

Astrology of the Seers

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ASTROLOGY EAST AND WEST

Astrology has existed all over the world and at all times. It was most prevalent in ancient religious cultures like those of Egypt and Babylonia. In the Europe and the Middle East these ritualistic cultures came to an end and were replaced by medieval cultures of Christian and Islamic varieties. These medieval cultures continued to use astrology, which they adapted from the earlier cultures, but it became a secondary pursuit. The religion of the One God would not admit the powers of the Gods.

However, the culture and religion of India maintained its continuity from early ancient times. It continued to worship the Gods as well as to seek the Divine Self or pure consciousness. It retained freedom in the realm of spirituality and religion, even though it often denied it in the outer life. There was no control of the culture by the forces of an exclusive monotheism or by a church which denied both nature and the transcendent. Hence it is not surprising that an older and perhaps more complete form of astrology survived there. The ritualistic calendar based upon the stars, the worship of the planets as Gods or cosmic forces, along with the general culture of temple worship continues in India today as it did in Babylonia and Egypt three thousand years ago. Modern Hindus still give prayers and offerings to the planets today as their counterparts in the ancient Europe and the Middle East did in their times.

Astrology, however, has undergone a kind of renaissance in the West, or one may be beginning, since the last hundred years. A new modern, scientific, psychological approach has added much knowledge and broadened the vista of astrology from the shackles of the medieval mind. This too is beginning in India though it is not as far developed and will probably not go as exclusively in this direction. Astrology has survived the onslaught of the materialistic age and may even have benefited from it, been forced by it into a greater clarity and objectivity. Once the symbol of the past, many now view it in futuristic light.

Astrology thus is a good point of dialogue and interchange between east and west, the ancient and the modern. It links together the greatest diversity of cultures in the most common perceptions and aspirations of humanity.

THE TWO ZODIACS

Most of us are under the impression that there is only one zodiac, that of the fixed stars or the constellations. We think that when an ephemeris, an astrological table of planetary positions, mentions that a planet is located in particular sign, for example Jupiter in Sagittarius, that if we were to look up into the sky to the stars of the constellation Sagittarius, we would see the planet located there. This, however, is usually not the case. The zodiac used by most Western astrologers today, what is called "the Tropical zodiac", is no longer based directly on the stars. It does not correspond to observable positions. Our astrological Jupiter in Sagittarius would more likely be found astronomically among the stars of Scorpio. It could even be found near Antares, the red first magnitude star at the heart of the Scorpion, if it were around 8 degrees Sagittarius.

The signs of the Tropical zodiac, over the millenia, may come to correspond any of the constellations of the fixed stars. Today, the tropical sign of Aries corresponds to the fixed stars of early Pisces. Soon it will correspond to Aquarius, with the beginning of the age of Aquarius that we hear so much about. In 10,000 years or so, tropical Aries will correspond to the fixed stars of Libra, its opposite, until some 23,000 years hence it will once more correspond to the actual stars of Aries.

This is because the signs of the Tropical zodiac are based upon the equinoxes, not the fixed stars. The beginning of the Tropical zodiac, its first degree of Aries, is always identical with the point of the vernal equinox, the place of the Sun at the first day of spring, not with any specific group of stars. The orientation of the equinoxes to the fixed stars changes over time according to the precession of the Earth on its axis. This phenomena, a changing of the tilt of the Earth, causes the point of the Earth relative to the fixed stars to move backwards in the zodiac. Over of a period of around 25,000 years the point of Earth relative to the fixed stars makes a full circuit of the zodiac.

The zodiac which corresponds to the actual constellations or the fixed stars is called "the Sidereal zodiac". Vedic astrology uses this, as does Western Sidereal astrology, which was took its orientation from the Indian model.

Around 2,000 years ago, when Western astrology was in its formative stages, the two zodiacs coincided. Since then, with the precession, the two zodiacs have been slowly moving apart, around 50 seconds per year. Hence the Tropical zodiac shows the actual astronomical positions of some two thousand years ago.

The Tropical zodiac is based not upon the stars but on the orientation of the Earth to the Sun. The Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn denote the places of the Sun at the summer and winter solstices. The Tropical zodiac begins with the Sun at the vernal equinox. This it designates as the beginning of the sign Aries. Its position at the summer solstice becomes the first degree of Cancer, at the autumnal equinox, the first degree of Libra and at the winter solstice, the first degree of Capricorn. The seasons mark the cardinal points of the

Tropical zodiac. Yet as the precession continues the fixed stars marking these seasonal points is slowly and inevitably changing.

The Tropical zodiac remains identical with these seasonal points. It does not consider the precession. Indeed, many who have used it have not even known of the precession. The Sidereal zodiac, on the other hand, calculates the precession into its positions. Its signs are always identical with the fixed stars. The ancient Hindus maintained knowledge of the precession throughout the course of human history, something no other culture was able to do. In the Vedic system the sign Aries, for example, is always equal to a thirty degree section of the fixed stars, in which are located the stars of the constellation of Aries.

Today, however, Tropical astrologers realize that their signs no longer correspond to the fixed stars. They rest their validity upon other factors. Some say their validity depends upon the seasons; others say it is a temporal rather than a spatial symbolism, with the signs more as a division of time than a division of space. This they hold corresponds to the difference between the static, eternal or space oriented cultures of the oriental and ancient cultures, as relative to the time and progress oriented cultures of the West and modern times.

This is not to say that Tropical astrology does not consider the precession. It does so relative to world-ages, as its recognition of the age of Aquarius with the precessional movement of the vernal equinox back into the fixed stars of Aquarius. Tropical astrology does recognize the Sidereal zodiac and consider it to be of value but for longer collective time periods, not of direct relevance to the individual chart.

Vedic astrology, on the other hand, does consider the position of the planets relative to the points of the equinoxes and solstices. Yet this is used as one of several points for determining planetary strengths and weaknesses, not as a major factor in interpretation.

We see, therefore, that two different methods of determining the signs of the zodiac exist. Each is based on a different kind of calculation. Neither is necessarily wrong. Both are using different measurements, though they employ the same language to speak of them. The signs of the Tropical zodiac are not really star signs, though they follow the analogy of the twelve constellations or star groups. They measure the heavens according to the Sun-Earth relationship, not that between the solar system and the fixed stars. The signs of the Sidereal zodiac, however, are identical with those of the fixed stars (or, more properly, of a thirty degree section of the sky in which they are located). There are a few people today who try to relate the signs to the actual stars only, rather than to a thirty degree division in which they are located. For example, they would see Aries as only equivalent to the stars of that small constellation, not the greater band around it. Vedic astrology does not agree with this. It sees in the twelvefold division of the zodiac a harmonic division of the light coming from the center of the galaxy. It is this harmonic division that is most important, not the individual stars within that division, though these have their significance as well.

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE TWO ZODIACS

As two different zodiacal systems are used, a controversy naturally arises between them. Some astrologers may consider one to be the true zodiac, the other to be in error. Some may consider both to be valid but to different degrees. Some may try to use both together. If we are unbiased, I believe that we can find examples of accurate astrological readings using either system, and examples of bad readings as well. This may depend more upon practitioner than system.

Some say that the Tropical system is for westerners, as it has developed here, and that the Sidereal system is for easterners, as it has prevailed there. Yet Sidereal astrology can give good and accurate readings even for westerners who believe in the Tropical system and Tropical astrology can make sense of the charts of easterners. Moreover, we see this barrier between east and west breaking down everywhere. Easterners can be as materialistic or scientific as westerners and westerners can be as spiritual or religious as easterners. We are all human beings with the same basic nature in life and we cannot make the influence of the stars dependent upon geographical influences.

When a tropical astrologer says that the Sun is in Aquarius, he does not mean that the Sun is in the fixed stars of the constellation Aquarius. He usually knows that it is probably in the fixed stars of Capricorn. He means that it is in the eleventh of a twelvefold division of the zodiac based upon the position of the Sun at the vernal equinox. Similarly, when a sidereal astrologer says that the Sun is in Capricorn, he means the fixed stars, not the tropical division, which he knows is probably Aquarius. Though both astrologers use the same terms, they refer them to different portions of the sky based upon two different ways of dividing the heavens.

As Vedic astrology is sidereal this means that the signs will change in the Vedic chart from what we find in the more common tropical chart. A Taurus Sun sign person may find their Sun in Aries in the Vedic system. This shift of positions naturally causes some consternation, particularly for those of us who are familiar with or pleased with our chart in the Tropical system. An Aquarius Sun sign person may not be happy to become Capricorn in the Vedic system (even though there is some difference in the interpretation of the meanings of

these signs). On the other hand, a Capricorn Sun in the western system may feel happier as a Sagittarius Sun in the eastern. (We should mention in passing that the Vedic system does not make such a big thing of Sun signs, it considers the Ascendant and the Moon to be more important). Hence it is crucial that we understand the two zodiacs and their differences so that we don't confuse one system with the other or try to judge one according to the standards of the other, in which terms neither is likely to look good.

The Sidereal zodiac is probably the original zodiac historically, as it is the observable zodiac. The Tropical, which is an abstract zodiac, must have derived from it, as all abstractions are usually based on underlying observable things.

The zodiac was invented long before the time when the vernal equinox was in Aries. It must have originally been based upon direct observation of the stars. When the Egyptian and the Babylonians spoke of the sign Taurus, it must have been the fixed stars. Yet in their time Taurus marked the vernal equinox, not Aries. It is hard to imagine that in 2000 B.C. when the Moon was in the stars of Taurus the ancients would have located it the tropical sign of Aries (which would have been the case if they used the Tropical zodiac). An abstract or symbolic zodiac, as the Tropical is, would not have made sense in cultures that marked their calendar on observable planetary positions.

If astrology came originally from India, then the Sidereal zodiac would definitely come first, as its astrology has remained sidereal through out its long history. Ancient cultures like India, which maintained the continuity of their civilizations over thousands of years, would quite naturally have to reckon with the precession of the zodiac. As their calendar was based upon astronomical sightings, like that the Moon in a certain constellation on a certain date, within a thousand years the calendar would be off two weeks, in two thousand years, in a month. It was only when these ancient cultures declined and fell that the knowledge of precession with their calendar was lost. It is not surprising that we find many such calendar shifts in the ancient Vedic texts of India.

Western civilizations, however, did not have these ancient roots. They changed too quickly for such shifts of stellar positions to be noted. Knowledge of the precession was lost altogether in the dark ages.

The advantage of the Sidereal zodiac, therefore, is that it is probably the original zodiac astronomically and historically. The complaint of many astronomers that astrology cannot be valid as its signs no longer correspond to the stars cannot be lodged against Sidereal astrology. Yet whether the Tropical zodiac is an improvement on this original zodiac of the fixed stars, an alternative system, or a deviation from it, is another question. Tropical astrology can be accurate. However, Vedic astrology considers the Sidereal zodiac to be more important. The advantage of the Tropical zodiac, of course, is that it is the commonly known one, the astrological language of our culture. Yet whether it will be the primary system for the global astrology that will emerge in the New Age remains to be seen. By the accounts of psychics like Edgar Cayce, who also used a sidereal system, the sidereal model will prevail in time.

Vedic astrology has existed for over many thousands of years. A number of changes of equinoctial positions similar to our age of Aquarius and similar shifts in the calendar have been recorded in it. The Vedic system and its zodiac are based upon a continuity of culture that goes back to the age of the Gods when human beings still had communication with the intelligence of the cosmos. It may, therefore, provide us the key to that working of that cosmic intelligence.

THE ORIENTATION OF THE SIDEREAL ZODIAC

Western astrology orients the zodiac to the point of the vernal equinox. This it marks as the beginning of the sign Aries, as we have indicated. Vedic astrology, on the other hand, according to my interpretation, orients the zodiac to the galactic center, to the central galactic Sun, whose influence comes to us through the fixed stars of the constellation Sagittarius. The galactic center is called "Brahma", the creative force, or "Vishnunabhi", the navel of Vishnu. From the galactic Sun emanates the light which determines life and intelligence on Earth and which directs the play of the seven rays of creation and the distribution of karma. It is the central point for determining the meaning of the signs of the zodiac, which reflect the twelvefold division of its light relative to our solar system.

In terms of the sidereal zodiac, the galactic center is located in early Sagittarius. In the Vedic system is found in the lunar constellation (nakshatra) called "Mula", meaning "the root or source". Mula can thus be seen as the first of the series of these lunar constellations. It marks the first 13 20' of Sagittarius, in the middle of which is located the galactic center. The last in the series of lunar constellations is "Jyeshtha", meaning "the eldest". It marks the end of Scorpio. This shows that the ancients knew of the galactic center and named their constellations according to that knowledge, with it in the center.

We should note the system of 27 lunar constellations is used in India, often more commonly than the 12 signs. This is because according to it the Moon resides in one constellation per day. It makes for easier observation than the sign system in which the Moon resides in each sign for two and a half days. If one knows the lunar constellation the Moon is on one day of the month, one will be able to figure it easily for the

rest of the month. Such a system shows that Vedic astrology was based on a firm ground of observation of the stars.

There are thus three main points of orientation for the Sidereal zodiac: these form a triangle---

Aries, as cardinal or creative fire is the field in which the cosmic light is projected.

Leo, as fixed fire, is the field into which it is sustained. Sagittarius, as mutable fire, is the field in which it is completed or transformed.

This orientation is fixed according to the Sun's relationship to the galactic center. The galactic light comes through Jupiter and early Sagittarius and triangulates itself through Aries and Leo (located in trines or 120 degree angles from it).

The Sidereal zodiac maintains this consistent relationship with the galactic center. The Tropical zodiac is based upon a consistent Earth-Sun relationship via the equinoxes. The Sidereal zodiac measures the relationship between the solar system and the great galactic Sun. It reflects the influences which emanate from the center of the galaxy, as mediated and transmitted by the planets of our solar system.

The energy of the galactic center is transmitted mainly by the planet Jupiter, called "Guru", the teacher, in the Vedic system, and by Sagittarius, its positive sign. Jupiter is said to be the teacher of the Gods, the cosmic powers of light. In this respect he is even the teacher of the Sun who is the guide of the world. Jupiter represents and directs the light of the galactic Sun into our solar system.

In this manner we can divide the zodiac into three groups of four constellations:

ARIES-TAURUS-GEMINI-CANCER

LEO-VIRGO-LIBRA-SCORPIO

SAGITTARIUS-CAPRICORN-AQUARIUS-PISCES

The first division of the zodiac is directed by Mars, which through Aries, cardinal fire, initiates the zodiacal emanation of energy. This is the cardinal or creative quadrant of signs. It consists of Aries and Cancer, two cardinal signs, Taurus, a fixed sign, and Gemini, a mutable.

The cardinal quadrant of signs is responsible for beginning movement, initiating activity, guiding and directing the manifestation, casting the seed forces.

The second division of the zodiac is directed by the Sun, which through Leo, fixed fire, stabilizes the zodiacal emanation of energy. This is the fixed quadrant of signs. It consists of two fixed signs, Leo and Scorpio, one cardinal, Libra, and one mutable, Virgo.

The fixed quadrant of signs is responsible for sustaining movement, stabilizing activity and bringing energy into form. It provides continuity to the forces in life.

The third division of the zodiac is directed by Jupiter, which through Sagittarius, mutable fire, brings the zodiacal emanation of energy to completion and fruition. This is the mutable quadrant of signs. It consists of two mutable signs, Sagittarius and Pisces, one cardinal, Capricorn, and one fixed, Aquarius.

The mutable quadrant of signs is responsible for completing movement, transforming energy, destabilizing form. It moves us away from energy and form into the domain of thought.

All three divisions begin with a fire sign and end with a water sign of the same quality. The first group has fire and water of a cardinal sign, the second of a fixed sign and the third of mutable. These three groups of signs represent the movements of creation, preservation and destruction according to the galactic force transmitted through our solar system.

SOLAR AND COSMIC ASTROLOGY

In summary, we could say that Tropical astrology may best be called "Solar astrology". Its signs may be more accurately called "solar houses", or "equinoctial signs". Its zodiac measures the Earth-Sun relationship but has no direct correlation with the other fixed stars.

As such, its concern is with psychology, the personality and character-types, the solar side of our life and character. Its signs show how the planets distribute the solar force, but not how they distribute the energies of the stars and of the galaxy itself, the secret light of intelligence.

Sidereal astrology can be called "Cosmic astrology". Its signs are the stellar constellations. Its zodiac measures the relationship between our solar system, the fixed stars and the galaxy itself.

As such, its concerns cover a broad area. It possesses good predictive powers and, perhaps, a better basis for a spiritual astrology. For spiritual astrology we must consider the great galactic center and the position of the signs relative to it.

Both systems can be integrated. We see that both astrologies employ a system of houses. These are based upon the daily rotation of the Earth on its axis. The Tropical zodiac reflects in addition the yearly rotation of the Earth around the Sun. The Sidereal zodiac adds to this the millennial rotation of the solar

system through the precessional cycle. In this way, one could measure all three of these factors and thereby integrate eastern and western astrology. However, this becomes complex and cumbersome in actual prediction.

On the other hand, both systems can also remain as alternatives, just as different healing systems exist. It could be argued that maintaining the differences between the two systems is good and allows for a broader development of astrological knowledge.

Even if one system is ultimately found to be superior to the other, aspects of one may still be helpful to add to the other. Many Vedic astrologers add Uranus, Neptune and Pluto to their system of interpretation. The greater psychological sophistication and intellectual clarity of Western astrology may be helpful to add to the Vedic system also.

Aspects of Vedic astrology, like its use of gems as remedial measures, can be used in terms of Western Tropical astrology, which generally lacks many methods for harmonizing planetary influences. Harmonic charts, which are becoming popular in Western Tropical astrology today (like the dwads), come originally from the Vedic system. Hence aspects of the Vedic system may be useful to Tropical astrologers as well.

AYANAMSHA

The difference between the Tropical and Sidereal zodiacs is called the "Ayanamsha". It is a term now used by Western astrologers as well. In Sanskrit "ayana" means solstice and "amsha" means portion. It refers to the difference between the point of the vernal equinox in the fixed stars from that of the first point of the constellation Aries.

The main controversy among sidereal astrologers is as to the exact degrees and minutes of the location of the Ayanamsha. Some western astrologers consider that the vernal equinox is already in Aquarius. This would be an Ayanamsha of over thirty degrees. Such a view is hard to validate astronomically, as the equinox is now still in early Pisces far from the actual stars of Aquarius.

Western sidereal astrologers place the Ayanamsha around 24 02 as of 1950. Most Vedic astrologers place it between 21 40 and 23 10 for that era. The latter which is the more official "Lahiri" Ayanamsha, now standard by the government of India but still not accepted by all. While it is easy to determine the exact point in the heavens to which the vernal equinox corresponds today, it is hard to measure what should actually be the first point of the constellation of Aries. The identity of the Vedic star Revati, said to mark this position, is a matter of dispute. Nor is it easy to determine the point in time in which the vernal equinox was there.

AYANAMSHA FOR 1950 (Degrees and Minutes)

Lahiri (govt. of India): 23 10

B.V. Raman: 21 42

Shri Yukteswar: 21 46

J.N. Bhasin: 22 03

Fagan-Bradley (American Sidereal Astrology): 24 02

RATE OF MOVEMENT OF AYANAMSHA

The rate of movement of the precession per year is also a matter of some difference of opinion and appears to vary slightly over time. Hence the date of coincidence for the two zodiacs is calculated differently. Vedic astrologers start their calculations from 200-550 A.D. as the point of the coincidence of the two zodiacs. Some western astrologers want to use the birth of Christ for this purpose.

Lahiri: 48"

Raman: 50.3"

Shri Yukteswar: 54"

Personally I prefer the system of Shri Yukteswar, the guru of Paramahansa Yogananda, from his book, THE HOLY SCIENCE, as he was both an astrologer and a Self-realized soul. He begins the cycle with 499 A.D. and makes it a 24,000 year cycle, according to the Vedic theory of the four yugas. B.V. Raman's calculations are very close to this and J.N. Bhasin's are not far either. Astronomy places the cycle at 25,800 years (and a rate of movement around 50.3") but admits fluctuations that make the period a matter of speculation.

One can choose the Ayanamsha one finds best. The rationales of the different systems can be studied on their own. For ordinary planetary positions it seldom makes a difference. It is mainly in terms of harmonic charts and planetary periods that it can become significant. Only time will tell which is right and each group has its reasons for the validity of its calculations, which there is not the space to examine here. As in all things in life, there are a number of way of looking at things. In the end it is the practice rather than the theory that reveals the truth.

A modern tropical ephemeris may give the Western sidereal Ayanamsha by the month, which we can then subtract from all planetary positions. An ephemeris with the positions of the planets according to the Lahiri or

Raman Ayanamshas can be purchased from India. Options for calculating the standard Ayanamshas or for adding one's own can be found on most Vedic astrology computer programs. Extensive Vedic or Hindu astrology programs are now available through many astrological computer services today and they are likely to become common for most astrologers to have at least for reference. Vedic astrology has made it in the West, at least on computer! Now, hopefully, we can give some sense to those apparently strange calculations.

AYANAMSHA TABLE 1900-1990

YEAR	LAHIRI	YUKTESWAR
1900	22 27 59	21 00 54
1910	22 35 51	21 09 54
1920	22 44 43	21 18 54
1930	22 52 40	21 27 54
1940	23 01 21	21 36 54
1950	23 09 34	21 45 54
1960	23 17 54	21 54 54
1970	23 26 21	22 03 54
1980	23 34 31	22 12 54
1990	23 42 56	22 21 54

This simple table is for general reference. For intermediate years the difference can be averaged according to the yearly rate. For all practical purposes it can be corrected to the nearest minute. As the rates are about 9 minutes for ten years, one can add .9 minutes per year.

HOW TO CALCULATE THE VEDIC CHART

The calculation of the Vedic chart can be done according to the same method as the calculation of the Western Tropical chart, only the Ayanamsha is subtracted from all planetary and sign positions. Thus any typical Western chart can be turned into a Vedic chart through subtracting the Ayanamsha. For this reason, we will not go into how to calculate charts. This can be found in many common Western astrology books, which can be examined for reference. There is a special Indian way of calculating charts but it is very complicated, for example, depends upon figuring the time of dawn, and so is not important to learn.

Planetary aspects from the western chart, however, will not be applicable. In addition, the house cusps in the Western chart will mark the middle rather than the beginning of the house in the Vedic system. These issues will be discussed in their appropriate sections.

One should calculate the western chart and transpose it into the eastern by subtracting the appropriate Ayanamsha. One can use a Vedic astrology computer program or send away to an astrological service for a Vedic chart according to the Ayanamsha preferred. Vedic astrology has many more calculations in its system than the Western system. Hence a computer program is almost essential for its practice. As in all astrological calculations one should make sure of the accuracy of the birth data.

SAMPLE CHART

Below we show the south Indian style (the north Indian style uses a diamond pattern). The south Indian chart is often preferable. This is because in Vedic astrology we read houses not only from the Ascendant but also from the Moon and other planets. These can be seen easily on the southern chart but not on the northern chart. In it the upper left star marks the constellation Aries and the rest of the signs follow in clockwise order around it. The exact degree positions of the planets and houses are usually listed separately, though for a simple reading they are not necessary. Our example is the chart of Mahatma Gandhi.

Notice that this structure puts much more emphasis on the signs. The usual western circular chart emphasizes more the aspects between the planets.

THE PLANETS

THE GREAT COSMIC SIGNIFICATORS

According to Vedic astrology, the planets are relay stations for the reception and transmission of stellar energies. We should not just view them in a local light for what they may be doing within our solar system, they are bringing to us the forces of the galaxy, of the universe itself. Hence we like to emphasize the following point:

--The essence of astrology is in understanding the meaning of the planets. The meaning of the signs, houses, aspects and other astrological factors is determined by the planets which rule and significate them. Astrology is nothing but the science of the planets, as the forces of the stars are governed by and manifest through them.--

Each planet (and the concept of planet includes both the Sun and the Moon) governs one portion of the cosmic creative ray, upholds its vibration in the solar system. Therefore, it is necessary, as a basis for astrological study, to have a firm grasp of the meaning of the planets, their various indications and levels of correspondence. Astrological thinking is largely planetary thinking but according to the planets as cosmic significators, encompassing all domains of life and the evolution of consciousness.

We are all different combinations and degrees of the energies of the planets. Each of us is usually stamped by the rule of one planet as our planetary type. Most of the action we do in life is according to the nature of the planet which dominates us. Most of our relationships are according to our planetary affinities. Once we have understood the meaning of the planets we can, therefore, comprehend the whole basic field of possibilities of human life.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE PLANETS

In Vedic astrology the seven major or visible planets are normally listed in order of the days they rule: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

This shows an interweaving of two sequences, which is the way the planets normally distribute their energies. The inner planets (those between the orbit of the Earth and the Sun) occur between the outer planets.

Sun-----Mars-----Jupiter-----Saturn
Moon-----Mercury-----Venus

NUMEROLOGY OF THE PLANETS

Each planet is given a certain number based upon this sequence----1. Sun 2. Moon 3. Mars 4. Mercury 5. Jupiter 6. Venus 7. Saturn 8. Rahu 9. Ketu.

These numbers correspond to the energies of the planets. The Sun is one, which is unity, the prime number from which all the others proceed. It is the origin, the guide, the foundation. The Moon is two, which is duality and is the basis for the workings of the mind and emotion. It is relationship, balance and interchange. Mars is three, the number of will and energy. It is power, penetration and decision. Mercury is four, the number of order, balance and reason. Jupiter is five, the number of law and intelligence in manifestation. Venus is six, the number of harmony, beauty and relationship. Saturn is seven, the number of control, limit and completion. Rahu is eight, the number of dispersion and new beginnings. Ketu is nine, the number of realization and liberation.

Planetary energy begins with the Sun and follows this sequence to Ketu at the end. Each planet represents a stage in the development and distribution of that solar energy. Each planet can be understood through the law of its respective number, which is usually common in the lives of those ruled by that planet.

ORDER OF PLANETARY SIGNIFICANCE

Of the planets, the Sun and the Moon, as the two luminaries are most important. Next in importance are Mars, Jupiter and Saturn as the major planets beyond the orbit of the Earth. Then come Venus and Mercury as the major planets within the orbit of the Earth and therefore always close to the Sun.

The lunar nodes, north and south, called Rahu and Ketu, regarded as shadowy or secondary planets are of yet less importance. After them in significance we can place the distant planets of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto if we wish.

THE PLANETS AND THE QUALITIES OF NATURE

From great Nature, called Prakriti in Sanskrit, comes the three primal qualities or gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

Sattva is the higher quality and is of the nature of light, lightness, clarity, harmony, balance and intelligence. It is the divine quality and brings about the upward movement of the soul. It creates peace, love and faith and brings the human being into the spiritual life.

Rajas is the intermediate quality and is of the nature of energy, action, turbulence, distraction, disturbance, violence and passion. It is the demonic (asuric) quality and keeps the soul in the middle worlds. It creates aggression, competition, strife and pain and causes the human being to seek worldly acquisition and achievement as the main goal in life.

Tamas is the lower quality and is of the nature of inertia, darkness, dullness, obstruction, heaviness and lethargy. It is the animal quality that keeps the soul bound in the lower and unconscious realms. It brings about servitude, decay, domination and destruction and causes the human being to become harmful, useless, unproductive and unintelligent.

Each of these three qualities is necessary in nature. Tamas gives stability, as in roles of the earth and the physical body. Rajas gives energy, as in the atmosphere and the vital body. Sattva gives light, as in place of heaven and the mind.

Rajas and Tamas, however, do not naturally belong to or function rightly in the domain of the mind, which is the natural realm of Sattva. Tamas becomes the ignorance and lack of attention which veils the mind. Rajas fuels desire and fantasy that are projected through it. As astrology measures the mental quality or Sattva of the person, Tamasic and Rajasic energies become negative in the chart.

All evolution spiritually is in reducing Rajas and Tamas and increasing Sattva. When Sattva is pure it allows the perception of our true or Divine nature in which we go beyond the outer world.

Prevalence of Sattvic planets in a chart shows ethical, religious and spiritual qualities and the soul in its ascent. Prevalence of Rajasic planets show worldly qualities and the soul in its state of attachment, seeking acquisitions and achievements in the outer world. Prevalence of Tamasic planets show lower qualities, destructive tendencies, and the soul in its state of descent.

The planets are generally given the three qualities as follows:

SATTVA----SUN, MOON, JUPITER

RAJAS-----MERCURY, VENUS

TAMAS-----MARS, SATURN (also RAHU, KETU)

We can place Uranus, Neptune and Pluto into a pattern of Neptune--Sattva, Uranus--Rajas and Pluto--Tamas, though their influences here are rather weak.

The planets also have secondary qualities. The Sun has some Rajas, as it provides not only perception but energy. The Moon has some Tamas or cloudiness to it. Mercury and Venus have some Sattva and can enhance qualities of compassion and devotion respectively. Mars and Ketu have some Rajas, as they give energy and power of will.

Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, like the lunar nodes Rahu and Ketu, are usually overpowered by the nature of the planets they are associated with. Even mutable or sensitive planets like the Moon and Mercury can take on any quality according to influences and associations.

The above scheme is the natural status of the planets according to the three qualities. Other factors like rulership of Sattvic houses (1, 4, 5 and 9), Rajasic houses (2, 7, 10, 11) or Tamasic houses (3, 6, 8 and 12) should be examined. The nature of the signs in which the planets are located must also be considered (see section). In this regard we cannot put too much weight on the qualities the planets generally represent.

Harmoniously placed and balanced planetary influences tend towards Sattva. Conflicting planetary influences make for Rajas. Lack of communication between planets makes for Tamas. Generally, preponderance of spiritual factors in the chart makes for Sattvic type, preponderance of egoistic factors creates Rajasic types and lack of integration in a chart tends towards the Tamasic.

For these reasons, the ultimate determination of the state of the three gunas in the chart is a complex decision. It is part of the whole ascertainment of the mental and spiritual nature of the person. It may depend upon somewhat on the nature of the soul, as more evolved souls will use the higher aspects of their planetary energies and less evolved will gravitate towards the lower. Higher souls will relate more to their Sattvic planets, intermediate to their Rajasic, and lower to their Tamasic influences. For this reason some

astrologers refuse to make any spiritual judgement of the person based upon the chart alone. All astrologers should learn those factors which increase Sattva and encourage them in all their clients.

ELEMENTS OF THE PLANETS

From the three gunas in the sequence of cosmic evolution arise the five elements. From Sattva comes ether. From Rajas comes air and fire. From Tamas comes water and earth.

However, elements in harmony, balance or in their right place tend towards Sattva. Those in conflict move towards Rajas and those disconnected fall towards Tamas. In this regard a chart with a lot of earth may not be Tamasic. It may manifest the harmonious use of the earth element or Sattvic earth qualities like devotion, loyalty, friendship and sensitivity to the world of nature.

The traditional association of elements and planets in Vedic astrology is as follows:

ETHER----JUPITER

AIR-----SATURN, RAHU

FIRE-----SUN, MARS, KETU

WATER----MOON, VENUS

EARTH----MERCURY

The Sun represents fire and indicates the fire element in general in the chart. Yet as a dry planet, it contains some air as its secondary element.

The Moon represents water and indicates the water element in general in the chart. Yet when weak in luminosity (close to the Sun) it tends to become airy. When combust (within 15 degrees of the Sun), it can even represent fire, because as a mutable planet it takes upon the influence of the planets with which it is associated.

Mars represents fire and indicates more specifically the fire element in the chart. Yet as a heavy planet it contains earth as its secondary element.

Mercury is said by many to represent the element of earth in the chart, as it indicates basic earthly qualities of objective perception, commerce and communication. As a fast moving planet it is sometimes said to represent air and by its subtle nature is said to represent ether. Yet as a changeable or mutable planet it tends to taken upon itself the influence of the planets with which it is associated.

Jupiter by its spiritual nature is said to represent ether. Yet as a heavy and liquid planet it can represent water. This is particularly true in those systems that relate the planets to a four element system (excluding ether). As an expansive planet, it is by some said to rule over air. This is not so much the element it possesses as the one it controls.

Venus represents water and indicates more specifically the water element in the chart, as Mars does fire. Yet as a light and somewhat mobile planet it contains a secondary nature as air.

Saturn by its dry and nervous nature is said to represent air. But according to its attributes as dark, heavy, gross and coarse it may be said to rule over earth. Generally, when strong it gives earthly qualities, when weak or afflicted it creates air.

Rahu (the north lunar node) is said to be like Saturn and is more specifically airy, though like Saturn can give the dark side of earth energy. Ketu (the south node) is said to be fiery like Mars but secondarily airy. As usual we must judge their condition by the planets which influence them as they are shadowy planets.

Uranus has primarily an airy, changeable and disruptive nature. Neptune has primarily a watery but very subtle, almost etheric nature. Pluto like Mars has fire but with secondary earth.

We see, therefore, that several different but related systems of the elements can exist. This again is because the elemental nature of the planets is not entirely fixed. It depends upon which of their attributes are most pronounced in the chart according to different factors like location, aspects and rulerships. Personally, I like to modify the traditional Hindu system and make Saturn rule earth and Mercury rule air. We should always remember that no absolute system of correspondences exists because all aspects of nature are interdependent and mutually reflective. Hence we should use such systems them for what they are worth but not over weight them.

These elements refer to the nature in general; physical, mental and spiritual. None of them are necessarily good or bad. We can discriminate higher or lower types among each of the elements. A higher earth type, the sattvic type, would be a caretaker of the Earth like an environmentalist. A lower earth type, the tamasic type, would be a thief, for example. But generally too much of the lower elements, like earth, and too strong earthly planets, like Saturn, will bring out the lower qualities of the soul, whereas strong influence of the higher elements, like ether, air and Jupiter, will raise the soul upwards.

However, harmony and balance between the elements is generally better than too much of any. It is the synthesis of factors in astrology that is the key. These individual planetary meanings are building blocks but cannot be made the basis of judgement in themselves.

PLANETARY ATTRIBUTES AND ACTIONS

From these three primary qualities or gunas arise other secondary qualities. From these come the primary actions or affects of the planets. They are outlined below as redefined in English, first the attributes and then the actions----

MAJOR PLANETS

THE SUN	hot, radiant, light, dry, subtle, clear, sharp	active, guiding, expanding, penetrating, isolating, insensitive, destructive
THE MOON	cold, wet, heavy, mobile, fast, cloudy, soft, smooth	passive, responsive, creative, relating, sensitive, nurturing
MARS	hot, radiant, heavy, cloudy, sharp, coarse, mobile	active, aggressive, penetrating, contracting, isolating, insensitive, destructive
MERCURY	neutral, light, subtle, mobile, fast, smooth, clear	mutable, responsive, relating, sensitive, expressive
JUPITER	neutral, moist, heavy, static, clear, calm, slow	active, expanding, creative, relating, guiding, sensitive
VENUS	cool, moist, light, smooth, soft, subtle, cloudy	passive, responsive, relating, sensitive, creative, expressive
SATURN	cold, dark, dry, heavy, slow, rough, hard, static, gross, dull, coarse	resisting, retarding, contracting, isolating, insensitive, destructive

LUNAR NODES

RAHU	cold, dry, light, mobile, subtle, dark, cloudy	retrograde, expansive, destructive, isolating, insensitive, disintegrating
KETU	hot, dry, dark, light, sharp, mobile, fast	retrograde, isolating, contracting, destructive, penetrating, guiding, releasing

DISTANT PLANETS

URANUS	cold, dry, light, subtle, sharp, mobile, fast, active	inventive, disturbing, disintegrating, isolating, destructive, insensitive
NEPTUNE	cold, wet, light, subtle, cloudy, soft	passive, relating, sensitive, diffusive, disintegrating
PLUTO	hot, dry, heavy, sharp, hard, coarse, rough	active, aggressive, penetrating, isolating, destructive, insensitive, disturbing

This science of qualities, actions and elements is common to all branches of Vedic Science. It is its very basis as an objective ascertainment of the nature of things. Hence we should learn to see these attributes in the life around us. When, for example, we see a cold, dry and dark situation, we should note that Saturn's influence must be prevalent as its attributes predominate. Therefore the situation must be under a Saturnian influence, transit, planetary period or dominated by a Saturnian personality. The planets merely represent qualities in nature. The language of astrology is just another form of the language of nature and her basic energetic attributes. For this reason good astrologers can intuit the planetary influences in things by reading their attributes without even having to examine an astrological chart.

It would be too much space to explain all these attributes in detail, how they function and interrelate. Please meditate upon these attributes and their planetary forms yourself. What follows are a few typical indications.

Planets which are creative will further our projects in life. Those which are destructive in action will limit them. For example, creative planets will be good for children; destructive ones will tend to deny them. On the other hand, too many creative planets may get us too caught in the outer affairs of life, while destructive planets may also remove us from the lower aspects of life.

Planets which are sensitive will increase our openness to others. Those which are insensitive will cause us more to focus on our own individual needs. Those which are relating will connect us to things. Those which are isolating or separating will remove us from them.

These factors work on both the body and the mind. Hot planets will make our body hot and in excess cause fever, infections or bleeding. Cold planets will make our body cold causing weak digestion, poor circulation, pallor and chills. Heavy planets will cause us to put on weight. Light planets will cause us to lose weight.

In the mind, cloudy planets will reduce perception whereas clear planets will increase it. Slow planets will make our minds function slower, whereas fast planets will increase its rate of activity. Again no quality is essentially good or bad and too much of any quality can cause problems.

KEY INDICATORS OF PLANET

Each planet relates to various factors within ourselves and in our lives. It becomes an indicator or significator of certain things inwardly and outwardly. The judgement on them depends upon how that planet is oriented in the chart. For example, the Sun is the significator of the father. If strong the father will usually be strong, healthy and successful.

Naturally, each planet indicates many things. To be more specific other factors, like various houses and their rulers, must be brought into consideration.

SUN: father, ego, self, soul, individuality, rational mind, honor, status

MOTHER: mother, emotions, personality, sociability, happiness, home, popularity

MARS: brothers, friends, enemies, enmity, injury, energy, logic, science

MERCURY: childhood, education, intellect, speech, commerce, vocation, adaptability

JUPITER: husband (for woman), guru, dharma, principle, wealth, fortune, grace, children, creativity, health

VENUS: wife (for man), beloved, love, art, conveyances, beauty, comfort, charisma, charm

SATURN: death, longevity, old age, disease, loss, sorrow, property, fate, limitation, obstruction, detachment

RAHU: disease, psychic disturbances, collective trends, mass disturbances, epidemics

KETU: injury, enmity, death, negation, knowledge, liberation, psychic or spiritual insight

URANUS: shock, disturbance, transformation, eccentricity, invention

NEPTUNE: psychic sensitivity, imagination, illusion, charm

PLUTO: will, domination, manipulation, catastrophes

PLANETS AS BENEFIC OR MALEFIC

Planets have long been classified as to whether their influence is benefic or malefic. This has often been simplistically rendered as good and bad, according to a moralistic concept of good and evil (often depending upon what religion one follows). Thereby it has given rise to a stereotyped, judgmental or moralistic thinking, as if life were nothing but a school of reward and punishment and that the stars had no higher purpose than to administer justice to deviant mortals. Still there is a truth behind these concepts which remains useful and important.

Benefic planets generally increase, promote, further, expand or bring to fruition the affairs of the planets, signs, and houses they influence. Malefic planets, on the contrary, generally decrease, obstruct, harm, limit or destroy the affairs of the planets, signs and houses they influence.

In a very broad sense, one could say that malefic planets cause disease, difficulties, delays, conflicts, separations, poverty and suffering. Benefic planets promote health, ease, comfort, peace, harmony, abundance and happiness. Yet in actual prediction, much greater precision is required than this and planetary influences combine in many ways.

Malefic planets can function in a positive way by negating negative factors in the chart (like disease or poverty). In fact, such instances of negative influences cancelling each other in the chart represent the greatest good fortune. Not only is good fortune gained but potential negative side-effects are also neutralized. In the same way, benefic planets can function negatively. Too many benefic influences can render a person weak and self-indulgent and make their life easy, superficial and without challenges.

In Vedic astrology, the nature of planets as benefic or malefic is not entirely fixed. There are two different ways of judging this. The first is what is called their "natural status"; Jupiter as benefic and Saturn as malefic and so on. This has been the main factor used in Western astrology, particularly in the Middle Ages. There is in Vedic astrology a second factor called the "temporal status". This depends upon which sign governs the ascendant in the particular chart. The nature of planets as positive or negative, benefic or malefic, creative or destructive, varies with each ascendant according to the particular houses they rule.

For example, the ruler of the ascendant, even if it is Saturn, becomes benefic in its temporal status (as for a Capricorn ascendant). Similarly, rulers of negative houses, houses that indicate misfortune, disease, death or other difficulties in life, like the sixth house, will become temporally malefic, even if they happen to be Jupiter, which in natural status is the best benefic. This will be discussed in detail in the section on the houses, as it is one of the most important and unique principles of this system of astrology.

To determine the benefic or malefic nature of a planet both its natural and temporal statuses must be carefully considered. Moreover, planetary nature changes with planetary association. Such influences are aspects between planets and the nature of the signs and houses in which they are located. Friendship and enmity between planets comes into consideration here (see section). A preponderance of malefic influences and aspects can neutralize a benefic and vice versa.

Some astrologers have suggested that the terms benefic and malefic be done away with, like those of good and evil. Such terms as expansive and contractive planets may be preferable in many instances, as these writers suggest, or planets which create or resolve difficulties. Yet the capacity of badly disposed planets to do harm in life should not be underestimated. Nor can the influences of such difficult planets be very easily

neutralized. Similarly, the capacity of well-disposed planets to bring unexpected help or benefits should not be overlooked. Planets may not function in a simplistic way but they do function according to cosmic forces beyond our control that can raise us up or bring us down in ways we could never do of our own accord.

Which planets we consider to be benefic or malefic depends to a great extent on what we want in life, according to our goals and values. Life has many domains and what is good for one field of life may not be good for another. For example, what is good for wealth may not be good for spiritual development. For the spiritual life, which depends upon detachment, malefics like Saturn may be very positive in destroying our desire or capacity to accumulate wealth. In this way they can aid in driving our consciousness inward.

Sometimes a planet may be good for one aspect but not for another within the same domain. A planet may give wealth or prestige but weaken one's health, thereby furthering some of the outer goals of life but not all of them. We can observe this in regular human life where overwork may be good for one's business but not for one's vitality. The planets must be as complex as life in their functioning.

While we use the terms malefic and benefic here, it is in a more adaptable sense than a simplistic good and bad. We see in these terms a cosmic sense that can help us understand astrology on a deeper level. It is the ancient sense of life as a battle between light and darkness, the gods and the demons, cosmos and chaos. The planets were seen as the matrix of this battle and regarded as capable of transmitting or even personifying these conflicting forces. Astrology is a dead and sterile thing without this mythos and this cosmic symbolism of light and dark.

The benefic and malefic effects of planets based on their underlying nature, is as given below----

PLANETARY NATURES

BENEFIC AND MALEFIC -- Natural Disposition

GREATER BENEFIC: JUPITER	GREATER MALEFIC: SATURN, RAHU
LESSER BENEFIC: VENUS	LESSER MALEFIC: MARS, KETU
GENERAL BENEFIC: MOON, MERCURY	GENERAL MALEFIC: SUN

The Moon is considered generally benefic. It is a strong benefic when away from the Sun and bright in nature. It becomes malefic when close to the Sun or dark in nature. It is more benefic when waxing and more malefic than waning. Specifically, I consider it to be benefic except when within 60 degrees of its conjunction with the Sun, and until it is 30 degrees past the Sun (some books count the Moon as malefic when within 72 degrees of the Sun; others regard the waxing or increasing Moon as benefic, and the waning or decreasing Moon as malefic). Yet even when close to the Sun, in a good sign and with good aspects its benefic nature can still come out.

Mercury, like the Moon, is a general benefic, but is mutable in nature, easily takes upon the nature of the planets with which it is associated, and so is sometimes regarded as neutral (the Moon possesses much of this same mutability or sensitivity).

The lunar nodes, Rahu and Ketu, are generally somewhat more malefic than their planetary counterparts, Saturn and Mars, but as shadowy planets are more likely to take upon the nature of planets with whom they are associated. In this way they can function as benefics.

Uranus and Pluto, to a lesser degree than Rahu and Ketu to which they are similar, are generally malefic but in nature. Pluto seems to be more malefic. Their influence as distant planets is not always strong in itself, though it is often strong in transits. Neptune, likewise, is a weak and mutable benefic, like Mercury, but to a lesser degree. The distant planets, like the lunar nodes, function more to magnify or transmit the influences of other planets.

Natural disposition as benefic as malefic may be overridden by other factors, mainly temporal status. Yet we find that natural benefics always do some good, even when otherwise malefically disposed. Natural malefics, similarly, always do some harm or create some difficulties or delays, even when otherwise beneficially disposed.

BENEFIC AND MALEFIC IN WESTERN ASTROLOGY

These natural dispositions of planets as benefic or malefic generally agree with that of traditional Western astrology. The most notable difference is that of the Sun, which Western astrology usually views as a benefic. Sometimes in Vedic astrology it can be the most malefic of the planets.

The Sun as a very powerful and hot planet does have a destructive effect, as its desiccating effect in nature. It tends to limit or destroy the affairs of the house wherein it is located or which it aspects.

The Sun in the fifth house does tend to deny children or create difficulties with them. In the seventh house it can give separation or delays in relationship, partnership and other seventh house considerations. Even Western astrology recognizes such affects. It is similarly well-known that planets too close to the Sun, what is called in "combust", do not usually give good results. The Moon also loses her strength becomes weak the closer she gets to the Sun. So the negative effects of the Sun's influence are well known.

However, the Sun in Vedic astrology is also regarded as a Sattvic or spiritual planet. This is quite different than the other malefics which are Tamasic, gross or unspiritual, in quality. Hence in this sense of quality, the Sun is a good planet and gives high values like self-esteem, integrity and independence. One such action which is spiritually beneficially but materially malefic, it can help separate us from material abundance and worldly happiness and cause to seek self-knowledge. Much of the western sense of the Sun as a benefic can be understood in the eastern sense of the Sun as a spiritual or Sattvic planet.

DISPOSITORSHIP

Planets project the influence of the planets located in the signs they rule. When, for example, Saturn and Mars are located in Cancer, the sign of the Moon, the Moon may take upon their negative natures.

A planet is said to be the "dispositor" of the planets located in the signs that it rules. Generally it will rule over them and make them function according to its nature. If Saturn is in Sagittarius, for example, Jupiter will gain power over it and it will be less malefic than usual. However, if there are several such planets and if they are strongly benefic or malefic, their nature can outweigh that of their ruler, who will come to function like them. Hence to determine whether a planet is benefic or malific, we must also consider whether a planet is the ruler or dispositor of benefic or malefic planets.

In fact, by this principle of dispositorship any planet can come to function like any other. Jupiter can thereby function like a malefic Saturn and Rahu, or Saturn can function like a benefic Venus. The planets thus are points of energy transmission and what energies they transmit depends as much upon their factors of association as their given nature. While the planets do have their specific natures, they do not exist in isolation and can serve to reflect the other planets and their functions. This is simply the relativity of all life.

Sometimes one planet may become the "final dispositor" of all the planets in the chart. This occurs if all planets are in signs ruled by one planet or in those of planets located in its signs. For example, if Mercury is in Gemini with the Sun and Venus, Mercury would be their dispositor. If the Moon and Saturn are located in Libra, another sign of Venus, and Jupiter and Mars in Aquarius, a sign of Saturn, then Mercury would become the final dispositor in the chart. Such a planet usually becomes very strong and marks the planetary type of the person.

In this principle of dispositorship is much of the secret of astrology and the key to subtle chart interpretation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANETS

THE SUN

"I know that great being who has the effulgence of the Sun beyond darkness. Only knowing him can one go beyond death. There is no other path for the journey." Shukla Yajur Veda 31.18.

"The Sun has yellow eyes which dispense honey, his body is square, he is pure, bilious (pitta) in constitution, intelligent, masculine and tends towards baldness." Parashari 3.23.

The ancient Vedic religion upon which Vedic astrology is based, the religion of all the ancient world, was the religion of the Sun. The worship of the Sun was primary to all ancient cultures, including the religions and mythologies of our ancient Indo-European ancestors the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans and Slavs. It is the oldest and most natural form of human religion, as religion is seeking the light. As such, it is also the religion of the future as we once more return to our spiritual roots in the coming ages of light.

The Sun is a grand symbol with a great mythology, a profound psychological and spiritual meaning. It is the image, the face of Truth itself. The Sun is God, the Divine incarnate in nature. The Sun is the Deva, the deity. To the ancients the Sun was the One God, which was the unity of truth, not an exclusive and jealous deity. In our birth charts the Sun shows our divinity (or lack of it), our unity and point of focus, our center and central purpose in life. It shows the light that we possess and which we aspire to expand.

According to the solar religion of the Vedas, the Sun is the Atma, the Self of all the universe. The Sun is the Divine Being who dwells in the hearts of all beings as the true Self. The Sun is the Divine light and love which is the unity of all life. The Sun is the visible form and presence of the deity. In their worship of the Sun, the ancients recognized the presence and place of God in life. They were bringing the Divine light into life and making of their life and perception a thing of worship.

The Sun symbolizes the cosmic intelligence, pure consciousness or the enlightened Mind. The ancient solar religion was the religion of Divine life and of enlightenment. In much of his worship no images of the God were used. He was lauded in the sunlight, the sunlit path of clear awareness (images or forms, however,

were used more commonly in the worship of the Goddess who was the Earth or the Moon). The winged disc of the Sun was used throughout the ancient world to symbolize the soul and its inherent perfection and transcendence of time. The Sun was sometimes worshipped in human representation as the cosmic man, often made of gold, representing the true Man who contains within himself all the Gods.

The saviour or sage worshipped in the ancient cultures was the son of the Sun, the presence of the Sun on Earth, the incarnation of the Divine light of truth. This symbolism is found even in Christianity where Christ is born on the winter solstice, the day the Sun is born again, as the days once more begin to get longer. It is found in Buddhism, where the Buddha as the enlightened or solar being turns the wheel of the law, the Sun wheel.

The first man, the father of the human race, was often seen as the son of the Sun (like the Hindu Manu). He was not always a fallen Adam but an incarnate Christ or enlightened master. The Sun is our spiritual father, our origin and our final resting place. At death the ancients prayed to merge into the Sun, to follow the path of light to the Gods and to the supreme light. That was thought to be the only way beyond sorrow and rebirth.

The human being is meant to manifest the Divine light on Earth, to bring the light of truth into the material realm. As such, we are all children of the Sun, doing the cosmic labor of manifesting the light. We are portions of the sunlight projected to Earth to further the will of the Divine Sun in its creative play. To be conscious as souls we must awaken to this duty. To do this we must awaken from the dream of illusion that we are just creatures of this life and its memories.

The Sun dwells within the hearts of all of us as our inner Sun, our inner light and life. Without this inner light, no perception could be possible. Without this inner life, we could not even breathe. Just as there is the movement of the outer Sun through the constellations of the zodiac, so there is the movement of the inner Sun through the chakras of our subtle or astral body (which reflects our birth chart). We will explore these themes further in our section on Yogic astrology.

Nor is the Sun merely the luminary of our local solar system. The Sun is our local manifestation of the cosmic or universal light. It brings to us the light, the life, the love from all the stars, whose children we are. It reflects the light from the galactic center, the central Sun of our galaxy. It connects us with the heart of all life and all the forces of light, consciousness and intelligence. It is connected with the Suns in subtle realms as well as this physical world. It is a doorway to all the domains and powers of light.

All the planets shine with the reflected light of the Sun; they represent different solar rays. Hence there is only real one light, which is the Sun, which is all lights, and is inwardly the light of the mind.

In Vedic astrology, therefore, the Sun is the principle of light, life and love, our true will and perception. It is the most important factor for determining the spiritual life and potentials of the individual. It represents the soul, the causal body or reincarnating entity, whose will is behind our fate. It is also the mind or the mental principle on a lower level as reason, discernment, clarity and illumination.

A well-placed Sun gives intelligence, perception, strength of will and character. It affords endurance, stamina, vitality, positive spirit, direction, courage, conviction, confidence, leadership, independence and straight-forwardness. Without it whatever we may do or accomplish in life will not be ours and will not give us inner strength or peace.

An ill-placed Sun gives lack of intelligence, poor perception, weakness of will and character. It creates lack of endurance, low vitality, melancholy, fear, dependency or servitude, deviousness or dishonesty.

An overly strong but malefically disposed Sun creates pride, arrogance, tyranny and control. It creates much of the same problems as Mars (or Saturn) when too strong. It can give a deceptive charisma and a dominating personality. When the Sun is strong we outshine everyone else for good or ill; depending on whether its disposition is benefic or malefic, conscious or unconscious.

A weak but spiritually disposed Sun makes us receptive, wanting to do good and self-effacing. We may lack in confidence and come under the rule of other people. We will seek to sacrifice ourselves but may not know what to give ourselves over to.

The Sun rules the heart, the organ of circulation and vitality, and a weak Sun gives problems here. Inwardly the heart is the organ of intelligence that regulates the life, breath, aspiration and perception. The nature of the Sun in the chart shows who we really are in our hearts. The Sun shows who we are in ourselves, as an individual, as apart from how we appear or what roles we take. It shows how we are with ourselves, in ourselves and by ourselves.

The Sun is our sense of self and indicates the level of our self-manifestation. On the lower level, the Sun represents the ego. It shows our impulses towards power, prestige, fame, honor, respect, authority and control--all the things that give value and preeminence to our separate self and personal power. It shows where we shine, how we shine and in what we shine, how we illumine ourselves and our own lives.

On the higher level, the Sun represents our soul as our power of direct cognition. It shows our aspirations, our creativity, our seeking for light and for truth, our integrity, our capacity to transcend external conditionings and be a light unto ourselves. The Sun is who we really are, and with the Sun in the chart is the problem of identity, the search for our true Self, the great enquiry "Who am I". It is this inner search that is the real basis for the psychology of astrology. The Sun directs us towards the yoga of knowledge for the revelation of our inner being.

In terms of family relationships, the Sun represents the father. We can read through it the life of our father, our relationship to him and his influence upon us. It is the role of the father to shape our sense of self, to provide us with direction and self-worth in life. It is the absence, weakness or failure of the father in modern culture that is behind the many ego, identity and self-image problems so many of us today possess. The son needs a beneficent father to give him a sense of self-strength, self-mastery and capacity to function capably in the world. The daughter needs a good father to give her the sense of self-worth, integrity and the capacity to be her self in the world. We can judge this by the Sun in the chart.

The Sun shows the kinds of authority and the values which shape our lives. The Sun represents the king, the president, the political leader. It can indicate the government in general and whatever favors or promotions may come through it. It represents law and order on lower or higher levels, rule and reason.

The Sun can represent spiritual authority and along with Jupiter help us understand the nature of the guru or the spiritual teaching we are most likely to follow. It shows our guiding light, principles, values and precepts.

The inner purpose of the Sun in the chart is to aid in our transcendence. It takes us beyond things, negating their limitation. It may raise us to a high level outwardly in life but will inwardly push us beyond that. It operates to negate all things into the self. The Sun tends to deny the ordinary activities of life but only to command the extraordinary, the highest, the best.

The Sun will further us in the highest or most grandiose human strivings. It will give the power of independence, the capacity to become a value or a light unto ourselves and will promote the growth of intelligence. While destructive of form and expression, it elevates the being and the intrinsic worth of things. It does not always give abundance but does give quality. It gives power, fame, mastery and glory but not always wealth or emotional happiness.

In Sanskrit, there are innumerable names for the Sun. Most commonly he is called "Surya", which means the father, progenitor, enlivener, impeller, the source of will, energy, motivation and inspiration, like the Greek Sun god Apollo.

THE MOON

"The Moon is watery and airy (kapha and vata) in constitution, she is intuitive and has a round body; she has a luminous countenance, sweet speech, is changeable and moody."
Parashari 3.24.

As the Sun represents the cosmic masculine force, the Moon indicates the cosmic feminine force. The Sun is the God and the Moon is the Goddess; the Sun is the Deva and the Moon is the Devi. The Sun is the spirit and the Moon is its creative force, which becomes matter; the Sun is Shiva and the Moon is Shakti. Together, they represent the great primal duality as masculine and feminine, active and passive, mind and body, day and night, independence and relationship, will and love.

As the Sun is the Divine Father and creator, the Moon is the Divine Mother and creatrix. As the Sun rules time, the Moon governs space; as the Sun rules fire, the Moon rules water.

As the Sun is the Self, the Moon is the mind. According to the Vedas from the Moon the mind (Sanskrit manas) was born. Yet the Sanskrit term for mind has a different meaning than the usual western one. Mind includes emotion and means feeling; consciousness in general that reflects upon things. It means thought, care, consideration, as well as musing, dreaming, imagining. As the Self is the point of central clarity and perception, the mind is the field of conception and manifestation.

The Sun represents the Self, which is our independent, directly perceiving consciousness. The Moon shows the mind, which is our dependent, reflective, usually conditioned consciousness. As the Sun represents who we are in ourselves, the Moon shows how we relate to others, our social consciousness. As the Sun represents character or individuality, the Moon indicates our personality.

The Sun shows the causal body which indicates the will of the soul to be achieved in incarnation. The Moon shows the astral body, the field of impressions or past karma operative behind the present incarnation. Hence the Moon is an important karmic indicator.

The Sun represents the present and future, the Moon, the past. The Sun shows who we are and are meant to be. The Moon shows who we have been and what of the past we bring with us. Hence the Moon can show positive resources from the past which give us greater consciousness in life, or it can show negative influences from the past that bind us to regressive patterns of behavior.

Afflictions to the Moon show personality disorders, difficulties in relating to other people and emotional disturbances. A badly placed Moon gives wrong imaginings, hallucinations, psychological turbulence. It creates lunacy, as our language reflects. A badly afflicted Moon shows bad heredity, poor family background, bad education and other traumas to the emotional nature that may be very difficult to overcome and may indicate severe imbalance or disruption of the astral body.

The Moon shows our capacity to receive, to be affected, but it also indicates our capacity to be hurt. It is the most easily hurt of the planets and indicates our general vulnerability.

A strong Moon, on the other hand, shows sensitivity, receptivity, caring for others and a nurturing attitude in life. It gives emotional maturity, responsibility and the capacity to have a beneficial effect upon society.

The Moon, like the Sun, is a Sattvic or spiritual planet. It gives faith, love, openness, surrender, devotion, peace and happiness. It imparts the grace of the Goddess, the Divine Mother. It makes us pliable, sensitive and contemplative. It causes us to do good for the sake of others and to be obedient to higher principles. People with such a religious or spiritual Moon often have a strong connection with a traditional religion and may have had many monastic past lives. They have a sweet, tolerant and humane disposition, which can even become saintly. They are often the easiest people to be around and the least critical. They will tend to see the good in all.

The main weakness of the lunar type religious or spiritual mind is that it may cause people to be too orthodox. They may rely unquestioningly on an authority that does not represent the truth. They like organization, ritual and tradition and represent the best of it, but when that tradition has become negative, they are often unable to question it, much less break away from it. They may be too concerned about being good than about finding the truth.

As a very sensitive and mutable planet the Moon can be easily influenced and overcome by other planetary energies. Saturn can darken it, depress it or give it detachment. Rahu can cloud it or cause us to lose power over our minds which it rules. The Moon represents our impressionability, our capacity to become whatever we influence we give ourselves over to.

The Moon is not only responsiveness but also inertia. Through our lunar sensitivity we can become accustomed to a life of pain, sorrow or ignorance, as well as to one of joy and truth. The Moon is our capacity to endure in any environment, which can become a negative factor, whereby we accept subordination, subservience or degradation.

The mind is purely a dependent consciousness. It has no real nature of its own. As such it can function in one of two ways: it can reflect the inner nature of things or the outer appearance. It can mold itself after the inner light of truth, the spiritual Sun, or external influences and authorities, the outer or social lights (which the planets can project upon it).

In its higher nature as pure, receptive awareness the mind is one with the Self, the Moon and Sun are one in function, and the consciousness of the human being is integrated. Such a well-placed and spiritual Moon is found in the charts of yogis and other conscious individuals.

In its lower nature as impressionability to mass influences and collective traumas, an ill-placed and malefic Moon is found in the charts of criminals, the insane or those suffering from neurological disorders.

As indicating the feminine nature in general the Moon can give beauty and attractiveness. It can make for a good wife or homemaker as well as mother. When more intellectually disposed it can give a broad grasp of many fields of knowledge and often, like Venus which resembles it, give artistic accomplishment or religious devotion.

On the level of human relationships, the Moon represents the mother. Through it we can read her nature, her influence and her longevity. It also shows our birth and through it we can read the difficulty or ease of our birth and the factors which brought it about. It indicates the home or where we feel at home. It shows happiness and the state of the emotions. It shows where we place our love, care, general affection and friendship in life.

The Moon gives love and friendliness to all. Such a benefic Moon is often found in the charts of doctors, healers or psychologists, as well as good mothers and wives. It is the capacity to focus our attention on another and their needs.

The Moon gives us sensitivity of human feeling, a strong social consciousness and a need to exchange emotions. It makes us require that our feelings are recognized in life and shared by others. While the Sun stands alone, the Moon is the friend of all. Hence the Moon measures our popularity, our social status and our capacity to influence the masses. In this capacity it is, like the Sun, an important planet for political and social power and prestige. A strong Moon can give power or preeminence like the Sun. A strong Moon can outshine the other planets, sometimes even the Sun. Whereas the Sun creates the king or strong-willed leader, the Moon creates a good administrator or a leader open to the needs of his people.

The Moon indicates relationship, interchange, communication. It shows our general propensity for relationship and how we receive others and view society. It also gives creativity and expression to the mind, the capacity to influence others as well as to be influenced ourselves. It can be used as a general measure of our creativity or self-expression.

While the Sun projects the seed, it is the Moon which gives birth. While the Sun stands alone and overcomes any planet with which it is associated, the Moon brings together and accepts into herself whatever planetary energy she is conjoined with. While the Sun measures our independence, the Moon reflects our dependency.

Lunar people are friendly, caring, nurturing, but not always honest, consistent or clear. Lunar people work through cooperation and mutual help, family and friends; solar people rely upon the power of their own character, the strength of their own will. As solar types may become egoistic, lunar types may become circumscribed within a family, clan, group or belief and be unable to work with anyone outside it.

The Moon is our social nature and indicates our social concerns in life. It indicates our popularity, the Sun does our prestige. It shows the effect of our personality on others, as the Sun shows how we uphold our individuality even against others.

The Moon governs water; water as a psychological symbol, water in our own body, or water in the world. She sustains our fluidity of body and mind. She allows us to flow. As such she is the creative flow of life, the stream of awareness, the waters of creation from whose well we must drink to find contentment in life. She is the water of delight which bestows happiness in life. In her influence is love and communion.

The main name for the Moon in Sanskrit is "Soma". This refers to our inner nectar of happiness which alone has the power to calm the mind and refresh the nerves. The Moon gives the inner contentment through which alone longevity and rejuvenation can proceed. She is the general beauty, bliss, communion and communication from which the more specific energies of Mercury and Venus arise. The Moon is also called "Chandra", the giver of delight and rhythm as the great cycles of nature, like that of the tides, reflect her.

MARS

"Mars is cruel, has blood red eyes, is ill mannered, yet generous, is bilious (pitta) in constitution, is prone to anger and possesses a thin waist and body." Parashari 3.25

Mars is the great planet of energy. As Venus governs our affections, our emotional and vital impressionability, Mars relates to our passions, our emotional and vital capacity for self-projection. We could say that Venus governs our incoming emotions, our capacity to receive emotion; Mars rules our outgoing emotions, our capacity to project emotion.

Mars is the male and Venus is the female. They are the positive and negative, the active and passive sides of our feeling. Venus is emotional sensitivity, which can become refinement. Mars is the planet of emotional excitability, which can become violence. Thus, generally, Venus is the benefic and Mars is the malefic side of the emotions.

Whereas the Sun and Moon represent our masculine and feminine natures generally, Mars and Venus do so specifically. They are planets of sexuality and the relationship between the sexes can be read through them, whereas the luminaries have a parental influence, from a more general male and female nature. When the influence of Mars and Venus combines, particularly in fixed signs, the sexual drive can become very strong and may dominate the nature.

Mars is the planet of power, strength, courage, aggression, which measures our ability to project force in life. On the positive side, a strong Mars is necessary to give us the energy, independence, will and self-confidence to carry out our endeavors--qualities it shares with the Sun. Without it we have no real interests, passions, motivations, determination, no real intensity or ability to carry anything out to the end and really accomplish it.

On the negative side, this same aggression brings about competition, argument, conflict--and when not checked by other factors, causes domination, control, violence and injury, a placing of our own personal will-to-power over the good of life. As such, Mars has always been well known as the great God of War. He can make a person militaristic or violent, turn them into a soldier or general, even a criminal if more malefically disposed. He can cause us to inflict death on others. He can also, if he afflicts the factors representing the self in the chart (like the Ascendant and its ruler) bring violence, injury and accident upon ourselves. He can cause our death.

The malefic nature of Mars is well known in most instances of violent death, whether accidental or intentional. Mars also can indicate premature death in a chart, as with the loss of the partner (particularly the loss of the husband for the wife, widowhood). He is the general significator for injury, accident, conflict and enmity. Mars creates misunderstandings, arguments, litigation. In this regard Mars is the selfish will that does not take into account the views and needs of others.

In a more positive light, these difficulties come about because Mars insists upon greater independence, differentiation and clarity of views. He makes us more certain who we are and who our friends are. He causes discontent and seeking until we discover the real source of power within us.

Mars is the significator of brothers, friends and alliances. These include any association of common interest to achieve a common goal. In a lower sense, it is the alliance of soldiers (or lower yet, thieves). But that Mars energy of working together in discipline to achieve a common aim is necessary for any common endeavor. Mars is the leader or the central energy of determination, upon which the right organization of forces depends. All energy requires a focus for its proper application. Mars gives us this direction.

Mars indicates arms and muscles and gives physical prowess. A good Mars is necessary for physical strength and athletic performance. He gives sexual vitality to the male. A weak Mars can cause impotence or lack of manly characteristics.

Mars is a critical, perceptive and discriminating planet. His power of argument may, on the positive side, can give good skills at speech, oratory and the good logical faculties. The lawyer, the politician and the scientist need such a strong Mars. With logic and science, Mars gives mechanical skills. He is the machinist, the engineer, the miner, the chemist, the electrician. He invents things to help us get things done better.

As giving insight Mars indicates knowledge and, in the higher sense, can direct us towards a yoga of knowledge, particularly one that employs much self-discipline or asceticism. A strong and spiritual Mars is good for the practice of rituals and yogic techniques, methods of directing occult and spiritual energies. We find such a Mars in the charts of those drawn to energetic yogas or Tantric practices. Mars types like a more dramatic, challenging and daring path in all fields of life.

Mars rules tools, weapons, machines and their usage. He is the planet of work, effort--research and development. Modern culture based upon technology has had a strong Martian influence; hence our tendency to war and monstrous weapons. Technology and war go together as aspects of Mars energy we have not yet understood or controlled properly. Mars causes us to develop energy but it does not necessarily give us the wisdom or love to use it properly. It tends to regard power as an end in itself when it is only a means.

Mars is the son of the Earth in Hindu mythology. Hence he is called Ku-ja or Bhumi-ja, the one born from the Earth. He is the flame hidden in matter. His energy demands manifestation in material form. But he can also bring out some of the negative or dark sides of the Earth energy, the titanic primordial powers, the Asuras or demons of the abyss, who wish to destroy the creation and brings things back to the state of raw chaos. This inertia or tamasic quality behind Mars energy must not be forgotten.

Combined with Jupiter, the positive side of Mars comes out as the capacity to make great achievements in life in harmony with law and truth. It creates the proverbial good guy who works selflessly for what is right, but who, however, may suffer from self-righteousness.

Combined with Saturn, its negative side usually predominates, creating selfish, perverted or criminal tendencies, particularly when there are no balancing factors. Where balancing factors do exist this combination creates discipline and the capacity for great accomplishments.

Mars is the planet of action. Yet it is not just action for action's sake, it is the planet of goal oriented action. As one's ultimate goal and highest value in life, so one's action. It is important therefore to subordinate our Martian energy, which is indispensable for a creative life, to spiritual principles and to the influence of more spiritual planets. In this way it can give the capacity for the practical application of energy on a spiritual level in yoga and meditation. It can give capacity for insight and inquiry on an inner as well as outer level.

In short, most of the qualities of Mars relate to his nature as fire. He can burn or give warmth, give light or create smoke, disturb or illumine, but unlike the Sun who is self-luminous, he requires some fuel to burn. We must make sure that his fuel is not the life or energy of another or the more refined aspects of our own being.

MERCURY

"Mercury has the best appearance, is witty, fond of jokes and laughter, and is learned. He takes upon himself the nature and constitution of the planets with which he is associated."
Parashari 3.26.

Mercury is the great messenger of the Gods. He is the planet which represents speech, communication and commerce on all levels. In his lower function he organizes and articulates material resources. On a higher level he connects us with our inner capacities, the powers of the mind.

As Jupiter generally represents the higher or abstract mind, Mercury indicates the lower or concrete mind, the intellect or informational mentality. However, Mercury is not limited to this. He also shows the higher mind in its discriminating ability and connects us with the Divine Word or word of truth. Mercury governs names. On a lower level these are the outer appearances of title and personality which are illusory. On a higher level they are the names of God which connect us to the true reality of things.

Mercury governs writing, education, calculation, thought. Mercury is the fastest moving of the planets and so is indicative of quick comprehension, facility, ease and plasticity in expression. Mercury provides for the quick correlation of ideas, the fast interchange of information or of things of value. He is mental and nervous energy in its articulate activity. He shows our intellectual powers and the degree of mental development in life.

Mercury is a child and indicates the state of childhood generally, particularly in the period between infancy and adolescence. Afflictions to Mercury may mean health problems in childhood, troubles in the home life or difficulty at school. The mind and nervous system, as well as the lungs may suffer.

As a planet of commerce, Mercury represents trade, or articles of trade, including money. Though not in himself a planet of wealth, he is helpful in both acquiring it and keeping it, as he helps us organize it. He is necessary whenever there is to be an exchange of ideas or commodities. He sees the value of open markets and free communication and is not restricted by boundaries of race, nation, caste or belief, but he can be attached to his own opinion, his calculations and his own gains and losses.

Mercury breaks down barriers between people and reveals a common humanity and common human needs. As such, he possesses a certain compassion and sense of equality based not so much upon sentiment as upon objectivity and practicality. Afflicted he is similarly willing to exploit everyone, though he will often improve their outer condition to some degree in the process.

Mercury is an important factor for determining our vocation, as that is what we do in life to communicate with others, our interchange with society. Mercury shows how we appear and how we function in the network of transactions that makes up the world of things and ideas. In this regard, his representation of our education or training in life comes into play. He is the child that is the father of the man.

Mercury is the most mutable of the planets. As such he easily takes upon himself the nature of the other planets with which he is associated, for good or for ill. He may value communication and public opinion more than truth, and become dependent on and defensive of whatever is the strongest environmental influence. He is the mind which has no real nature of its own but reflects whatever it considers to be the reality, which may be no more than the impressions of the senses.

A weak Mercury makes us rationalize things to suit our purpose. It creates immaturity, naivete and folly. It can create dishonesty, a lack of properly defined boundaries. This may make a person a thief, not because they are cruel, but because they do not respect anything as belonging to another. They take what they need according to a childish view of life that the world should provide for them. They have no objective perception and are caught in childish fantasies and may even believe that what they have taken was really given to them or merited by them.

In this regard, Mercury is like the Moon. He is the child of the Moon. He is the mind which does not perceive but can merely organize ideas. If the mind orients itself towards the perception of truth, the vision of the eternal, then it will see the falseness of the external world and the reality of the inner consciousness. If it orients itself to the images of the senses as reality in itself, then it will see the outer world as real and create a scientific view of life. If, however, it orients itself to our selfish fears and desires as reality, it will create illusion, a neurotic or even schizophrenic view of life.

Mercury is the rational conscious mind which is still only the most articulate part of the subconscious mind (the Moon). True consciousness is not of the mind but transcends thought.

In Sanskrit, Mercury is Budha, which means intelligence or cognition, and relates to the Buddhi, the faculty of determination whereby we discern the real from the unreal (fully awakening which one become enlightened, a Buddha). When this faculty judges reality not by appearances but by discerning the transient from the eternal, then it functions rightly and the higher power of Mercury is revealed. When it discriminates names and forms we become caught in the apparent reality of the external world.

In the higher sense, Mercury is this faculty of truth determination which discriminates the real from the unreal, the pure from the impure, the truth from illusion. This is the most precise and perfect functioning of the mind. In this higher activity, Mercury, the mind, is Vishnu, the pervasive consciousness who is also the Divine son, the guiding cosmic intelligence and source of the great teachers and avatars.

A well-placed Mercury is of great importance in life. Our Mercury establishes our values in life. Material values, like prices and standards of measurement, artistic values, as well as spiritual values like seeing all life as sacred, are different aspects of the value sense of Mercury.

A good Mercury also gives good humor and psychological balance. It imparts a mental adaptability that is also playful. He is the trickster but can become deceptive. When afflicted Mercury becomes the fool, the idiot. Sometimes, even when wise, he will play the fool to express his adaptability and wit and to learn what would otherwise be hidden from him. Under a strong negative Saturn influence Mercury can lose its power and show lack of intelligence.

Afflictions to Mercury do not always give lack of intelligence or intellect, however. They may cause some other harm, like speech defects, nervous system disorders or neurosis. Intelligence can be given by other planets, like Jupiter, but without a strong Mercury there will be difficulty in expressing it, particularly through the written word. Mercury determines our expression in life. Of what value is what we do or who we are if it cannot be in some way communicated or shared?

Mercury is very important in modern culture and one of its most beneficial powers--the need to establish open communication that must lead to a world culture. Telephone, radio, television and computers are products of Mercurial needs aligned with the engineering capacity of Mars. Yet so far we remain caught in the lower domain of Mercury and are only sharing superficial wealth and information, not communing with our deeper Self. We are swamped with massive and usually trivial data through the development of the lower Mercury principle through the mass media.

Astrology itself requires a strong Mercury for its needs of calculation and communication. As our principle of balance Mercury is often the point at which we can change our lives for higher purposes.

JUPITER

"Jupiter has large limbs, is heavy, has yellow hair and eyes; his constitution is phlegmatic (kapha), he is intelligent and endowed with all the branches of learning."
Parashari 3.27.

Jupiter is well known as the most helpful, generous and benefic of the planets. His grace has always been sought by the votaries of astrology. In Sanskrit, he is called "Guru", the spiritual teacher or the guide. He signifies dharma, the law of our inner nature, which is the law of creative evolution and self-realization. He shows our principles in life, our guiding light of truth. The extent to which one has this can be measured by the disposition of Jupiter in the chart.

He is the planet that indicates such domains of principle as law, religion and philosophy. He is a spiritual and ethical (sattvic) planet, which insists upon the pursuit and support of the good. He establishes our good in life and through his influence that goodness comes to us.

Jupiter is the planet of intelligence; not intellect which depends upon information or refined discernment (indicated more by Mercury), but formless intelligence which goes back to eternal laws, ultimately to the sense of the eternal itself. He represents our sense of the enduring and the extent to which we are aware of, live according to, and manifest cosmic intelligence. He represents the immanent Divine spirit which establishes and upholds even the laws of nature.

Jupiter is the planet of creativity; as intelligence is creative. He signifies outer creativity, as our children, our son, our progeny. From Jupiter the state of our children is to be ascertained; their number, sex, health and our relationships with them.

Yet he is also creativity in the inner sense. He gives powers of expression through solid principles which can produce anything from philosophies to institutions (not so much art, however, which is under Venus). Creativity springs from our inner principles, which are determined by Jupiter. He is expansive and loves to share. Hence his constant delight is in greater unfoldment.

As Mercury tends to show our outer career in life, how we relate to society on a practical level, Jupiter indicates our inner career, where we really find our personal fulfillment and what we enjoy doing. He indicates our spiritual mission in life as Mercury represents our outer expression. With a good Jupiter but without a good Mercury, one may be wise inside but will outwardly appear unwise. Jupiter does not give attention to detail like Mercury and so may not allow us to articulate ourselves with clarity. His concern is more with doing the work right than with explaining how it is rightly done.

Jupiter represents joy in life, joy in living, the positive spirit. He is the great optimist who always sees the good. In him all sorrow, depression and melancholy is overcome or turned into a learning experience.

Jupiter is the planet of luck, grace, favor, fortune. He gives wealth, abundance, prosperity and success. In the lower sense he gives fortune on the material plane, for it is the daring optimist who succeeds in the end. He also is indicative of good karma, unexpected rewards. Those who win at races or lotteries or have great inheritances usually have a well placed Jupiter.

In the higher sense, Jupiter is the Divine grace which can fulfill all of our needs without our seeking. He gives religious merit and spiritual beneficence. When Jupiter is with us, all life, all the universe is with us, as he is that cosmic and Divine beneficence.

On a physical level, he is the planet of health. He makes us active in a healthy way and attunes us with the joy of nature. He gives vigor, vitality and a strong immune system.

On the negative side, however, through the expansive Jupiter nature, when it is afflicted, we can become overly optimistic. We will imagine the best and not guard ourselves properly. We will be vulnerable to the deceptive schemes of others. We can over extend ourselves, go beyond our resources, be overly generous or spend too much. Our speculations will prove faulty. We will try to do too much and succeed in nothing. We may suffer from unexpected bad luck, bad karma, trouble with authorities and institutions or loss in litigation.

Too much of Jupiter can make us too materialistic, too enamored of wealth and caught in conventional values and beliefs. We may become self-satisfied, too content and caught within the status quo. Jupiter is a fun loving and joyous planet but when wrongly placed can get us caught in the pursuit of pleasure and luxury much like Venus. Though the pleasure of Venus is largely sexual, that of Jupiter is largely of groups and crowds.

Jupiter likes music and can indicate musical talent. He likes shows, ceremonies, parades, rituals. He can make us into a showman. On a lower level, he like parties and can make us self-indulgent. His influence can make a good entertainer or even a rock musician, with his love of expansive energy and noise. His happiness is in sharing, even when unspiritually oriented, he will still cause us to drink with our friends and pay for the drinks.

On a higher level, he indicates the priest and is concerned with propriety, formality and hierarchy. He can make us enamored of ceremony, ritual and display. Hence in Sanskrit he is also called "Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati", the original priest or Brahmin. Jupiter is the great planet of aspiration. It shows our faith in life and can indicate the religion we follow or the form of the Divine we are naturally inclined to worship.

Jupiter shows our devotion and dedication in life. As such, for the woman, it signifies the husband. In her chart it will show his nature, health and her relationship with him. However, this is more true of Hindu society where marriage has followed family and religious sanction. For westerners, where marriage is more owing to choice or passion, Mars often is more indicative of the partner for the female.

Jupiter reveals the expansiveness of our spirit, just as Saturn indicates our capacity to contract or concentrate. It is no wonder that people all over the world have always sought the energy of this planet for inner as well as outer prosperity and creativity. It is the energy of grace in our chart which we can use to further our aim in life, which should be the aim of life itself for the overflowing of beneficence and love.

Jupiter's influence functions on a higher level if tempered with that of the Sun or Saturn, which are more stern and realistic. All planets represent energies which are one-sided in themselves and require the right balancing for true harmony, even that of Jupiter.

VENUS

"Venus is joyful in spirit, possesses a beautiful body, is splendorous and has lovely eyes; she is the inspirer of poets, is watery and airy in constitution (kapha and vata), and has curly hair."

Venus manifests the feminine spirit; she is well known as the Goddess of love and beauty. Our Venus shows our affection and sense of harmony in life. In the chart of the male, she represents the wife or lover. She is our appreciation of the beautiful and as such represents our aesthetic sense.

Venus is the significator of art, poetry, painting, music and dance. She is our muse in life, our sense of the beloved that draws out our creative expression. She indicates our sensitivity, refinement and gentleness.

On the lower or outward level, Venus shows our seeking for pleasure, comfort and luxury. She represents the pleasure of the senses and the comforts of the body. She is sexuality and sexual attraction and serves to make either the woman or the man more appealing to the opposite sex. She brings wealth as an adornment. She is beauty, style and elegance; the refinement of wealth and not just crude accumulation. Her concern is not just with quantity but with quality, with good taste. She likes gems, antiques and things of special value. She wants not just for the joy of possessing but to have the adulation of others.

Yet thereby she is also inclined to be vain, superficial and affected--mere show. She likes not only to exhibit herself and her own beauty but to display her adornments which serve to embellish her. She demands that we please her and that we be pleasing to her. She can become the pleasure that dissipates, exhausts and debilitates, the self-indulgence that can destroy us.

In this regard, she is the seductress. She is attractive and fascinating. The web of her power can catch our energy like a spider and drain away our fire, our positive will in life, pursuing her favor which is often fickle or hard to get, impossible to attain. She is dreamy, wispy and hard to hold, and thereby controls us by our seeking of her. She may never let us attain her for her joy is in being desired, not in being possessed.

Inwardly, Venus is the morning star, the light of inspiration which is the first spark of the Sun of truth. Venus is our aspiration to the good, the beautiful and the pure, our devotion to truth. She is our love that in its true nature is the love of truth. She is our sensitivity that becomes sensuality through its impressionability; but her basic nature is good.

Such a pure Venus comes out in association with Jupiter and Mercury. Her vain side manifests in alliance with Mars, which causes an excess of passion, emotion, sexuality and sensuality.

Venus shows our natural tendency to beautify things, to make things reflect their pure or astral forms. Our Venus works on our world to help bring it into harmony with its inner meaning as a play of delight. For Venus all is play (which on a lower level means "all is show"), and it is the pathos, the drama of the play that matters to her, not any practical or objective reality. Venus gives the sentiment that would sacrifice a kingdom for one's true love. The gods, the devas, are Venusian creatures and through them is the play of beauty in the world.

Venus represents the higher astral and is the star of our astral light. She opens us up to the kingdoms, the realms of beauty of the gods. These include not only the realms of art and myth but also many psychic abilities, powers of visualization and creative direction of the mind force. On the highest levels she opens us up to the heavens of devotions, wherein we can commune with the Divine in the form that most appeals to us.

In Indian mythology Venus is the teacher of the demons or titans, the Asuras, as to subdue and influence them cannot be done by force but only by charm and grace. Venus also gives power. It is not only the power

which fascinates but the power to move and to motivate. A strong Venus gives sexual power which on inner levels can be transmuted into astral or spiritual power and strength of will. A strong Venus can give charisma or power of personality. This may be a capacity to inspire. It may just be a giving of enthusiasm. But it can also be the power to hypnotize and thereby deceive. Venus can be the sorceress and has many forms of subtle power and allure to entrap us.

Venus was the main planetary deity of Egypt and Mexico, where Atlantean influence persisted the longest on this planet. Their calendars were based upon the cycles of Venus. The positive and visionary side of Venus came out in these cultures with the use of gems, colors and music. But the negative side also came out when these cultures declined into black magic and idolatry. This resulted in a sumptuous occult kind of materialism that aimed at both physical and astral pleasure. The majority of humanity were turned into slaves for the selfish pleasure of a few. Occult energies were turned towards this subtle astral indulgence. This caused a revolt of the earth energies and the higher Venusian forces which destroyed Atlantis in a flood, from the ocean itself that holds the power of Venus.

Modern culture is bringing out aspects of a negative occult Venus in the mass media, with its massive sensuality and cult of sex and violence. However, we will probably avoid the destruction that Atlantis suffered, though we will experience some major difficulties from our ignorance. It is important that we use this glamour force in the right way. It can heal if used consciously or destroy if used selfishly.

A strong Venus is very helpful in any chart, as it indicates capacity to love, sense of refinement, beauty and purity. Love is the strongest power, and in this regard Venus possesses the power to overcome even Mars. Venus gives vitality, the energy of delight. She is our portion of the Ananda, the Divine Bliss in creation.

Yet an afflicted Venus is one of the most difficult things to overcome the capacity to be taken in by appearances. This lower side of Venus is much in evidence in our culture with its emphasis on the pleasures of the senses. Even the artistic side of Venus has largely been reduced to this today with our emphasis on loud music, bright colors and showmanship.

We must discover Venus as the love of truth to overcome Venus as the love of appearance. For that we must seek the deepest nature of our love and not accept the image of glamour for it.

SATURN

"Saturn has a tall and thin in body, has yellow eyes and is airy (vata) in constitution; he has large teeth, is lazy, lame and has coarse hair." Parashari 3. 28-29

Saturn is traditionally the most difficult of the major planets, the legendary king of the malefics. He has been feared throughout the centuries as the great God of Death--the significator of death, disease, poverty, separation, ugliness and perversity. Though Saturn possesses a higher and more beneficent side, at least from the standpoint of the spiritual life, even this is stern and exacting, hard to live up to and to endure, a power of discipline, asceticism and solitude.

Saturn brings limitation and obstruction, hindrance in self-expression and in self-manifestation, which may become oppression and adversity. As Jupiter indicates the process of creation and expansion, Saturn brings about contraction and destruction. As Jupiter is the great affirmer, Saturn is the great negator. As Jupiter is the God of joy, he is the God of sorrow. As Jupiter is the optimist, he is the pessimist. As Jupiter shows the joy inherent in all life, Saturn reveals all life as misery. Jupiter is the positive teacher of the soul; Saturn is the negative guide. As Jupiter tells us that "all is God", Saturn drills into us that "nothing is Divine", that there is nothing truly real in the outer world. The religions of world negation, like Hinduism and Buddhism, have the influence of a strong spiritual Saturn.

Saturn is the significator of disease, old age and death; the great enemies of human life, which overcome all life bound by time. As the furthest in orbit of the major planets, his is the major influence we all must face in the end. Hence in the placement of Saturn in the chart is the ultimate issue of our life and destiny, the hard facts or stern reality we must face.

Though the power of Saturn to limit or destroy what it influences should not be underestimated, its positive value must as well be considered. Destruction is the necessary counterpart for creation, as is decay and death required for new life and growth. The limitation on our material fate is necessary: all material things must come to an end, what is put together must come apart and all things must return to their component elements. The four noble Truths of the Buddha and his doctrines of impermanence and universal suffering reflect the wisdom of Saturn.

Our great fear of Saturn has measured the degree of our attachment to the material world and our inability to face the ultimate issues of our existence. Saturn shows us the limitation of this realm, which is the necessary but painful lesson we must learn to find our way into the unlimited. Saturn is death that takes us beyond the limitations of mortal life, which is the gateway to the eternal, though straight and narrow as the razor's edge.

Saturn gives bad luck, misfortune, difficult karma. It is the planet of bad karma or unfortunate destiny. Yet these may come upon a soul not because it has been evil or slow to evolve in past lives. Some souls, particularly those who are more advanced, may seek such things as a means of quicker and deeper spiritual growth in life. Anyone can resort to the Divine in prosperity, but who can do so in great adversity? Such is the measure of a great soul. Saturn is also the suffering that makes us grow inwardly.

The influence of Saturn is to delay, to withhold. As the slowest moving of the planets he retards things, holds back their development. Those retarded in mind or speech are usually under a strong affliction of Saturn. He makes us deaf and blind, stunted or deformed.

Saturn is the significator of old age, the God of time, who brings on all the degenerative processes of aging, the failure of our faculties and our powers. As such a badly placed Saturn causes premature aging. Saturn takes away our vitality, on a physical or on a mental level. He causes depression, melancholy, self-pity and gives rise to worry, fear and anxiety.

As a nervous planet, Saturn obstructs nerve functioning. He may cause numbness, paralysis or degenerative neurological disorders. His obstructing and repressing influence on the mind may promote neurosis or insanity. Saturn is behind most diseases, particularly chronic, degenerative diseases, diseases of old age, including arthritis and cancer. As representing decay he can cause an accumulation of waste materials in the body and often is a point of devitalization in the chart.

Saturn causes poverty, deprivation, want. He keeps us in bondage or servitude, under the domination of others, under the rule of external forces. Yet Saturn also causes us to retain what we possess. Saturn indicates property, land, fixed assets. Those who obtain wealth through a well-disposed Saturn may become misers, and will carefully hold on to what has with such difficulty been acquired.

In the lower sense, Saturn, is a selfish planet. In fact, we could say that Saturn is the planet of selfishness. It indicates our most deep-seated and obstinate ego drives towards self-protection. Saturn is our survival instinct, which becomes our need to maintain our separate existence, and is more basic and stronger even than our sexual drive. Most of our materialistic values, like our need for wealth, are little more than glorified survival values and bear the limitation and poverty of vision of Saturn. They are caused by the influence of Saturn but as circumscribed by it are also destroyed by its disintegrating affect.

As the planet of the ego, Saturn is furthermore the planet of fear, upon which the ego is based. Saturn creates fear and darkness in the mind. It makes us feel that we cannot overcome things, that life is against us. He makes us doubt ourselves, doubt even the Divine and makes us prey to dark fears, fantasies and phobias.

Saturn represents the darker side of the mind and the baser elements of life: crime, perversity, paranoia. Saturn indicates the underworld, the lower astral realms. Its influence works through ugliness, terror and fright, through abuse, degradation and self-debasement. Saturn not only can cause separation from loved ones and loss of love, he can also cause sexual perversions and unnatural sexual actions. Saturn can cause us to pursue gross pleasure without any grace or associated with violence and the pleasure of harming others or seeing others in pain.

Usually a strongly malefic Saturn is prominent in the charts of criminals, perverts or evil-minded people. Its negative side comes out particularly in association with Mars, another cruel planet. There is no limit to the destruction the evil forces these planets can project when not under benefic influence.

On a lower level Saturn represents the gross body and the senses, the elemental forces which dominate us. It is the gravity that pulls us down and gets us attached to what is inferior.

Saturn is the God who eats his own children, who devours his own progeny. He raises people up, but eventually casts them down in a very precipitous fall. Those who are under the spell of his base values will eventually be destroyed by them. He shows the falsehood for what it is, in which there is the revelation of the enduring value of truth.

As the power of darkness and obstruction, Saturn is the enemy of the Sun and the Moon, and has an eclipse like affect upon them. Only Jupiter has the power to really subdue or to balance out his influence, though Venus and Mercury can refine it to a great degree. As Saturn is limiting, Jupiter is unlimited. As Saturn is miserly, Jupiter is generous. Both together allow for an equalized movement of expansion and contraction, creation and destruction, in which there can be true growth. As Jupiter elevates Saturn, Saturn gives Jupiter a greater detachment and more objective perception.

Saturn is not only in many respects the lowest of the planets, it is also the highest. Its lesson is the most difficult but the most rewarding. Saturn is the grandfather spirit and law giver, our guiding ancestor. He represents not only the negative influence of the past which constricts us, he represents the positive spirit of the past that brings order and consistency to our lives.

Saturn in Hindu mythology is the son of the Sun. The Sun moves in a chariot directed by Saturn. Saturn is the darkness, death and sorrow we must overcome for the revelation of the true light. He is the guardian of the mysteries of true awareness--which is only possible through a very precise and exacting cultivation of attention.

Saturn is the yogi in meditation. He can give complete detachment and independence. He is the one who stands alone and goes beyond the limitations of the masses. He shows the way of transcendence, though necessarily difficult, whereby all limitations can be overcome by resorting to our true and unlimited Self. In this respect the power of Shiva, the lord of the yogis, the god of death and transcendence may work through Saturn.

A well-placed and strong Saturn is thus necessary for the spiritual life. In fact, it is necessary for creating anything of enduring value in any domain of life. Saturn gives the concentration, the sense of detail, the discipline and seriousness necessary to deal with the great challenges of life.

Saturn is the significator of life itself. It indicates fate, term of life, longevity. A strong Saturn protects the life. Saturn is the planet to be propitiated in old age. He indicates the regime necessary for full life and longevity, violating which we suffer from premature decay and death.

THE LUNAR NODES

"Rahu creates smoke, has a dark body, resides in forests and engenders fear; he is airy (vata) in constitution. Ketu is similar to Rahu."
Parashari, 3.30.

Apart from the seven planets, Vedic astrology gives consideration to certain significant points of planetary relationship as minor or secondary planets. The two most important of these are the nodes of the Moon. The north node is called "Rahu" or the Dragon's Head; the south node is called "Ketu" or the Dragon's Tail. We will refer to these two nodes throughout the book as Rahu and Ketu, as it is a simpler nomenclature.

These two nodes are considered to be secondary or shadowy planets. Astronomically, they represent the points at which the Moon's orbit crosses the ecliptic, the celestial equator. These are the places at which the Moon crosses the point of the Sun's orbit, at which eclipses can occur. The lunar nodes show the times when the solar and lunar forces obstruct each other or cancel each other out. They show the potential for short-circuiting, as it were, our solar or lunar energies. They are thus very sensitive points that can have repercussions in the total field of planetary forces.

Rahu, the north or ascending node is the point at which the Moon crosses the ecliptic to the north. Ketu, the south or descending node is where it crosses it to the south. The influence of the north node is thus ascending, expanding, externalizing but of what is largely a negative force. The south node is descending, contracting and internalizing. Hence in the Vedic system the south node is less negative than the north.

Eclipses of the Sun and Moon can occur in proximity to either of the nodes. The nodes were regarded mythologically as the demon which swallows the luminary and causes the eclipse. As such, they have the power to overcome the Sun and the Moon, and in this sense can be stronger than any of the planets.

In Vedic astrology, therefore, the conjunction of any planet with either of the lunar nodes is regarded as a kind of eclipse of that planet, wherein its energy is in some way obstructed, negated or liberated.

While it is the practice of many modern astrologers today to overlook or consider lightly the lunar nodes, Vedic astrology regards them as among the most important factors in chart interpretation. They possess the power not only to negate planetary influences, but as the eclipses are points of energy transformation, they have additional special properties to transfer or to augment planetary influences, for good or ill.

THE LUNAR NODES IN WESTERN ASTROLOGY

Western astrologers correlate the north node (Rahu) with Jupiter and the south node (Ketu) with Saturn. They see the north node as generally benefic and the south node as malefic. They interpret the north node as a point of easy expansion of energy, leadership potential and good luck. The south node appears to them as a point of obstruction, limitation, thwarting of self-expression, loss of power and misfortune.

They relate the nodes karmically: The north node is seen as a point of good karma from an unselfish past life, in which the individual used their energies (usually represented by the planet aspected by the node) for the general good. The south node is regarded as a point of difficult karma from a past life, in which the individual furthered their own selfish interest at the expense of others.

However, they regard that the influence of the north node in excess can result in a dissipation of energies. It may cause us to become carried away by mass trends and collective influences (something like a badly placed Jupiter). The south node, on the positive side, they regard can develop strong concentration and mastery of abstruse or arcane subjects (something like a well placed Saturn).

The north node is regarded as showing the opening up of a new and positive karmic sphere; the south node shows completion of or limitation to an old karmic pattern.

THE LUNAR NODES IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY

The lunar nodes in Vedic astrology are a much more complex and studied phenomenon than in Western astrology. Their meaning is usually quite different, though under certain conditions it can be similar to that in the western system.

The lunar nodes, by themselves, are regarded as generally the most malefic forces in the chart. The north node, Rahu, is said to be like Saturn, the greater malefic; the south node, Ketu, like Mars, the lesser malefic. Yet the nodes have a subtler, more psychic and difficult to neutralize malefic force than these two main malefics. Of the two, the north node, Rahu, is regarded as more malefic, as usually the most malefic force in the chart.

That the two nodes are malefic is quite logical, as they indicate the factors which cause eclipses, which block out the light of the great luminaries, the Sun and the Moon. For this reason they are more indicators of bad karma than good. They may show when collective karma shadows the individual life and in this regard can represent collective catastrophes. Moreover, the south node as completing this karmic cycle is more generally fortunate than the north node that begins it because its energy is being internalized and withdrawn.

Rahu, the north node, which Western astrologers see as Jupiter, Vedic astrology perceives quite oppositely as a more malefic form of Saturn. However, it does recognize that the lunar nodes (either of them, but more commonly the north node) can function in a positive, Jupiterian manner, when associated with a strong planet or in a strong position. As shadowy planets they take on and magnify the power of the planets with which they are combined. The north node in the tenth house, for example, can often boost us up in our career influence but it may threaten our integrity in the process.

Rahu is regarded as the main planetary factor behind insanity, neurosis, neurological disorders, possession by negative entities and other such abnormal sensitivities of the mind and nervous system. This is particularly true when it influences the Moon, especially a conjunction, and other factors representing the mind (like Mercury and the fourth house). It can heighten our astral sensitivity which can be to weaken our soul's grip upon the physical body.

Personally, I have studied the influence of Rahu on many charts and seen the high instance of Moon-Rahu combinations in insanity, nervous disorders or criminal action. Note Moon-Rahu conjunctions in charts of such mentally disturbed and power seeking types as Jim Jones and Frederick Nietzsche (not to equate these two people together).

Rahu's manifestation is not always as severe, and may be counteracted by other forces, as anything in astrology. Yet its basic effect is usually as predicted in traditional Vedic astrology and seldom really Jupiterian.

The key to most nervous, psychological and emotional disturbances, susceptibility to drugs and psychic influences, mysterious diseases like cancer or neuro-muscular disorders, as well as most inexplicable general mental unhappiness and malaise and unrest in life, can usually be traced to the influence of these nodes, especially Rahu. This is particularly true when they combine with and augment the negative force of other malefics like Saturn.

Ketu, the south node, which Western astrologers treat like Saturn, is treated in the Vedic system like Mars. Though malefic, it is not regarded quite as malefic as it is in the Western system. Ketu creates doubt, disturbance, anger, ambition, willfulness, a critical and often narrow vision in life, which may lead to conflict and argument. While Rahu shows an individual carried away by mass trends, collective, unconscious or astral influences, Ketu shows the individual caught more in their own contracted energies, isolated, alienated, obstinately separate and on their own.

THE NEGATIVE SUN AND NEGATIVE MOON

As the factors which determine eclipses, the nodes are the shadows of the Sun and Moon (speaking here symbolically, not astronomically). The north node, Rahu, is the shadow of the Moon, or the negative Moon. It has the power to obstruct, negate, cover or darken the Moon (the mind). The south node, Ketu, is the shadow of the Sun or the negative Sun. It has the power to obstruct, negate, cover or darken the Sun (the self).

As the negative Moon or the negative side of the Moon, the mind, Rahu represents illusion, hallucination, trance, psychosis, paranoia and other such negative mental states. As the negative Sun or the negative side of the Sun, the self, Ketu represents self-doubt, lack of self-confidence, lack of self-worth, which can lead to self-aggrandizement, or, ultimately megalomania. It represents negative states of the Self.

Rahu has the power to overcome the Moon and Ketu has the power to overcome the Sun. They can limit other planets as well, though not to such a degree. Similarly, Ketu can obstruct the Moon; it may create certain violent fantasies or an attraction to the lower or more macabre side of life; alcoholism or something of that order. Rahu can obstruct the Sun; it may create confused imagination, indecision, illusions about oneself and the capacity to lose oneself to collective or psychic influences. But Rahu is more dangerous to the Moon and Ketu to the Sun. As having the power to overcome the Sun, Ketu is the most powerful planet in the chart besides the Sun.

Yet please do not overreact to these two shadowy planets. Their influence is only a portion of the chart. It seldom manifests the extreme negative side. But for unaccountable, generally psychological or neurological difficulties, please examine these two nodes. They explain much that is hidden or occult in life.

POSITIVE SIDES OF RAHU AND KETU

On the positive side, the influence of Rahu can put us in harmony with collective trends and give popularity, prestige, fame and power. It imparts an almost psychic sensitivity to mass trends and a capacity to use them. Ketu, in the positive sense, can create great powers of concentration, powerful perception, independence, the capacity to transcend external influences, psychic and spiritual insight. In terms of yoga and the spiritual life it ultimately becomes the signifier of liberation itself (Moksha karaka). Aligned with Mercury it gives good insight and is helpful in the pursuit of such subtle subjects as astrology.

The positive influence of the nodes, however, is less common than the negative and both tend to have a debasing effect upon us. Both nodes represent very difficult forces to handle, and their positive side may only come out through overcoming great obstacles in life and may have side-effects.

Rahu usually it functions best when placed in a strong house, like the ninth or tenth, with the ruler of that house powerfully placed elsewhere. There it can give fame, status and prestige. It may give this when strongly located in the first house also.

Ketu means a flag. It has the power to boost up the effects of strong planets with which it is conjoined. A planet in its own sign or exalted conjoined with Ketu gains considerable power. Venus in the second house in Libra conjoined with Ketu, for example, will give wealth or talent. With Mars in Scorpio in the third, Ketu can give great military prowess. Rahu can also function in this way but to a lesser degree.

A strong Rahu gives worldly powers and success, the fulfillment outwardly of worldly desires, but not usually inner fulfillment. It can give rise to such worldly desires that can never be fulfilled, however successful the individual may be--an outer good luck combined with an inner unrest.

Ketu gives sudden and unexpected results for good or ill, depending upon its placement. Well-placed it makes the individual strong but not necessarily sensitive to others. The lunar nodes like Saturn can increase base values in life, giving more selfishness, even though providing outer success. Hence they can get us trapped in the realm of the senses and in the abnormal or unnatural use of the body.

In the spiritual realm Rahu can give psychic powers, mediumship capacity, but also danger from drugs, danger of possession and danger from black magic. Ketu gives perception, liberation, wisdom, psychic sensitivity in a more genuine way but can give a too limiting critical view of things that gets us stuck in some corner of our minds.

Yet as the two nodes are always opposite each other, usually when one is strong or weak, so is the other.

URANUS, NEPTUNE AND PLUTO

The distant planets of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, more recent discoveries of modern astronomy, are not usually used in Vedic astrology, and quite effective readings can be done without them. Most of the influences they represent are determined in Vedic astrology according to the lunar nodes.

Pluto is very much like Ketu. It represents the negative side of Mars and is a psychic, willful planet. Its influence is similarly mysterious, destructive, negative, manipulative. It can lead us into danger or suffering, even death.

Uranus, like Rahu, is related to Saturn but does not so easily correspond to it as does Pluto to Ketu. Rahu is something like Neptune and Uranus combined. Rahu has the imaginative hallucinogenic side of Neptune along with energizing, shocking power of Uranus. The influence of Uranus is eccentric, erratic, disturbing and strongly individualizing force. It can force us into spiritual changes but may just derange us if we are not conscious of its power.

Neptune relates to the negative or secretive side of Jupiter and is a strongly sensitizing and often psychic influence. It has a subtle Venus like effect. It is the planet of imagination, illusion, fantasy, charm.

THE SIGNS

HOW THE PLANETS TRANSMIT THE INFLUENCES OF THE STARS

Vedic astrology employs the same twelve signs of the zodiac as in Western astrology. The meanings are similar, but their locations are determined sidereally, as we have mentioned.

THE TWELVE SIGNS

ENGLISH SYMBOL	SANSKRIT	ANIMAL	RULER
Aries (add)	Mesha	Ram	Mars
Taurus	Vrishabha	Bull	Venus
Gemini	Mithuna	Twins	Mercury
Cancer	Kataka	Crab	Moon
Leo	Simha	Lion	Sun
Virgo	Kanya	Virgin	Mercury
Libra	Tula	Balance	Venus
Scorpio	Vrishchika	Scorpion	Mars
Sagittarius	Dhanus	Centaur	Jupiter
Capricorn	Makara	Crocodile	Saturn
Aquarius	Kumbha	Waterbearer	Saturn
Pisces	Mina	Fishes	Jupiter

SIGN RULERSHIP

The signs reflect the meaning of the planet which rules them. The key to understanding sign rulership is that it reflects the orbits of the planets around the Sun.

Saturn	Aquarius
Jupiter	Pisces
Mars	Aries
Venus	Taurus
Mercury	Gemini
Moon	Cancer
Sun	Leo
Mercury	Virgo
Venus	Libra
Mars	Scorpio
Jupiter	Sagittarius
Saturn	Capricorn

Cancer and Leo represent the orbit of the Sun. Around these two signs are Gemini and Virgo, which represent the two halves of the orbit of Mercury, the first planet in distance from the Sun. Then follows Taurus and Libra, the two halves of the orbit of Venus, the next planet out from the Sun. Then Aries and Scorpio, the two halves of the orbit of Mars. Then Pisces and Sagittarius, the two halves of the orbit of Jupiter. Finally we find Aquarius and Capricorn, the two halves of the orbit of Saturn, the most distant planet from the Sun.

Each planet has two signs. The odd numbered sign represents the positive half of its orbit around the Sun, wherein it is increasing and expressing its energy; the even numbered sign represents the negative half of its orbit, wherein it is decreasing and withdrawing (interiorizing) its energy. Cancer and Leo represent the positive and negative halves of the Sun's rotation on its own axis.

THE MOON AS THE FEMININE SIDE OF THE SUN

Vedic astrology sees the Sun and the Moon as in essence one planet. The Moon is the feminine side of the Sun that has been emanated to the proximity of the Earth to nourish and promote life on Earth. The Moon is the incarnation of the Divine Mother who dwells in the Sun. It is no mere astronomical coincidence that the Moon and Sun have the same relative size from the Earth. It is part of the working of cosmic law. Eclipses of the Sun and the Moon can only occur because of this. They are not accidental but are points of energy transformation necessary for the development of life on Earth.

The interrelationship of the Sun and the Moon is necessary to maintain the balance of positive and negative, masculine and feminine, yin and yang energies on Earth. Without the Moon being the same apparent size and balancing that of the Sun, life on Earth would not be possible. The homeostasis necessary for life could not be maintained. The Moon allows the Earth to hold water and is responsible for the maintenance of the oceans. Through the oceans it allows for life, for the rains that nourish plants and for maintaining fertility in creatures. Its energy allows for the building up of our bodies and minds.

ODD AND EVEN NUMBERED SIGNS

The odd numbered of the constellations are the positive, masculine or active signs, the even numbered are negative, feminine, passive. For example, Aries, sign 1, is the positive or masculine sign of Mars, wherein its energy is outgoing, expressive, manifest. Scorpio, sign 8, is the negative or feminine sign, wherein its energy is internalized, hidden, acting behind the scenes. Generally planets are stronger in positive signs; that is, they can accomplish more. Odd signs have a more yang or solar nature and even signs have a more yin or lunar nature. Odd signs are more energetic or rajasic; even signs are more resistant or tamasic.

Both positive and negative signs are necessary; no distinction of high or low, good or bad is implied. The negative side of a planet is that portion of its orbit when it is gathering in cosmic energy; the positive side, when it is releasing it.

The planets exist to bring into the solar system their respective portion of the sevenfold cosmic energy from the stars. The planets are the dynamic principles, whereas the signs are the fields or tissues maintained by their movement. The solar system is an organism. The zodiac reflects the organic relationship of the solar system with the galaxy. The planets are transmission stations that bring in the seven rays from the galactic center, which digest them to allow for the evolution of the solar system and the development of intelligent life on Earth.

By this system, Vedic astrology cannot accept Uranus, Neptune or Pluto as ruling signs, as they are ascribed today in Western astrology to rule Aquarius, Pisces and Scorpio. This would destroy the sequence of orbits and the logic of sign rulership. However, these planets may be related to the signs in a less direct way. Pluto does appear related to the negative side of Mars, Neptune to the negative side of Jupiter, and Uranus to the positive side of Saturn. They can be considered co-rulers of these signs, just as Ketu and Rahu are often considered to be co-rulers of Scorpio and Aquarius, as their similarity to Pluto and Uranus would affirm.

We see, therefore, that the signs do not exist apart from the planets. Gemini, for example, is nothing but the energy channeled by Mercury in the positive side of its orbit; while Virgo is its energy channeled in the negative half. The energy sustained by the orbit of each planet is projected through two signs of the zodiac, two thirty degree sections of the sky relative to the Earth.

SIGNS BY QUALITY

Each sign relates to one of the three major qualities, what are called in Western astrology "cardinal", "fixed", and "mutable". In Sanskrit they are called Chara, "active", Sthira, firm or "immovable" and dual or "both natured", Dwiswabhaba.

These qualities relate to the manner whereby the individual directs his or her energy in life and is often reflected in the nature of the character. These qualities are much like positive (cardinal), neutral (fixed) and negative (mutable), as electrical charges. No quality is necessarily better or worse than the others. However, each has its energetic pattern and its characteristic imbalances that an individual dominated by it must master.

CARDINAL TYPES

Cardinal signs show the positive, active, dynamic, initial or guiding phase of their respective element. Cardinal quality corresponds generally with the quality of Rajas; it is the principle of movement, gives impulse, direction and expression but may cause disturbance, agitation and too forceful or too frequent action.

Cardinal types, those individuals who have planets predominately in cardinal signs, are people of action. They are positive, expressive, outgoing, and have a high sense of achievement and accomplishment. They are willful, aggressive, impulsive, dynamic and often become successful or leaders. Most high achievers or executive types are of this quality. While they can accomplish a great deal and often get what they want, they may be lacking in sensitivity or unable to reflect upon themselves or their goals properly. They may impose themselves on others or harm others along the way, or, at least, may not be sensitive to the feelings

of others. They can overextend themselves or burn themselves out through excess activity, movement and stimulation. As souls they may be beginning a new phase of manifestation.

Modern culture likes this type. They have self-confidence, seek advancement and direct their energy towards their goals in a powerful way. Many of our leaders, bosses and entertainers are of this type. Cardinal types need to cultivate more sensitivity, doubt, hesitation, introversion and develop more consistency and stability. They need to make sure that what they are directing their energy towards reflects their deepest will and aspiration and not get caught in action for its own sake. If they do this their capacity for inner development in life can also be very high.

FIXED TYPES

Fixed signs show static, stable, neutral, formal or enduring phase of their respective element. Fixed quality corresponds generally with to Tamas; it is the condition of form or substance, gives continuity and consistency, but may cause inertia, resistance and stagnation.

Fixed types are firm, stable and determined in who they are and what they do. They like to continue, preserve and uphold things. They are quite settled in themselves and often unwilling to modify their opinions or to question themselves. Their characters are firm, hard and can be unyielding. They are consistent, have strong faith and not waver in their beliefs. They can be like a rock which is not moved by things. They can be obstinate, fixated and incapable of accepting or even acknowledging any other point of view than their own. They may be conservative or traditional or at least may not see the possibility of another way of doing things. They are often possessive and may accumulate much in life, finding it difficult to let go. When highly evolved, they are souls who hold to the truth and have great faith. When less evolved, they may be insensitive, attached or resistant. They change slowly but what they alter will endure. They can be emotional, sentimental or have a strong feeling nature. Sometimes they are thoughtful but go more deeply into the ideas they already have, rather than develop new ones. As souls they are usually maintaining a phase of manifestation.

Fixed types need to develop more initiative, attempt more new things, particularly new ways of looking at things. At the same time they need to be more sensitive, adaptable and open. They must make certain that what they are holding to is the truth and not just some pattern of negativity, emotionality or selfishness.

MUTABLE TYPES

Mutable signs show the negative, transitional, unstable, undirected or malleable phase of their respective element. Mutable quality corresponds generally with Sattva; it is the subtle, transformative or refined state of the element, which may, however, cause instability, hypersensitivity and disintegration. (It should be noted that some Vedic astrologers associated fixed quality with Sattva, as it is stable, and mutable quality with Tamas as it is disintegrating, but mutable signs are the best for developing the mind which is of the quality of sattva)

Mutable types are flexible, adaptable and capable of many things. They often have many talents, interests, curiosities and skills. They are prone to be indecisive and may find it difficult to act. In addition may be inconsistent and unable to stick to things. They are often mental types and like to think, calculate, worry or reflect and can become too introverted or overly preoccupied with themselves. They more commonly suffer from mental or nervous disorders, immune system derangements and allergies. They are often agile on a physical level, particularly when young, but have poor endurance. They can be very talkative or communicative, though they may not have anything specific to say. They can be good businessmen by their ability to exchange things and can get caught in their ideas and calculations about things. They may be successful as performers, as they can modify the character that they appear to be, but are apt to be unstable. When highly evolved, they are capable of great sensitivity and broad comprehension. When less evolved, they can be erratic, unreliable and neurotic. As souls they are usually completing a phase of manifestation.

Mutable types need to have more initiative, daring and willingness to act. They need to set aside their thoughts and work through their actions. They also need independence, firmness, consistency and peace. Above all they need to direct their sensitivity in a more conscious direction so that they are not so easily disturbed by things, so that they use their sensitivity consciously as a tool, rather than have it react against them unconsciously.

QUALITIES OF THE PLANETS

In judging the qualities of the individual in the chart, we must note the qualities of the planets themselves. Even if most of our planets are in fixed signs, a strongly malefic Saturn may give much mutability to the nature, or cause our patterns to be broken no matter how strongly we try to make them endure.

In terms of these three qualities the Sun and Mars are more cardinal or active, liking to lead and to dominate. The Moon and Venus are usually more fixed or passive, preferring to yield or to endure. Mercury and Jupiter are more mutable or adaptable, liking change and development. Saturn in itself tends to be fixed, tied in inertia, but its affect on other planets is to weaken them or render them mutable. The lunar nodes also function as disruptive or mutable forces, unless well placed, in which case they strengthen the qualities of the planets they are associated with and can give cardinal strength. We should also note the quality of the houses (see section).

In addition, it is important to note the particular planets in the signs of each quality. A mutable Sun, say in Gemini, will give mutability to the will and character, even if the majority of planets are not in mutable signs. A fixed Mars will give a fixed energy and purpose, even if there are no other planets in fixed signs. Hence even if there is a relative balance of the qualities, the qualities will still have their affect according the planets which they rule.

SIGNS AND THE ELEMENTS

Each sign relates to one of the four elements of Earth, Water, Fire or Air, in one of the three modes of these major qualities.

As the signs show the field in which the planets operate, their elements show their different levels, the layers or densities of our being in which we function in life.

EARTH SIGNS

Strong planets in earth signs show a strong sense of form, order, utility, practicality and seek material manifestation or expression. They usually show a strong connection to or much work to do with the Earth, the body or physical matter. For example, we can find them in such diverse professions as gardeners, doctors, bankers or farmers, all who deal with something tangible in the material world. They may show work with the hands, a strong sense of form or work with the practical, informational or earthly side of the mind. They keep us in the realm of the senses and require that we use our senses in a clear manner. They demand that we develop mastery of the body. They can have a certain gravity to them or weigh us down.

On the higher level, they can give us the capacity to realize our inner potentials in the material world, to see things as they are. Here we find them in the charts of old souls, those who have much connection with traditional cultures (like India or Mexico) and who may be completing their cycle of evolution. Those who follow Earth or nature religions, like Taoism, or the American Indian path, may be of this type. On a lower level, they may tie us to the world or the body and place a shadow over us, even draw us into the underworld. Many souls just coming into this world, or up from the animal kingdom can be dominated by such coarser earth influences.

Well-placed planets in earth signs give practical efficiency, physical purity and the capacity for work. Poorly placed planets in earth signs constrict and block us and keep us tied to the harsher side of life.

WATER SIGNS

Water signs bring our planetary energies into the realm of feelings and emotions and often give love, affection and attachment. They can be instinctual or intuitive, depending on how we use them, and usually cause us to seek emotional regard and recognition. They can show much work to do on the level of feeling, with our psychology and with human relationship. They can give strong vital natures and promote the interchange of emotional energy between people. They indicate that our main fulfillment will come in relationship, which may be family, friends or social recognition, or even spiritual relationships. Charts with many planets in water signs usually have many people around them and they often provide a place in their house for people to come together or just hang out. They may find it hard to create boundaries between themselves and others and may lack clarity. Their lives may be in the sea, as it were.

On a higher level, water signs give wisdom, faith, devotion and compassion. They may be connected with astral worlds of art or devotion. On a lower level, they give sentimentality, greed and attachment. We may get drowned in the emotional issues we are not able to work out or do not want to let go of. We should note, that while water is creative, it can also cause decay.

Well-placed planets in water signs give positive feelings, love and creativity. Negatively placed planets breed deep seated emotional turmoil or stagnation.

FIRE SIGNS

Fire signs show strong will, ambition, determination, discrimination, perception and a critical mind. People with fiery planets often seek power and a display of force and drama. Their focus is more on the self and

character than upon the interchange with others. They like to be popular but to dominate, not to be on the same level with others as it usually is with water signs. They show that our main field of activity in life is in the realm of the will. We need to be certain of our motivation and the nature of the self we are projecting. Fire signs give us the need to develop real independence, clarity and understanding, not just to shine over or rule over others.

On the higher level, they give independence and insight, strong judgement and high values. Fire types, those with strong planets in fire signs, are able to penetrate into things and understand the underlying energy, motivation or force behind them. Fire signs give leadership, the capacity to make alliances, the ability to project warmth, light and beneficence. On the lower level, they may make us destructive. Our will may clash with those of others and bring us into argument and conflict. They may cause us to be vain, proud or self-promoting.

Well-placed planets in fire signs give illumination, freedom and enlightenment. They show the soul coming forth in its manifestation. Wrongly placed planets in fire signs can be burnt up and show the will in turmoil and complication.

AIR SIGNS

Air signs show versatility of movement and change, generally more on a mental level. People with airy planets are often intellectual or at least mental types. They seek communication and realization of ideas and ideals; their love is usually of knowledge. They are often speculative and not concerned with practical results. They may live in their ideas and calculations, plans and projections. They show much work to do in the realm of thought and communication. They seek to ascend but may not have the foundation for it. Their energies may get scattered or diffused.

On a higher level, they increase idealism and aspiration and the longing to go beyond this world. They can be philosophical or humanitarian in their outlook. On a lower level, they may keep us confused and ungrounded, not willing to face the facts about life or about ourselves. We may want to change things according to our own notions that may not correspond to any reality or truth of things. We may be attached to our mental patterns and nervous energy that may not reflect anything real.

Well-placed planets in air signs give comprehensiveness, balance and sensitivity. Wrongly placed planets in air signs have their energy dispersed. They show disturbance, uncertainty and lack of consolidation and may cause mental or nervous problems.

EXAMINING THE ELEMENTS IN THE CHART

For a complete understanding of the elements in the chart we must examine the elements represented by the planets themselves (see section), particularly that of the strongest planet. For example, one may have many planets in earth signs but if they are predominately fiery planets and strongly placed, especially, an exalted Mars in Capricorn, one will have much energy, enthusiasm and motivation (fire) to accomplish things in the material or practical realm (earth). Such a person we would say is "fire operating in the field of the earth". Their force or the quality of their nature would be more fiery but their realm of manifestation would be more earthly. Even their physical constitution would usually be more fiery (Pitta), though they would be active through the body, senses or the concrete side of the mind.

If the planets are of different elements than the signs in which they are located, a certain cancellation or overpowering of elements can occur. If an individual has Mars, Saturn, the Sun and the lunar nodes in water signs, for example, none of which has a watery nature, these planets may serve to negate the energy of water rather than to manifest it. They could even create air in the nature by this neutralization of water. Or, if such planets are weakly placed, water may serve to overpower the elements and qualities they normally possess.

Much of the nature of an individual and their issues in life can be seen in how the elements relate in the chart. We could examine these configurations element by element and planet by planet but there is not the space for it. For example, if a person has planets primarily in earth and air, there will be a battle between the practical and idealistic sides of the nature. If they are primarily in water and fire, the emotions and the will may be at odds. If they are mainly in earth and water, their energy will tend to sink or contract itself. If they are mainly in fire and air, their energy will expand, ascend but perhaps disperse itself.

The three qualities and the five elements are related. Cardinal quality is similar to fire; that is, energizing and expressive. Fixed quality is similar to water; gathering and stabilizing. Mutable quality is similar to air; fluctuating and communicative.

The signs share the attributes of their respective elements---

Air signs are light, subtle, mobile, dry and clear. They are expansive, expressive, relating, sensitive, but may cause dispersion and disintegration.

Fire signs are hot, radiant, light, sharp and clear. They are active, guiding, penetrating and separating and may cause combustion and destruction.

Water signs are wet, cloudy, cold, stable, smooth and soft. They are passive, yielding, receptive and calm but may cause stagnation and decay.

Earth signs are heavy, dark, hard, rough, static and slow. They are contracting, resistant, unyielding, unexpressive but also give stability, endurance, perseverance and loyalty.

USES OF SIGNS IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY

Western astrology tends to focus on the Sun sign. In Vedic astrology the Ascendant is the most important factor, then the Moon sign and third the Sun sign. This is logical because the Ascendant is the most quickly changing of all planetary factors. It changes signs in two hours, compared to two and a half days for the Moon and a month for the Sun. Hence it more directly reflects our individuality. As it is the point of orientation of the Earth to the heavens it also more directly reflects the meaning of our particular incarnation on Earth.

However, whatever sign has the greatest strength by aspect or association of planets will be the strongest in the chart. It may not be one of these three signs, though it usually is.

The signs are not irreducible elements. It is the planets which are the main factors. For this reason, in Vedic astrology we speak of individuals according to their most powerful planet or planets, not so much by signs. We judge individuals primarily by their planets.

Sometimes the strongest planet is not the ruler of the Ascendant, the Moon or the Sun. Usually if a planet aspects these factors and their rulers, it will overpower them. For example, Saturn as the strongest planet in the chart will give Capricornian traits, the traits of its cardinal sign, even if there are no planets in Capricorn. It is the qualities of the planets that are the essence of Vedic astrology. The signs are only one side of that.

The following delineation of the signs is general, mainly according to personality types. It is primarily as Ascendants that their qualities are described here, but the same indications apply as Moon-signs or Sun-signs, to a lesser degree.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGNS

ARIES

Aries is the positive sign of Mars, cardinal fire, the beginning of the zodiac and the head of the Cosmic Man (time personified), a ram.

As sign no. 1, Aries gives independence, force, self-expression and a strong personal orientation in life.

Aries types are dynamic, aggressive, competitive and possess much initiative. They often live in their heads and can have a penetrating power of perception. They have scientific and logical abilities and may be good at research and invention, the development of new ideas. They are independent, adventurous and skillful in what they do. They possess strong emotions and passions but usually remain in control of them. They are often willful, impulsive or headstrong and can be critical or opinionated. Yet they can make good psychologists once they learn to examine themselves. Less evolved Aries types may be angry, impulsive and manipulative, pushing their way in life and imposing their ideas and energies on others. They may be driven by their impulses and instincts.

Though martial, their martial energy is expressed more through the mind than the body. They are prone to argument but do not often resort to violence. They may be a vain, self-indulgent or just overly preoccupied with themselves. While very good at developing strategies, they may become victims of their own cunning. They can think about things too much and can give themselves ulcers. Aries types can be self-centered and are not always sensitive to others. They benefit from relationship to balance them out. They are usually initiating a new phase of manifestation. Their key to spiritual growth is to use their sharp minds to discover truth, not to promote themselves.

TAURUS

Taurus is the negative sign of Venus, fixed earth, the face and neck of the Cosmic Man, a bull.

As sign no. 2, it gives a strong sense of relationship, partnership and communication of feeling. Taurus types seek balance and harmony in individual relationships and in their organization of their immediate environment.

Taurus people are very stable, enduring and fixed in their ways. They have a strong sense of form and beauty and may become artists and poets. They are often attractive, particularly when young, and like to adorn themselves. They can be very possessive and may become businessmen, bankers or accumulate property. They are apt to be materialistic and sensual and like comfort, beauty, luxury or adornment around them. Yet they easily develop taste, refinement and grace. They communicate with others well and associate readily with foreigners. They tend to become obstinate and do not like to move from a position once they

have accepted it as their own. They are slow to anger but also slow to forgive and can even be cruel or insensitive to those outside of their circle of association. They possess good memories but may become sentimental or cling to the past. They like to live in their body and senses.

Taureans usually value stable and happy home and married lives. They can be very romantic and devotional and are often votaries of the idea that all is love. They are attached to the earth, often work with their hands and leave their mark of form on their practical environment. Their mode is to acquire, preserve and refine. Spiritually they are also more devotional and like tradition and ritual.

GEMINI

Gemini is the positive sign of Mercury, mutable air, the lower neck and shoulders of the Cosmic Man, twins or a couple (a man and a woman).

As sign no. 3, it gives an energetic nature with a seeking of change and interchange, motion and invention.

Those in whom the influence of Gemini predominates are often nervous, restless and agitated. They possess quickness and adaptability of body and mind but can exhaust themselves through excessive activity. They have good intellects, along with excellent powers of speech and communication and a good command of language. They may be writers, journalists or poets, or secretaries or computer programmers. They are good with information and statistics and may be scientists. There is a speculative side of their minds, however, and they can pursue ideas for their own sake or get caught up in their own unrealistic fantasies or worries. They usually love knowledge.

Geminis are as mobile in human relationships as they are in mind and tend to marry more than once or have several partners. They may be strongly sexually oriented but must be careful as their vital energy is not always as high as their imaginations. They love stimulation and novelty and can get easily addicted to media or computer influences. They like anything that excites their nervous system or increases their velocity in life but thereby they can become hypersensitive or become neurotic. Their agility of mind may cause them to become deceptive or unreliable and they can be tricky and hard to pin down. They may be indecisive and never bring anything to fruition. They are the most changeable of all types and always on the go, until their energy fails them. Once they come to seek inner knowledge rather than outer knowledge and sensation, they can become quite spiritual, as their energy is the most subtle and volatile of all the signs.

CANCER

Cancer is the sign of the Moon (an even or negative sign), cardinal water, the chest of the Cosmic Man, a crab.

As sign no. 4, it shows a need for mental and emotional stability and happiness.

Cancer people are usually open, friendly, sympathetic, caring and nurturing, as they are under the sign of the mother. They value human relationship and the exchange of feelings, particularly on an intimate and personal level. They usually have many people in their homes or friends coming and going, including cooking or caring for them. They seek popularity and are sensitive to the moods of the masses, through which they can gain social or political influence and recognition. Yet they may be over emotionally sensitive, shy, attached and dependent. They love their home and family but sometimes to the point of narrow mindedness. In the same way they can love their community, country or religion in an enclosure of feeling.

Cancerians are devoted, loving and intuitive, often sensing immediately the feelings of others. They can have powerful imaginations, yet may be bound by subconscious fixations and attachments. They are gentle, non-harmful but may become defensive or cowardly. They are just and frugal but sometimes lack in will, initiative and courage. They are receptive and can become contemplative when they open up to the spiritual life and are usually of a devotional bent of mind. Yet what they follow they will represent and project to the world at large. Once they feel connected they gain confidence, initiative and power and can shine over others like the Moon. Once they learn how to be receptive to truth, they can do great service in life and act with great power.

LEO

Leo is the sign of the Sun (positive), fixed fire, the solar plexus of the Cosmic Man, a lion.

As sign no. 5, it shows a need for order and harmony around a central will and character influence.

Leo individuals possess a strong sense of self, character and will in life. They know who they are and want others to recognize it. They are often proud, bold, ambitious and aristocratic. They respond strongly and personally to things and are dramatic, sometimes vain, in their self-expression. They like to attract attention and may talk a lot about themselves. They like to shine in social situations and may dominate others. They prefer to be the center of attention and value honor, respect and prestige. They are often strong souls and possessed of fine principles and good intelligence. They can be refined in their manners or philosophical in their outlook on life.

Leos have strong and noble hearts but can suffer from too powerful emotions or too much need for attention. They do not always do well in partnership and tend to form alliances with inferiors or to subordinate their partners to them. They may suffer from their children as they do not always give them enough independence. They like to turn others into satellites, who may in turn rebel against them. If they can control their pride they can develop much power of character that can take them through all the highs and lows of life and grant them a spiritual perception. Inwardly they can development the greatness of soul and character.

As they have a high standard for themselves they can become very dejected if they fail or do not succeed as much as they wish. Such fallen Leo types can be among the most miserable of people.

VIRGO

Virgo is the negative sign of Mercury, mutable earth, the intestines of the Cosmic Man, a virgin.

As sign no. 6 (2 x 3), it shows the need for balancing energy, particularly between body and mind.

Like their Gemini counterparts, under the influence of Mercury, Virgo types possess good intellects, command of the language and nervous sensitivity. They make good teachers and have a strong sense of the facts. They also can project the healing ray of Mercury and make good doctors, healers and can be good at yoga (particularly Hatha yoga). They are more physical than Geminis, like physical exercise and may excel as athletes. Their knowledge has a more practical or informational side to it and they are often good at trivia. Their knowledge is seldom theoretical. It is usually tied to some form or practical manifestation. They make for good craftsmen, draftsmen or artists, as they have a strong sense of form, line and detail. They may become actors, as they can easily learn how to discipline their expression and project their emotions. Virgos are more method actors than charismatic types, however.

Owing to their sensitive and changeable minds and nervous systems, they may become neurotic. They often suffer from a nervous or variable digestion and elimination. They are usually the weakest physically of the signs and can more likely come down with difficult to treat disorders or chronic diseases, particularly problems involving the nervous system. Their body-mind coordination may fail them. Sexually they tend to be shy when young but are prone to excessive sexual activity when older, though it is seldom open or freely expressed.

Virgos are often fussy, discriminating and exacting about details and like cleanliness and order. Their discrimination sometimes has a spiritual orientation and they can be good at philosophies like Vedanta that are built on purity and discrimination. They are possessed of good and factual memories. They are helpful and service oriented. They are good workers but can suffer from overwork or lack of recognition in what they do.

LIBRA

Libra is the positive sign of Venus, cardinal air, the lower abdomen of the Cosmic Man, the scales or balance.

As sign no. 7, it gives leadership, power and command of ideas.

Libra has a somewhat different meaning in the Vedic than in the western system. In its stronger manifestation it is the sign of reformers, revolutionaries, prophets, idealists and fanatics. Libra individuals have a strong sense of harmony, justice and balance, particularly in the realm of ideas. They want to see heaven on earth. They are sensitive, humanitarian, excitable and have the power to arouse and influence the masses. Their orientation is often political, in which sphere they often become leaders, even great generals. They love the truth and are devoted to their ideals but may go too far in their zeal and become propagandists. They have a strong sense of the world or history as a whole as moving towards some ideal. Their idealism may also express itself through art and drama, which for them becomes a vehicle of social change. They like fame and recognition and like to have an audience for their ideas and have a strong social sense.

Librans are usually attractive and have a charisma that may become sexual. They are not much concerned with home and family. But under the rule of Venus do like beauty around them, sometimes much like Taurus types. They like to have circles of beautiful or famous friends. They often like to live in the clouds and have strong connections with the higher astral plane. They can attune themselves to the love truth and thereby quickly learn to transcend the world.

By their sociable nature they are often successful and want to make a mark upon the world. They like business situations that give them administrative power or ability to influence others. Yet they can lose themselves in their goals and projects.

SCORPIO

Scorpio is the negative sign of Mars, fixed water, the sexual organs of the Cosmic Man, a scorpion.

As sign no. 8 (2 x 4), it shows a need for balance and stability on a deeper or psychic level.

Scorpio is a very profound and mysterious sign. As the negative or physical side of Mars, Scorpio people are often soldiers, policemen or athletes. They like to use their martial force on a physical level and can be prone to the use of force. They usually have good muscles and like to exercise. When mentally developed they have a good capacity for research and inquiry and may become chemists or surgeons. More evolved Scorpio types like to explore the depths of the mind and may have an interest in the occult and yoga (tantra). Their kundalini can often be easily aroused for good or ill. They may like trying to work with or overcome negative forces and see life as a battle between light and darkness, with which they may become obsessed. They are often fascinated with techniques or technologies for directing energy, either outwardly or inwardly.

Scorpios can be very intelligent and perceptive but prefer to remain behind the scenes or do not express themselves quickly (not because they are slow but because they are cautious). They can be good orators or debaters, and may become good poets, artists or actors by their ability to express powerful emotions. They are usually passionate and can be very attached sexually. When unevolved they are prone to vice, perversity or the underworld side of life and can become violent, emotionally or physically.

Scorpio types are intense, secretive, introverted and sometimes troubled. They have an active subconscious and must keep their emotions clear and pure, free of envy and attachment, or they can get stuck on an emotional level. Yet by this sensitivity they may develop a philosophical disposition and profound insight that the other types attain to rarely. They can be caught in their solar plexus and the accumulation of personal power. They need to surrender to the heart. The higher side of Scorpio is symbolized by the eagle, the profundity of vision and transcendence needed to subdue the serpent.

SAGITTARIUS

Sagittarius is the positive sign of Jupiter, mutable fire, the hips of the cosmic man, a horse, centaur or archer.

As sign no. 9, it shows grace, beneficence, completion and full harmony (3 x 3), the manifestation of the will in action.

Sagittarius individuals project the positive side of Jupiter. They have a positive attitude in life, an expansive spirit, a moral, religious or philosophical disposition. They have a strong sense of principle, law and justice. They are usually warm and friendly, dramatic and seek to develop their principles in life. They make themselves noticed and can easily become active or involved with the expansion of the social forces they open up to. On the other hand, they can be too conventional, too law-abiding and overly moralistic, caught in some dogmatic idea. They may become lawyers, religious leaders or successful businessmen. They like to be generous but like to stay within the convention of the society, or the group or organization with which they are involved. They possess critical minds and strong opinions but are prone to become self-righteous. Their minds may be too discriminating and fault finding and they may be unable to see their own limitations.

Sagittarians are often athletic, though not always competitive, like the outdoors, enjoy the wilderness, and become lovers of nature. They have a sense of play or even partying, which may become self-indulgence or group indulgence. They find it hard to settle down. They are lucky in life and things often come easy for them. The world often responds quickly and favorably to them. They can inherit much from father or family. They are a helpful presence in any enterprise, as they bring much enthusiasm and make good and devoted friends. Yet, however, successful they may be in the material world, they usually retain some sense of higher aspiration and are attracted to religion or the spiritual life.

CAPRICORN

Capricorn is the negative sign of Saturn, cardinal earth, the knees of the Cosmic Man, a crocodile.

As sign no. 10, it shows the state of power, order and complete organization.

Capricorn is often the lowest and the highest of the signs in terms of achievement in life. It is the sign of practical realization. On the material level, this can create much worldliness and obstinacy and make people selfish. Less evolved Capricorn types may be sons of the earth, farmers who know little beyond their farm. Somewhat more evolved is the hard headed Capricornian businessman who saves everything for some eventual great gain. On the spiritual level, Capricorn can give the capacity to manifest spiritual principles in daily life and practical work.

Capricorn types are hardworking, persevering, tenacious and have the power for eventual great accomplishments. They usually have to work for themselves and learn to value everything that comes through their own effort. They start slowly in life, often encounter many obstacles along the way, but thereby create the energy for long term success. They are ambitious but often narrow in their goals and rigid or cutting in their opinions. They can be shrewd at business and are often good in science and technology, with a strong mathematical sense. They tend to be traditional and may have much past life karma in traditional and oriental cultures.

They often need to learn more self-surrender, to take themselves less seriously and to be less concerned about the outer form of things. They are often detached from their emotions, either by lower sensate or higher intellectual or spiritual values, or by conventionality or just being caught in the senses.

AQUARIUS

Aquarius is the positive sign of Saturn, fixed air, the lower legs of the Cosmic Man, the pot or the water bearer.

As sign no. 11, it indicates the group and the need to understand what individuality really is.

Aquarius individuals are the most self-negative of all types. On a higher level, they have more faith and the capacity to surrender the ego to the Divine. On a lower level, they have more belief in others and tend to denigrate themselves towards the ego demands of others or peer group influences. For this reason, they tend more towards sexual deviations than the other signs. They are prone to do what they are told not to do and to befriend those they are told to avoid. In this way their energy can be blocked, dissipated, confused or darkened.

On a higher level, they are willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of all and may be strongly humanitarian. On a lower level, they may accept a subservient, servile or even degrading role in life, and not protest against the injustice inflicted upon them. They like to take the side of the oppressed, rejected, the outcaste or disapproved elements of society. They often have much guilt and like to blame themselves. They act selflessly relative to what they repose their faith in. If that is the Divine they may become saintly. If it is some criminal group, they can even become underworld leaders.

Aquarians may be eccentric and scattered in what they do, unclear as to who they are. They lack charisma and often fail as political leaders to attract the masses. Yet by their faith and devotion, they are often successful as religious leaders and teachers. The water they bring is that of truth from their intuitive perception.

PISCES

Pisces is the negative sign of Jupiter, mutable water, the feet of the cosmic man, the fishes.

As sign no. 12, it shows the complete display of all possibilities but not necessarily their proper integration.

Pisces individuals are emotional, expansive, intuitive and imaginative. They are enthusiastic but not always wisely so. They like to influence others but are easily influenced themselves and may be vulnerable or impressionable. They are friendly and communicative and like people and can relate to a variety of people. They can easily become dependent or make others dependent upon them. They are often sentimental and easily moved by feelings, including those that are not genuine. They are friendly and compassionate but can be moved by sympathy and pity. When frustrated in life, they often develop self-pity. They are usually attached to the past for good or ill and may accept the values of the culture and religion they are born into. However, they are susceptible to missionary type influences and like demonstrations of faith. They like ceremony and ritual, enjoy music and can be good musicians.

Pisceans often lack in boundaries and may not have enough clarity and practicality. They can be amorphous, hard to pin down and will appear so as to please others or reflect the influence of the moment. As a mutable and emotional sign, they tend towards emotional disorders and may have sensitive digestive and nervous systems. They are not often good leaders but make good followers or promoters. They can lack in self-confidence or they can have too many impractical ideas about themselves but wish to achieve a lot in life. They can become dependent on or addicted to sugar or alcohol and often need special acknowledgement or approval.

They need to control their imaginations and develop more discrimination. Once they do this they can reflect the creative joy of the soul.

EXALTATION AND DEBILITY

There is one sign in which a planet functions at its optimum, called its "exaltation". Except for Mercury, which both rules and is exalted in Virgo, this sign is different than the signs ruled by the planet. In Vedic astrology, there is a specific degree of exaltation, a point in the exaltation sign where the exaltation is highest. These points of exaltation are different for every planet. Planets occupying their degree of exaltation are preeminently strong.

These positions are--the Sun 10 00 Aries, the Moon 03 00 Taurus, Mars 28 00 Capricorn, Mercury 15 00 Virgo, Jupiter 05 00 Cancer, Venus 27 00 Pisces, Saturn 20 00 Libra. Rahu and Ketu are sometimes given exaltation points as 20 00 Taurus and 20 00 Scorpio (hence when one is exalted so is the other). By the views of other Vedic astrologers Rahu and Ketu are both said to be exalted in Gemini and Virgo, the signs of Mercury.

Exaltation is an important factor in determining the strength of a planet and the favorability of its sign location. By some systems the strongest planet in the chart is the one closest to its degree of exaltation.

The sign opposite that of exaltation is referred to as the sign of a planet's "fall" also referred to as "debilitation". The degree opposite its degree of exaltation is its degree of its fall. Planets in their of fall are weak and can cause many difficulties.

Planetary debility can be cancelled out by special factors. A planet with its debility cancelled can give very good results, perhaps even better than exaltation.

The Sun in Libra with its debility cancelled can give a strong, self-confident and expressive character. The Moon in Scorpio with its debility cancelled can give a very deep understanding of the psyche and is common in spiritual teachers, occultists and psychologists. Mars in Cancer with its debility cancelled can give mastery over the feeling nature and the capacity for profound relationships. Mercury in Pisces with its debility cancelled can give a very profound intuitive mind and much insight. Jupiter in Capricorn with its debility cancelled can give great wealth, political power or the capacity to influence others. Venus in Virgo with its debility cancelled can give good artistic powers and charm. Saturn in Aries with its debility cancelled can give strong powers of leadership and strength of will.

The first of such cancellation factors is if the debilitated planet is located in an angle from the Ascendant or the Moon. The point of the Midheaven is often strongest in this regard. If Mercury is in Pisces but in the tenth house its debility is greatly reduced by its angular location.

A second factor is if the ruler of the sign in which a planet is debilitated is itself exalted. For example, if in a particular chart, the Moon is located in its fall in Scorpio, but Mars as ruler of Scorpio is located in its exaltation in Capricorn, this can cancel the debility of the Moon. To a lesser extent, if the ruler of the debilitated planet is strong or in its own sign, the debility can be reduced. For example, if the Moon is in Scorpio but Mars is in Aries, the strength of Mars in Aries would help counter the weakness of the Moon.

Another helpful factor can be if the debilitated planet has a planet exalted in one of the signs it rules. For example, if the Mars in a chart is in its debility in Cancer but the Sun is in its exaltation in Aries ruled by Mars, the strength of the Sun would reduce the weakness of Mars. A less important factor is if a debilitated planet is retrograde. Generally debility must be cancelled in at least two ways to be effectively countered.

On the other hand, the exaltation of a planet can be cancelled similarly to the debility. The exaltation can be cancelled if the planet is under malefic aspect, in difficult houses, or is the dispositor of malefic planets. Retrograde motion may reduce it as well. A planet in exaltation but neutralized gives very poor results.

If in a particular chart, Saturn is debilitated in Aries, a sign ruled by Mars, but Mars is exalted in Capricorn, a sign ruled by Saturn, their effects would tend to neutralize each other, or the planet which is stronger in the chart would give more its results. This is because each planet would rule the sign of the other. If, however, the Moon is debilitated in Scorpio, a sign of Mars, but Mars is exalted in Capricorn, a sign of Saturn, the debility of the Moon would not taint Mars as Mars would be its ruler. The principle therefore is that the ruling planet or dispositor usually has more weight. Exaltation and debility are important but they are not absolute and must be looked at with discrimination.

MULATRIKONA

Mulatrikona means "root trine". These are special areas where a planet functions very well, almost as well as exaltation. They usually consist of some portion of the positive sign ruled by the planet. However, with the Moon it is part of its exaltation sign, as the Moon does not have a positive or odd numbered sign. With Mercury it is part of its own and exaltation sign Virgo, as it has no special sign of exaltation.

The Mulatrikona positions are--the Sun 4-20 degrees Leo, the Moon 4-20 Taurus, Mars 0-12 Aries, Mercury 16-20 Virgo, Jupiter 0-10 Sagittarius, Venus 0-15 Libra, Saturn 0-20 Aquarius.

DETRIMENT

In Western astrology a planet is considered to be in detriment if located in a sign opposite the one it rules, as Mars in Libra. Vedic astrology, we should note, does not recognize this. Location in a sign opposite a sign ruled by a planet is considered positive as it allows a planet to aspect its own sign by its main or opposition (180 degree) aspect. The rule in Vedic astrology is that a planet is strong if it can aspect its own sign. This is particularly true of planets which possess no special aspects. For example, the Moon in Capricorn can be considered favorable, as it is only from there that it can aspect its own sign, Cancer.

PLANETARY RELATIONSHIPS

The strength of planets in signs depends upon their relationship with the ruler of the sign in which they are located. Planets are strong in their exaltation, Mulatrikona or own signs. For other signs than these there is a system of planetary relationships for measuring the favorable or unfavorable connection between planets.

Planets are strong in signs of their great friend or friend. Planets are neutral in strength in neutral signs. They are weak in the signs of their enemy or great enemy, and more so in their fall (opposite exaltation). These locations in the harmonic charts (navamsha etc.) have to be considered and are a factor for determining residency strength (sthana bala).

Planetary relationships are twofold as "permanent" and "temporary". Permanent relationships depend upon the natural status of the planets. Temporary relationships are similar to aspects and are another kind of relationship by position in a particular chart.

In terms of permanent planetary relationships, planets tend to fall into two major groups--

The Sun, Moon, Mars and Jupiter are usually friends.

Mercury, Venus and Saturn are usually friends. Planets of these two groups are usually inimical towards each other.

The main reason for this is that planets tend to be harmoniously disposed to those planets ruling signs of the same element. Mercury, Venus and Saturn each rule an air and an earth sign; the Sun and Moon, Mars and Jupiter, rule fire and water signs.

The list of Permanent Planetary Relationships shows the more specific scheme that evolves from this. The Moon, for example, is a friendly planet and is inimical towards none. Hence planets with which it would be enemies are mainly neutral. The Sun and Mercury are always close together. Hence Mercury is a neutral to the Sun, and the Sun is a friend to Mercury, rather than inimical as would be expected. Other exceptions exist but usually do not extend beyond a group friend or a group enemy becoming a neutral.

Rahu and Ketu are sometimes given relationships similar to Saturn but many astrologers do not consider them as they are not primary planets. Along a similar line one may consider relationships for Uranus, Neptune and Pluto according to those of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars whom they resemble.

PERMANENT PLANETARY RELATIONSHIPS

Planet:	Friends:	Neutrals:	Enemies:
Sun	Moon, Mars, Jupiter	Mercury	Venus, Saturn
Moon	Sun, Mercury	Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn	None
Mars	Sun, Moon, Jupiter	Venus, Saturn	Mercury
Mercury	Sun, Venus	Mars, Jupiter, Saturn	Moon
Jupiter	Sun, Moon, Mars	Saturn	Mercury, Venus
Venus	Mercury, Saturn	Mars, Jupiter	Sun, Moon
Saturn	Mercury, Venus	Jupiter	Sun, Moon, Mars
Rahu/Ketu	Mercury, Venus, Saturn	Mars	Sun, Moon, Jupiter

TEMPORARY PLANETARY RELATIONSHIPS

Planets in signs second, third and fourth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth, from the sign in which a planet is located (counting

that sign as the first), are to be regarded as its temporary friends.

Planets in the same sign as a particular planet, or in the signs fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth from it, are to be regarded as its temporary enemies.

By this we see that friendship occurs according location in the quarter of the zodiac preceding and the quarter succeeding the particular sign in which a planet is located. They are in proximity but not on top of each other. Enmity occurs when a planet is distant from a particular planet or occupying the same sign. They are either too close or too far away for their rays to combine harmoniously.

COMPOSITE PLANETARY RELATIONSHIPS

The factors of both natural and temporal friendship have to be combined to get an accurate measure of the relationships between planets in any specific chart.

Permanent friend plus temporary friend = Best Friend

Permanent friend plus temporary enemy = Neutral

Permanent neutral plus temporary friend = Friend

Permanent neutral plus temporary enemy = Enemy

Permanent enemy plus temporary friend = Neutral

Permanent enemy plus temporary enemy = Worst Enemy

The correct ascertainment of planetary relationships is essential for determining the value of planetary location or the effect of aspects. As aspect between friends proves beneficial but one between enemies gives difficulty. Moreover, planets in a relationship of friendship function well for each other, even if not in any aspectual relationship, just as those in a relationship of enmity function adversely.

EXAMPLE OF PLANETARY RELATIONSHIPS

Birth Chart/ Mahatma Gandhi
Asc. 10 55 Libra Sun 18 23 Virgo
Moon 29 38 Cancer Mars 27 51 Libra
Mercury 13 13 Libra Jupiter 29 37 Aries Rx
Venus 25 54 Libra Saturn 21 48 Scorpio
Rahu 13 38 Cancer Ketu 13 38 Capricorn
Uranus 1 06 Cancer Rx Neptune 27 50 Pisces Rx
Pluto 27 04 Aries Rx

The Sun is in Virgo, a sign of Mercury, a natural neutral. Temporally, it is in the twelfth, a friendly sign. Permanent neutral plus temporary friend equals friend.

The Moon is in Cancer, its own sign.

Mars is in Libra, a sign of Venus, a neutral. Temporally, it is in the first, an inimical sign. Permanent neutral plus temporary enemy equals enemy.

Mercury is in Libra, a sign of Venus, a permanent friend. Temporally, it is in the first, an inimical sign. Permanent friend plus temporary enemy equals neutral.

Jupiter is in the sign of Mars, a permanent friend. Temporally, it is in the seventh from Mars, an inimical sign. Permanent friend plus temporary enemy equals neutral.

Venus is in its own sign.

Saturn is in Scorpio, a sign of Mars, its permanent enemy. Temporally, it is in the second, a friendly sign. Permanent enemy plus temporary friend equals neutral.

Rahu, should we wish to calculate its relationships, is in Cancer, a sign of the Moon, its permanent enemy. Temporally, it is in the first sign from the Moon, an inimical sign. Permanent enemy plus temporal enemy equals great enemy. Ketu is in Capricorn, a sign of Saturn, its permanent friend. Temporally, it is in the third from Saturn, a friendly sign. Permanent friend plus temporary friend equals great friend.

PLANETARY SIGNIFICATORS

There is yet another system, also unique to Vedic astrology, by which planets become signifiers of different aspects of our nature and different domains in life. This is determined by how many degrees they occupy by sign in the chart. To figure these out we should take the positions of the seven major planets in the chart and, not noting the signs, place them in order of their degrees and minutes.

The planet with the highest number of degrees in any sign becomes the "Atmakaraka", "the signifier of the self" or self-indicator. This, like the lord of the Ascendant or a final dispositor, may become the most powerful planet in the chart. It is often the most important planet to consider in judging the spiritual nature of the individual, particularly relative to its position in the harmonic ninth (navamsha) chart. It provides us a key to the aspirations of the soul. We often regard its position as the Ascendant in the ninth and other harmonic charts and read the indications of the chart according to it.

The planet second in its number of degrees in any particular sign becomes the "Amatyakaraka", the signifier of the confidant, symbolically the minister to the king, the one who we are closest to. On an inner level it represents the mind, the confidant of the self and can be called "the signifier of the mind".

The planet third in the sequence becomes the "Bhratrikaraka", "the signifier of brothers". On a psychological level, it represents will, energy and motivation; hence we can call it "the signifier of energy".

The planet fourth in the sequence is the "Matrputrakaraka", "the signifier of the mother and of children". On a psychological level, it represents our creativity, of which children are one expression, and can be called "the signifier of creativity".

The planet fifth in the sequence is the "Pitrikaraka", "the signifier of the father". On a psychological level, it represents our role or dharma in life, the rule or authority we follow, usually transmitted to us through the influence of our father. Hence we can also call it "the signifier of dharma."

The planet sixth in the sequence is the "Jnatikaraka", "the signifier of relatives." On an inner level, it shows our capacity for interchange with society generally. We can call it "the signifier of the world."

The planet seventh in the sequence becomes "Strikaraka", the signifier of the wife or spouse. On a psychological level, it indicates our capacity for relationship and partnership, our love and affection in life. Hence we can call it "the signifier of relationship."

It is good to examine the conditions of these signifiers for the domains they represent. This is particularly true of their positions in the harmonic charts, mainly the harmonic ninth, but also the harmonics that relate to them (like the signifier of brothers and the third harmonic). At least we should examine the condition of the signifier of the self or self-indicator (Atmakaraka).

As an example, we can take the chart above, that of Gandhi, noting the degrees of the seven major planets. The signifier of the self or self-indicator will be the Moon at 29 38. The signifier of the mind is Jupiter at 29 37. The signifier of energy (brothers) Mars at 27 51. The signifier of creativity (mother-children) is

Venus at 25 54. The significator of dharma (father) is Saturn at 21 48. The significator of the world (relatives) is the Sun at 18 23. The significator of relationship is Mercury at 13 13.

THE 27 LUNAR CONSTELLATIONS/ NAKSHATRAS

NAME	EXTENT	RULER
1. Ashwini	0--13 20 Aries	Ketu
2. Bharani	13 20--26 40 Aries	Venus
3. Kritika	26 40 Aries--10 00 Tau.	Sun
4. Rohini	10 00--23 20 Tau.	Moon
5. Mrigashira	23 20 Tau--06 40 Gem.	Mars
6. Ardra	06 40 --20 00 Gem.	Rahu
7. Punarvasu	20 00 Gem--03 20 Can.	Jupiter
8. Pushya	03 20--16 40 Can.	Saturn
9. Ashlesha	16 40 Can--00 00 Leo	Mercury
10. Magha	00 00--13 20 Leo	Ketu
11. Purva Phalguni	13 20--26 40 Leo	Venus
12. Uttara Phalguni	26 40 Leo--10 00 Virgo	Sun
13. Hasta	10 00--23 20 Virgo	Moon
14. Chitra	23 20 Virgo--06 40 Libra	Mars
15. Swati	06 40--20 00 Libra	Rahu
16. Vishakha	20 00 Lib--03 20 Scor.	Jupiter
17. Anuradha	03 20--16 40 Scor.	Saturn
18. Jyestha	16 40 Scor--00 00 Sag.	Mercury
19. Mula	00 00--13 20 Sag.	Ketu
20. Purvashadha	13 20--26 40 Sag.	Venus
21. Uttarashadha	26 40 Sag--10 00 Cap.	Sun
22. Shravana	10 00--23 20 Cap.	Moon
23. Dhanishta	23 20 Cap--06 40 Aqua.	Mars
24. Shatabhishak	06 40--20 00 Aqua.	Rahu
25. Purvabhadra	20 00 Aqua--03 20 Pis.	Jupiter
26. Uttarabhadra	03 20--16 40 Pis.	Saturn
27. Revati	16 40 Pis--00 00 Aries	Mercury

This is the cycle of the 27 lunar constellations, which, as we see, is quite different than that of the 12 signs. They are used more for marking the qualities of the Moon, whereas the signs relate more to the Sun. However, both signs and constellations can be used to read the properties of all the planets. A planet benefits by being in its own lunar constellation.

Each constellation marks an area of the zodiac of 13 degrees and 20 minutes. They come in three groups of nine: Ashwini to Ashlesha rule the first third of the zodiac, Magha to Jyestha the second third and Mula to Revati the last.

Vedic astrologers now consider that the vernal equinox is in Uttarabhadra. Previous records in Vedic texts show it to have previously been in Ashwini, Bharani, Kritika, Rohini, Mrigashira, Punarvasu and perhaps yet further back, as it moves backwards through the zodiac in the precessional cycle.

A twenty-eighth lunar constellation is sometimes marked, called "Abhijit", placed between Shravana and Dhanishta (constellations 22 and 23).

The main usage of the lunar constellations is for determining the planetary periods. They are also used, like the Sun signs in western astrology, for determining personality types. They are used in marriage compatibility readings and in horary and electoral astrology to determine favorable times for action.

THE HOUSES

THE DOMAINS OF PLANETARY ACTION

After planets and signs, the most important factor in all systems of astrology is the houses. The signs are a fixed twelvefold division of the zodiac and are the same for all charts. The houses are a changing twelvefold division of the zodiac, as the point at which they start varies according to each chart. The houses reflect the position of the Earth in its daily rotation relative to the heavens. As the Earth rotates during the course of the day the whole zodiac is gradually drawn to rise in the east and set in the west. Depending on the time of birth during the day, any point in the signs may mark the beginning of the houses.

The houses are determined by the cardinal points of the Earth's orientation to the heavens at the time of birth. The point of the zodiac rising on the eastern horizon at birth becomes the cusp or the determining point for the first house. The point of the zodiac directly overhead becomes the Midheaven or the cusp of the tenth house. The other houses are usually determined mathematically from these two points.

The term "house" arose as each of these areas delineates a domain of our life on Earth, the fields of our activity. The Sanskrit term is "bhava", which means a field of action.

The point of the zodiac rising in the east or first house, is known as "the Ascendant". It is the most variable of the major factors used in astrology, and so the one that gives the greatest specificity in prediction. The Sun passes through one sign in a month; the Moon in two and one-half days; but the sign of the Ascendant changes every two hours. The Ascendant is the most important factor in prediction in Vedic astrology, with the Moon-sign second and the Sun-sign a distant third. This is logical as it is the most specific factor in differentiating charts. Two people born the same day but at different times will have different Ascendants, though the other planets will change little if at all.

A difference in Ascendants makes a major difference in chart interpretations. Two people born in adjacent days but the same year and at the same time of the day, say 10 am. on September 18 and 19, will usually have more in common in their chart interpretation, than two people born the same day and same year but with a difference of an hour or more. This is because those born at the same time of the day, in days not far removed from each other, will have the same Ascendant.

The Ascendant is a spatial factor. It varies according to place on Earth and reflects geographical positions. Two people born at the same time but different places will have different Ascendant points, the more so, the greater the distance between their places of birth.

The Ascendant shows the orientation of the Earth in the astrological chart. As such, it determines the outer domains of life and our action in the material world. We might say that it represents the Earth as a planet in our chart. The Ascendant

indicates our physical incarnation and how we project ourselves into the world at large. The twelve houses delineate the different domains of action in life and our potentials within them. The signs reflect more our nature or character, the houses how we express and manifest it. The deeper and more cosmic aspects of our mind and soul relate to the signs and the stars. The more personal and outer expression of who we are comes through the houses and the Earth.

In Vedic astrology we usually judge personality types not by the Sun sign but by the Ascendant. As the Ascendant determines the entire field of action for the individual, it becomes the lens through which we interpret all the different aspects of life.

THE HOUSES AND THEIR ANALOGY TO THE SIGNS

The houses in Vedic astrology have the same basic meanings as in the Western system, with a few important variations. Generally, the houses follow the analogy of the signs.

The first house has a meaning like the first sign Aries, and shows the head, the ego and the self-sense in life. The second house corresponds to the second sign Taurus and relates to the gathering and holding of personal and material resources. The third house resembles the third sign Gemini and governs curiosity and research. The fourth house, like the fourth sign Cancer relates to the mother, home and emotional happiness. The fifth, like the fifth sign Leo, relates to our soul nature and creative intelligence. The sixth, like the sixth sign Virgo, relates to health and disease, work and service.

The seventh, like the seventh sign Libra, indicates relationship and partnership. The eighth, like the eighth sign Scorpio, shows sex, death, the occult, vice and the hidden side of life. The ninth, like the ninth sign Sagittarius, shows our religious, philosophical or ethical principles or opinions. The tenth, like the tenth sign Capricorn, indicates our public status in life and our achievement in the material world. The eleventh, like the eleventh sign Aquarius, refers to our aspirations and goals, as well as intelligence and friendship. The twelfth, like the twelfth sign Pisces, shows our subconscious and our hidden emotional nature.

The Vedic system departs more from this analogy than its western counterpart, though neither follows it rigidly. This is particularly true for its interpretation of the third and eleventh houses. The meaning of the houses cannot simply follow the signs as it is dividing up a different kind of space. The signs show a cosmic division (sidereally) or solar (tropically), whereas the houses show one that is earthly.

HOUSE DETERMINATION: DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

There are several different systems of determining the location and extent of the houses. Both Western and Vedic astrology have different systems of determining the houses and the controversies that go with them. Most of these variations of house determination are common to both.

While house location and rulership are very important and central to Vedic astrology they are becoming less important to most western astrologers. Some western astrologers dispense with the houses altogether and just use four quadrants rather than twelve houses.

The main difference between Western and Vedic astrology is in the interpretation of the house cusps. Both agree that the cusp is the most important and powerful point in the house; that planets located at the cusp have the strongest effect and most typical meaning in terms of the house. However, while Western astrologers make the cusp the beginning of the house, in the Vedic the cusp marks the middle of the house. This can cause a difference in many house placements. The first house in Vedic astrology will contain half of the twelfth house in the Western system, and so on. Naturally this gives rise to some different interpretations.

Yet the distinction between the two systems is not as major as it appears. Most Western astrologers ascribe at least a 5 degree orb to the cusp of the house; sometimes this is extended to 10 degrees for the luminaries, the Sun and Moon. Planets located these degrees prior to the cusp, though technically in the previous house, are regarded as influencing the house through their conjunction with its cusp. In this way the difference in house determination is more like 5 to 10, rather than 15 degrees.

Some Western astrological studies have found that planets have the strongest effect if placed 8 degrees prior to the Ascendant or Midheaven. This gives credibility to the Vedic view that would place these points in the first and tenth houses, not the twelfth and ninth, which are not thought by anyone to be of to be as powerful locations.

In a Vedic chart, therefore, planets will not only go backwards the better part of a sign, they will also go backwards up to half a house.

The problem both Vedic and Western astrology share is how to determine the location of the cusps of the houses. All agree on using the Ascendant as the cusp of the first house. Some like to use the Midheaven, the point in the zodiac directly overhead, as the cusp of the tenth house. As house orientation is relative to position on the globe, this becomes more variable the further from the equator the place of birth may be. It is rarely that there are exactly 90 degrees between the Ascendant and the Midheaven, except near the equator or at the time of the equinoxes.

In other words, the Earth's orientation to the zodiac does not divide it equally except at the equator. As we move away from the equator it divides it in more and more unequal sections. This is just as the Sun appears overhead at the equator but is at points lower in the sky the further we move away from it. Hence a twelfth of the day will not see a twelfth of the zodiac rising, just as the days vary in length the further we go from the equator. In arctic regions, with their long periods of darkness or light, lasting days or months, some signs will not rise at all for days on end. Others will not set for similarly long periods of time.

HOUSE SYSTEMS USING THE MIDHEAVEN

If we use the Midheaven, the most simple method is to divide up the difference between the Ascendant and Midheaven equally. If, for example, the Ascendant is 20 degrees Libra and the Midheaven 2 degrees Leo, a difference of 78 degrees, then we divide that by three. In that case, we get an extent of 26 degrees for each house. The cusp of the eleventh house then is 28 Leo and that of the twelfth is 24 Virgo. This is the method most often used in Vedic astrology.

However, one may ask, if the difference between the cardinal points of the houses is not equal, why should it be divided up equally? For this reason, various other houses systems like the commonly used Placidian have been formulated. This point certainly has its validity.

We can use whichever of these systems we find most accurate or logical, as the difference is not always that great. As India is fairly close to the equator where such differences are less, this issue did not require as much consideration as in Europe, much of which is not far from the arctic circle.

For common and easy usage we can use a regular Western Table of the Houses with the Placidian house cusps (or whatever system we prefer). We can subtract the appropriate Ayanamsha from each and take them as the center of their respective houses. We can take a western chart thereby and simply subtract the appropriate Ayanamsha from all house positions and regard the cusps as the middle of the house. If planets

are located between house cusps, the difference between the two should be divided, so that we know what house the planet is in the Vedic chart.

As in our example above, if Mars is located at 16 degrees Leo, between the cusps of the tenth house at 2 Leo and the eleventh at 28, dividing the difference, we find the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh at 15 Leo, thus placing Mars in the eleventh house.

Astrology computer programs do these calculations for us and usually allow some choice of systems. In all this it is best not to become too concerned about minor differences. It is not that there is only one way to read nature.

EQUAL HOUSE SYSTEMS

Owing to the variability which arises in house systems that use the Midheaven, simpler systems have arisen that do not consider it as the cusp of the tenth house. They regard the Ascendant as the cusp of the first house, and place all other house cusps an equal thirty degrees from it.

In such systems, if 5 degrees Gemini is the Ascendant, the cusp of the second house will be 5 Cancer; that of the third 5 Virgo and so on. These are called Equal House systems.

The advantage of these systems is that they are easier to calculate. They are also easier to read for aspects, as aspects are determined by degree position in signs, not by the angles as visible from the Earth. For example, a planet in the cusp of the tenth house in the equal house system will always be in a 90 degree or square aspect to the Ascendant. In non-equal house systems no such aspect may be formed. A planet conjunct the Midheaven may not be at any angle aspect to the Ascendant. Aspects cannot be determined by sight in such systems, but require examining the exact degrees of planetary locations.

Equal house systems become more important in extreme latitudes, north or south, where several houses may occur in one sign or several signs in one house, which would otherwise make chart interpretation very complicated.

The disadvantage of the equal house systems is that they do not adequately consider the Midheaven, a well known powerful point in the chart in all systems. For this reason, it is wise to still add the Midheaven as a special point of power. In equal house systems the Midheaven may fall in the ninth, tenth or eleventh houses.

HOUSE AND SIGN CHARTS IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY

Vedic astrology usually employs two different systems of house determination. First, it has a special chart, called the "Bhava Chakra" or "House chart", which specifically measures the houses. It can be done in two ways. It can consider the houses according to the Midheaven. Or it can just consider them from the Ascendant as an equal house system. It most resembles the house systems commonly used in Western astrology and has the same general variations.

Second, it considers the houses in the "Rashi Chakra" or "Sign chart". This we find to be more commonly used. In this chart it is not just an equal house system is used, it is an "equal sign" system.

In it, for example, if some degree of Taurus is the first house, then Gemini will be the second house, Cancer the third and so on. This is true even if it is 1 degree of a sign or 29 degrees. This is the most simple and general method of house determination, wherein primacy is given to the signs over the houses.

Houses are determined generally according to the Rashi Chakra and then specifically according to the Bhava Chakra. The Bhava Chakra is thus another chart. In it the position of the houses are given, not the signs, though sometimes the exact sign positions of the cusps are placed in or by the chart, as well as the points in which the house begins and ends.

HOUSES IN HARMONIC CHARTS

This house by sign system most commonly used in Vedic astrology may appear rather simplistic to practitioners of Western astrology and their sometimes detailed approach to calculating the houses. In this regard, it resembles the issue of planetary aspects. Again, the additional use of harmonic charts gives greater specificity to the house meanings in the Vedic system and can take the place of more specific house delineation.

We note the orientation of the houses, particularly the Ascendant, in harmonic charts. Most general is that of the harmonic third or decanate position. The most important of these harmonic charts is the harmonic ninth or Navamsha, from which all houses and aspects can be read as an additional chart. The Ascendant in the

Navamsha is the most variable factor in the chart, as it changes its sign every 13 minutes. As such it is the most important factor for fine tuning in the chart.

In harmonic charts, houses and aspects are always determined by sign. The birth chart, as the first or primary harmonic chart, can be read more simply in this manner also. Houses by sign, like aspects by sign, allow for an easy harmonic calculation that can be rendered more subtle by harmonic subdivisions. Thereby complex calculations are not needed but specificity is not lost.

HOUSES FROM THE MOON

Vedic astrology considers the Moon (and sometimes the Sun), as an Ascendant. As such it makes the location of the Moon at birth the first house. It uses the equal sign system again, with the Moon-sign as the first house, the next sign the second house and so on.

If a certain house from both the Ascendant and the Moon is aspected, then the results will be more certain. If, for example, the fifth house from both the Ascendant and the Moon are both aspected by Saturn, inability to have children would be more likely, than if only one of these were so afflicted.

USE OF DIFFERENT ASCENDANTS

Vedic astrology can consider other houses as the Ascendant for different purposes. For example, in judging the affairs of the wife or partner, one can count the seventh house as the Ascendant (for the wife) and examine the other houses from that

point; ie. the eighth house from the seventh (the second house in the usual order), as representing her longevity. Similarly, the fourth house can be considered an Ascendant for the mother and the ninth house for the father.

So too, planets in malefic houses from a particular house, like sixth, eighth or twelfth from it, will tend to adversely effect it. The opposite can be said for planets in benefic houses relative to a particular planet or house, like the fifth or ninth.

Houses have greater intricacy and importance in interpretation Vedic than in the Western system. The houses are treated as a system of coordinates that can be applied in various ways. However, the houses from the prime Ascendant and from the Moon-sign are the most important--the others are more for fine tuning.

SECONDARY USAGE OF THE HOUSE (BHAVA) CHART

As Vedic astrology considers the houses in the Rashi or sign chart from the Ascendant and the Moon and harmonic charts, often the more specific Bhava or House chart is not used. Some practitioners use only the Rashi and Navamsha charts and do not do the Bhava at all. Most books seldom list the Bhava chart. Very accurate readings can nevertheless still be given.

It is my view that the Midheaven should at least be considered as a point of power, even in the Rashi Chart, and that the Bhava Chart, though the least important of the three, can still be helpful to do. One should know what it is and how to construct it if necessary.

To approach Vedic astrology we must first of all learn to apply the houses in terms of the Rashi Chakra or sign chart, considering them both from the Ascendant and the Moon, in the equal sign system. Once these are understood then we can consult the Bhava Chakra or house chart (equal or otherwise) for more specific indications.

As the house chart is oriented towards the outer affairs of life and the signs represent more the inner nature or soul, the more specific systems of house determination should afford us better detail in judging our actions in the outer world, while the sign oriented systems should provide better knowledge of our inner nature.

Let us take an example. In the house chart (Bhava chakra), a planet is located in the eleventh house but in the sign chart (Rashi chakra) it is in the twelfth house. Say the ascendant is 25 degrees Libra and the Sun is in 2 degrees Virgo. This would mean that in terms of outer actions the individual would have great goals in life and accomplish a great deal, an eleventh house meaning. Yet in terms of their inner nature, they would be solitary or self-effacing, a twelfth house meaning.

Hence, once we have understood the basics, we can blend the meaning of different ways of looking at houses to afford us deeper insight into things.

The house systems that do not consider the Midheaven in effect regard the Ascendant as a planet, the most important of the planet, like marking the Earth in the chart. If we regard the Ascendant as a planetary point

then we can see how the scheme of the houses can be used relative to any planet as a system for showing how their energy is distributed. The twelve house system, thereby, can be used independently of its connection to the Ascendant. It becomes another system of determining planetary influences that can be applied to each planet. It is this more free use of the houses as a system of coordinates that we find in Vedic astrology.

HOUSES BY QUALITY AND ELEMENT

Just as the signs are related by quality and element, so are the houses. These qualities, to a lesser degree, can be applied to the houses as counted from the Moon.

"Angular" (Kendra in Sanskrit) houses are houses 1, 4, 7 and 10. These mark the angles or quadrants from the Ascendant. Planets situated in angles tend to be strong and active. Angular houses are similar in character to cardinal signs. They are sharp, energetic, decisive and penetrating. They give power for accomplishment and achievement and a generally outgoing or creative will in life.

Of these the tenth is regarded as the strongest position, then the seventh, fourth and first in order. Planets in the tenth dominate the chart and overpower even the ascendant.

Malefics in angles can cause a difficult or dark nature and inflict much damage in life, either on the person or through them. Benefics in angles afford luck, grace and protection.

"Succedent" houses (Panapara) are houses 2, 5, 8 and 11. Planets here are only moderate in strength. Succedent houses are similar in meaning to fixed signs. They show the accumulation of resources and the development of stability and reserve. They help us preserve and maintain things but are not good for new developments or bringing things to conclusion.

Of these the fifth is the strongest, then the eleventh, second and eighth.

"Cadent" houses (Apoklima) are houses 3, 6, 9 and 12. Planets here are weak, uncertain or hidden in their action. Cadent houses are similar to mutable signs. They give mental sensitivity and general adaptability which can give a high intelligence. They also tend towards instability and insecurity and can cause mental and nervous problems. They are usually better than angular houses for spiritual development.

Of these the ninth is the strongest, then the third, sixth and twelfth.

Usually it is better to have some angular planets for a chart to give any success in life. In fact, quadrant planets are more important than cardinal ones in this respect. If we examine the charts of famous, successful or powerful people they will have strong angular planets, though their signs may be cardinal, fixed or mutable. For this reason the chart design used in north India is based upon the angular houses as the most important factor in the chart. A chart without planets in angles is regarded as without distinction or power. Yet malefics in angles, though they often give outward success, show a destructive character.

Planets in angles allow us to accomplish things but too many planets in angles can cause us to lack in sensitivity or introspection. Spiritual astrology gives them less importance than does mundane astrology. In fact without some major cadent or mutable planets the spiritual life is usually not possible. Yet without some angular or cardinal planets no decisive course of action, spiritual or worldly, is possible.

Too many planets in any of these three groups can cause imbalance. Generally, a good balance of planets in all three is better than too many in any one and serves to give more harmony (sattva) to the nature.

When a person has planets in both cardinal signs and angular houses they may acquire a very decisive and aggressive nature, which can be highly rajasic. When a person has planets in both mutable signs and cadent houses their nature is rendered sensitive, weak or neurotic. When a person has planets in both fixed signs and succedent houses they are apt to be possessive and conservative. In all these cases both sign and house qualities mutually reinforce each other.

Different combinations of house and sign qualities are possible and should be studied carefully. Both should be listed and examined relative to each other. Generally, the sign qualities will more reflect character traits and the house qualities capacity for success in the domains of life. Taking these factors independently of each other can lead to some mistakes.

For example, a person may have predominately angular planets but in fixed signs. This will give them an underlying fixed, stable and determined nature but a capacity for much action and achievement in the world. It may help balance out the danger, the inertia and possible stagnation, of too fixed a character. On the other hand, it may make the person firm as a rock in their character but aggressive in action; a hard person to deal with who imposes themselves upon others. Planets in mutable signs but angular houses, on the other hand, will give outer success and communication abilities but a basically changeable or possibly unstable character inwardly.

Apart from this basic system, other significant ways of correlating the houses exist.

"Trine" houses (Trikona) are houses 1, 5 and 9. They form a triangle relative to the Ascendant. Residency in a trine is a source of strength, like residency in a quadrant, though angles are stronger than trines. Jupiter likes trines as its trine aspect comes into play in them. The Moon also does well in them.

In this regard the ninth house, though succedent, is still very good, it being the best trine. The fifth also gets boosted by this factor and becomes the best succedent house. Planets here, though not as strong for outer action as angular ones, are more important for the spiritual and inner nature. The lords of these houses also become very auspicious for the chart.

There is another special grouping of houses unique to Vedic astrology. Houses 3, 6, 10 and 11 are called "Upachaya" or increasing houses. Planets located in them increase in strength through time and give progressively better results as one gets older. Malefics, like the Sun, Saturn, Mars and the lunar nodes, do well in these houses, whereas they do not do good in trines (as they can indicate a malefic nature). The lords of these houses (except the tenth) however, are usually inauspicious and can cause harm as they are too impulsive in nature.

Of these houses, the tenth and eleventh are the best locations, though the tenth is more specifically an angular house. The eleventh is a good place for planets to be located in the chart as malefics do very well here and benefics do not do badly either (though not necessarily when located here with malefics).

We notice by these different house factors that planets do well when they are located above the horizon in the chart, by the Midheaven, in houses 9, 10 and 11. They represent how we affect the world in terms of our values (ninth house), actions (tenth house) and goals (eleventh house). Opposite them houses 3, 4 and 5 represent our self in terms of our vital energy (third house), emotional state (fourth house) and intelligence (fifth house).

The group of houses, 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8 are said to be "Apachaya" or houses of decrease. Planets located in these houses lose their strength through time and malefics do not do well here. Of these the eighth is the worst, probably the most unfortunate house to have planets located (though it can still give high intelligence and some other good attributes).

Houses 6, 8 and 12 are said to be difficult or malefic houses (Dushthana). Planets located in them are weakened and can cause problems. In the sixth they can cause disease or enmity. In the eighth they can cause disease, injury, loss or death. In the twelfth they can cause loss and sorrow. This is particularly true if they are under malefic aspects.

Malefic planets in the sixth may be good for power but still cause disease. Benefics in the sixth can be good for intelligence but can also cause disease. Mars in the eighth can cause violent death or losses. Saturn in the eighth, however, can aid in longevity, though not give prosperity. Benefics in the twelfth can give a spiritual nature or good rebirth. Venus, being exceptional in that it does good in the twelfth house and can give comfort and prosperity. Ketu does well in the twelfth and can give spiritual insight and the ability to ward off negative psychic influences. Rahu similarly is good in the sixth. It can give freedom from enmity and success through foreigners, though it can still contribute to nervous system disorders.

These houses are difficult points because they are places of transition, located on either sides of the seventh house (houses 6 and 8) and just above the ascendant (house 12).

Houses are related to the four goals of life. Houses 1, 5 and 9 relate to our basic nature, vocation or career (dharma). The first shows our basic nature in life, the fifth our creative expression and the ninth the higher aspiration we are seeking.

Houses 2, 6 and 10 relate to our wealth and possessions (artha). The second house shows our basic possessions in life, the sixth the work and difficulties they cause and the tenth, what we are able to achieve through them.

Houses 3, 7 and 11 relate to our desires (kama). The third house shows our basic vital energy, the seventh the ways we wish to enjoy it and the eleventh the goals we wish to achieve through it.

Houses 4, 8 and 12 relate to liberation (moksha), our seeking of transcendence. The fourth shows our basic seeking of peace and happiness, the eighth the struggle we have to go through to find it and the twelfth how we have to negate ourselves to arrive at it.

In addition, houses can be correlated to the elements, just as the signs. Houses 1, 5 and 9, like signs of the same number, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, represent the element of fire. Houses 2, 6 and 10 represent earth. Houses 3, 7 and 11 represent air. Houses 4, 8 and 12 represent water. This, however, is a more secondary factor than house qualities and seldom deserves much weight. Yet a fiery planet in a fiery house will receive some boost thereby. Many planets in the twelfth, for example, are often found in the charts of those who drown.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES

FIRST HOUSE

The first house relates to the self and indicates our basic self-expression in life and in the material world. In Sanskrit it is called "Tanur Bhava", which means literally, "the house of the body". It is the main factor in determining physical constitution but more generally shows our orientation to life as a whole.

It is the house of birth and shows our origin. Strongly afflicted it produces difficult birth or even infant mortality. It indicates our congenital physical vitality, so that when weak, is a primary factor in ill-health.

The Sun shows who we are in ourselves, in our basic character or individuality. The Moon shows how we relate to others, how we appear on a social level to friends and family. The Ascendant or first house indicates how we project ourselves on a public level--our initial and general appearance to the world at large. As such it determines the whole structure of our outer manifestation, our personality as well as our body. Afflictions to it thus can cause mental disorders.

For any significant accomplishment in life a strong first house and its ruler are necessary. It aids us in our career, as it helps establish self-identity. It is important thereby for honor, integrity, fame or recognition.

Whatever it is associated with becomes intimate to our manifestation in life: aligned with factors of the ninth house, it gives an ethical nature or spirituality; with those of the sixth or eighth house it gives disease; with those of the second or eleventh house it gives wealth and so on. Through it the influences of the other planets are able to enter into us and become an integral part of our lives. The Ascendant is our significator in the chart, our vehicle in manifestation. It is the most important factor in the chart and its strength or weakness can override anything else.

THE SECOND HOUSE

The second is the house of livelihood. It relates to earning capacity, our ability to provide for ourselves in life. It does not indicate career but helps indicate the financial success in it, particularly what accrues through our own labor.

Relating to the face it can show beauty or how we appear in life. Relative to the mouth, it shows our appetite and may indicate taste, not only in food; it can also show our sense of taste in art. As the house of speech, it shows intellect and the capacity for communication. It represents education and as immediately following the first house, shows the period of childhood. Afflictions to it can show unhappiness as a child or separation from the parents.

Basically, it shows how we operate and express ourselves in life, our capacity for communication and commerce, whether in the material, the social or the mental realms. According to its strength it may give wealth, social prestige or powers of speech and writing. Afflicted it may show excessive spending, harsh speech or excessive self-expression.

Most of its indications relative to the ability to acquire material resources are the same as in Western astrology. Yet most of its indications of intellect fall under the third house in the Western system.

THE THIRD HOUSE

The third is the house of brothers, friends and companions, how we act as a member of defined group of equals. It shows the people we like to do things with, how we act in cooperation and our capacity for leadership. It shows the alliances we make to achieve particular goals.

It is a martial house, a house of prowess, and is symbolized by the arms. It shows our basic energy in life--the impulse and intention that drives us. It reveals our passion or zeal in life, along with our courage and boldness in action, which may become rashness and impulsiveness. It indicates will and ambition, the force we project in life.

The third house shows our motivation and indicates our main interests, whether physical or mental; what we really like to do. It shows whims and interests, sports and hobbies. Well-placed planets here can give a capacity for profound interest, deep research and scientific thinking.

These meanings are different than that of the third house in the western system, which relates it more to the informational mind, rational thought and logic, which are often found under its curiosity aspect in the eastern system. Combining both we would say that the third house represents the acquisitive or motivated mind and can lead us into dangerous actions.

THE FOURTH HOUSE

The fourth is the house of home and happiness. It shows our house and environment both outwardly and inwardly (the mind). It relates to the mother and to the domestic situation. As such, it shows our basic emotional nature, our heart or feelings and is thereby important for determining our joy or aesthetic sense in life, our appreciation of love and beauty and our capacity for art. Upbringing, education and refinement in life are sometimes seen through it.

The fourth house shows land and property, and our ability to acquire them. As the house of property in general it shows the vehicles we may possess, like automobiles. It indicates the masses and thereby our popularity, particularly on a public level.

On the psychological level, it shows how happy we are at home or in our emotional nature, and may indicate deep subconscious drives. It also relates to our capacity for rest and relaxation. It is the psychological house per se and afflictions to it show emotional and mental disorders and lack of peace. It is probably the most sensitive house and afflictions to it can be hard to overcome.

Spiritually, it is indicative of our faith and, often, of our family religious background and shows our capacity for devotion and contemplation. It indicates the nadir, the lowest point in the chart, and hence what is internal, hidden, personal. Benefic planets here can be good for meditation.

THE FIFTH HOUSE

The fifth is traditionally the house of children. It represents our capacity to have children and shows the kind of relationship we will have with them. Afflicted it either denies children or limits happiness with them. (Though, for the woman, the fifth from the Moon is often more important for children than the fifth from the Ascendant).

It is the house of creativity in general. On a higher level, it shows creative intelligence, our capacity for original thinking. Along similar lines it indicates our capacity to give good advice and to counsel others. In this regard it is important for lawyers and politicians. Generally, it is the most important house for judging our level of intelligence (as opposed to mere intellect), a factor which is not considered relative to this house in Western astrology.

On the spiritual level, it is the house of the Ishta Devata, the chosen deity we worship in life, and indicates our aspirations. It shows our devotion, the truth which our guiding star. Like the ninth it is a house of grace and, even more so than the ninth, a house of good karma and shows the resources or merits (or lack of them) we bring into life, our blessing and curses. It is the house of mantra and shows our proficiency in using our words and thoughts with spiritual power.

It is a house of love, higher or lower. In this way it indicates romance and is the house of the beloved (not necessarily the marriage partner). It is thereby a house of pleasure, enjoyment, sport and recreation, and shows what we love to do.

It is another house of wealth and fortune. As such it shows our capacity to gain through speculation (like the stock market); how we can gain through our productions, creations, recreation and imagination.

THE SIXTH HOUSE

The sixth is the house of disease and enmity. It indicates opposition, difficulties and obstacles in life and can give many problems.

As a house of disease, planets here tend to cause physical disorders according to their nature, particularly relative to the digestive system which the house rules. Hence influences here, like those to the Ascendant, are important for showing our physical constitution in life.

It is a house of injury and shows wounds and accidents. It is a house of power and impulse, and shows the negative effects of abuse of power, which may be directed against us or come through us. It may show our own martial prowess or that of our enemies, and the dangers and inevitability of self-harm which come from any use of violent force.

Malefics here, like the Sun, Saturn or Mars, are strong and can show our ability to defeat our enemies but they still tend to give health problems and much struggle in life. As indicating our enemies in life, the sixth may thereby indicate theft or litigation and thereby cause poverty. As such it is indicative of where we should place our caution in life.

The sixth house relates to work and service, our capacity for karma yoga and for discipline and austerity. Well-placed planets here can aid in our spiritual evolution. Yet it may also indicate overwork or cause subservience. Benefics here tend to make us more service oriented, gentle, without enmity or self-negating. It often gives skill and intelligence but seldom gives recognition for them. It is a house of effort and shows our capacity to do great labors. It also shows our relationship with foreigners or distant relatives.

THE SEVENTH HOUSE

The seventh is well known as the house of the partner; the wife in a man's chart, the husband in that of the woman. It is the main house for judging marriage and male/female relationships. As the house opposite the Ascendant representing the self, the seventh house or Descendant represents one's opposite or complement, the other.

The seventh is thereby a house of love and passion and planets here give a strong sexual nature. Yet it represents more long term committed relationship rather than romantic infatuations, which are better represented by the fifth. It indicates partnership in general, even on an impersonal level.

As reflecting our relationship with "the other", it shows aspects of our social nature and our capacity to affect others in general. Thereby it may sometimes indicate political power or power over others, particularly if malefics like Saturn or Mars are located here. Such malefics also may render us disturbed in our sexual function.

Planets usually do not do well here for personal relationship, except Jupiter or a well-placed Moon or Venus. Mercury causes quick or superficial relationships. Mars causes conflict but gives power. Saturn causes separation, detachment and selfishness but also gives power. The Sun causes domination or control.

THE EIGHTH HOUSE: The eighth is the infamous house of death. It indicates destruction, dishonor and can show the negative, criminal or violent aspects of our mind. It can represent severe chronic diseases or injury leading to death. It can indicate those in life whom we are likely to lose to death. Planets here tend to cause us to suffer over the affairs they represent and give opposition and limitation.

On a positive side, it can indicate wealth which can be gained through inheritance or legacy, as, for example, one works for an insurance company or who administers an estate.

The eighth house is a very deep and mysterious house. It indicates occult research, as well as profound thinking, deep research or invention, including mathematics and philosophy. It can give proficiency in tantric type yogas. It gives a strong and piercing but not always beneficent intelligence and can show genius. It can show distant travels or strange adventures, both in body and mind. It is the house of transformation.

On the negative side, it shows our connection with the dark or underworld side of life and can show evil in our nature. Drugs, prostitution and the power to manipulate others are shown here. It gives a strong sexual passion as well, and often a good deal of sexual attractiveness, but not usually the concern for partnership of the seventh house.

It is the house of longevity, indicating our span of life. Showing the nature of our death, it also indicates the factors that tend to keep us alive. The negative and positive implications of this house are major factors for determining the ultimate meaning of our lives.

THE NINTH HOUSE

The ninth is the house of "dharma", "the law of one's nature", or "the principle of one's being". The ninth house shows our prime values, principles and ideals in life. It is the house of the father and his fate can be read from it. It shows the influences or authorities which guide and inspire us.

It is the house of religion, philosophy and law, and indicates our spiritual and ethical disposition. As such it relates to the deeper and more philosophical side of the mind and our capacity for abstract thinking. As showing our values, it can be useful in revealing our profession, particularly if we are teachers or religious figures, which roles it rules over.

It is the prime house of grace, fortune and luck, and gives sudden and unexpected gains in life. Those who win lotteries or races usually have good influences from this house. Good planets here can go very far to counteract any negative influences in the chart.

The ninth house gives honor, prestige and power in life, usually of a beneficent nature. It gives easy recognition and acceptance, and through its strength our principles are able to operate in the world and shape the course of events. It gives us a responsibility to use this grace in a beneficent way and we should not indulge in the good fortune it brings it or it can be wasted more easily than we would think.

THE TENTH HOUSE

The tenth is the house of karma, which means action. It is the main house for showing our effect upon the world generally. As such, it is often related to career or vocation. The tenth house does not in itself determine the career; for this the first house and other factors are very important. What it does show is the success in career and the affect of our actions upon the world, the status we are able to achieve in life.

In this manner, the tenth house is a house of skill, achievement, honor, recognition and prestige. It shows the position we are able to attain in life and the power that goes with it. It is an important house for determining political, social or worldly power. The tenth house measures our mark upon the world. It shows whether we bring good or bad karma to it. It can indicate pilgrimages and religious charities through its good karma side.

As the highest point in the chart generally planets here are very strong and can serve to raise us up in life. It can give us the favor of the government or established authorities. It causes us to want to be visible, gain

positions or titles, respect and acknowledgement. Hence it can make us worldly or politically minded. Whatever we do will be noticed. The danger is that it will make us too outgoing and achievement oriented.

THE ELEVENTH HOUSE

The eleventh is the house of gains. It shows income or what brings us increase. It indicates anything we may possess much of or find increase through. It relates to goals, aspirations, wishes, will and ambition and what results we are able to acquire through them. It measures our individualistic motivation that can lead to impulsiveness and egoism. On the other hand, it indicates the possible realisation of our ideals and desires.

In terms of family relationships it represents the elder brothers and sisters and their fate is read through it.

It is a house of abundance, in which planets are usually very strong and favorable (even though the lord of this house usually has a negative power). Whatever planet is located here we will tend to possess its qualities in great measure. Venus here, for example, can indicate having several wives. Jupiter here can give wealth. On a higher level, the eleventh can give great spiritual gains and show the development of an expansive and articulate intelligence (in this respect, it resembles the fifth house, whose opposite it is on the chart).

It gives great material gains, but there is often the tendency to be overly presumptuous about them and to over extend ourselves. It is not only the place of abundance but also of excess.

This is somewhat different from the indications of the eleventh in the western system. Both see it as a house of goals and aspirations, but the western view relates it more to group work, group expression and friendship. In the Indian system it is an individualistic and sometimes anarchic or egoistic house but will give many resources, perhaps people, to manifest through, yet from a position not of equality but power.

THE TWELFTH HOUSE

The twelfth is the house of loss, as the eleventh is that of gain. It is a house of expense, as the eleventh is that of income. It shows decrease, wastage and decay. We tend to lose or waste away the traits of the planets located in this house. The Sun here shows a loss of self-confidence or a poor reputation; the Moon here shows emotional drain and moodiness; Saturn here causes weakness of the nerves and worry and so on.

It is the house of sorrow, disappointment and resignation. It indicates limitation, confinement or adversity, sometimes imprisonment. It is a secretive house and shows work behind the scenes, as, for example, in a hospital or asylum, or a monastery. Yet it is also a house of passion, luxury and dissipation, the secret pleasures that keep us hidden.

It represents the past (as the ninth house does the future) and shows past karma we are bound to or past influences we are under. It can indicate guilt, regret, sorrow and grief. It shows the subconscious, where our rational mind and ego are dissolved and can indicate fantasy, illusion, mental disorders or trance. It is an astral house and shows how we connect with the subtle planes. It indicates our after death state, where our latent impressions and unresolved deeper attachments will lead us.

The twelfth house represents the end of the life-cycle and shows exhaustion. However, as the negation of life it also indicates liberation, the denial of ego, renunciation and surrender. It is thereby a house of yoga and meditation.

It is a house of isolation or separation. It shows one alone, negated by external adversity into a state of sorrow, or negated by inner peace into enlightenment.

HOUSE CORRELATION

A unique principle of Vedic astrology is the correlation of houses (what is called Sanskrit "bhavat bhavam", meaning literally "from house to house"). By this principle, houses the same number of houses away from a particular house as that house is from the Ascendant, will possess similar effects.

For example, the tenth house is a house of power, prestige, social and political influence. The tenth house from the tenth house (counting the tenth itself as the first house) is the seventh house. So the seventh will also be a house of power, prestige and so on.

The ninth is a house of grace, luck and fortune. Thus the ninth house from the ninth, namely the fifth house, will also share these traits.

The eighth house is a house of death, destruction and longevity. The eighth from the eighth, the third house, will also indicate these. For longevity, then, we would examine not only the eighth house but also the third. If both are afflicted it would much more likely indicate short life, than if only one were afflicted.

The sixth is a house of disease, injury and enmity. The sixth from the sixth, or the eleventh house, will also relate to these factors. Hence if a planet is the ruler of both the sixth and the eleventh houses, it is doubly a significator of violence.

The fifth is a house of children, creativity and intelligence. The fifth from the fifth, or the ninth house, can similarly be examined for determination of the state of children, etc.

The fourth house relates to the emotional state of the person, home and happiness. The fourth from the fourth, or the seventh house, can also be considered conjointly with the fourth for determining these affairs.

Other applications of the principle of house correlation exist. For example, the twelfth house is the house of negation, representing the end of life. Applying this principle generally, the twelfth house from any house will be its negation.

The ninth house is the house of fortune, grace, honor and luck. The house twelfth to it, the eighth house, will be the negation of these traits; it will represent misfortune, disfavor, dishonor and bad luck.

The seventh house represents relationship. Twelfth from it is the sixth house, which will thereby represent enmity, conflict or the denial of relationship.

This principle can also be used to show the negation of the meaning of negative houses. The sixth house is a house of

disease. Twelfth from it is the fifth house, which indicates thereby the negation of disease or the positive condition of health. Hence increasing the influence of the fifth house and its ruler can neutralize the effects of the sixth house and help prevent disease.

HOUSE SIGNIFICATORS

Both Vedic and Western astrology judge the affairs of a house by noting the influences on the house and its ruler (the planet that rules the sign occupying the house cusp). To this the Vedic system adds another planet as the general "house significator". These planets are the same for all charts. Their position in the chart should be considered in regard to the affairs of the particular house.

Some houses have more than one planetary significator, relative to different affairs under the sphere of the house. This helps us differentiate the meanings of a particular house (see examples below).

FIRST HOUSE	The Sun (the significator of the self)
SECOND HOUSE	Jupiter (as significator of earning capacity) Mercury (as significator of childhood, speech, education)
THIRD HOUSE	Mars (as significator of energy and prowess)
FOURTH HOUSE	The Moon (significator of mind, emotions, mother)
FIFTH HOUSE	Jupiter (as significator of children, creativity, and intelligence)
SIXTH HOUSE	Mars (as significator of enmity, injury and theft) Saturn (as significator of disease)
SEVENTH HOUSE	Venus (significator of wife in male chart) Jupiter (significator of husband for female)
EIGHTH HOUSE	Saturn (significator of death and longevity)
NINTH HOUSE	Jupiter (as significator of dharma) Sun (as significator of the father)
TENTH HOUSE	Mercury and Jupiter (for profession) Sun (for fame and prestige)
ELEVENTH HOUSE	Jupiter (as significator of gain)
TWELFTH HOUSE	Saturn (as significator of loss)

We see that the significators of the houses are different than the rulers of the respective signs (following the house/sign analogy). Mars as the significator of the third house is not the same as Mercury, the ruler the third sign Gemini.

We also see that some planets are significators of more than one house: Jupiter relates to houses 2, 5, 7, 9 and 11, Saturn to houses 6, 8 and 12. This can help us discriminate the different effects of a planet.

For the indications of children in the chart, we can examine Jupiter and the fifth house; for dharma (religion or spirituality) we can examine Jupiter and the ninth, for income Jupiter and the eleventh and for livelihood Jupiter and the second.

For disease, we can examine Saturn and the sixth, for longevity Saturn and the eighth and for sorrow and liberation Saturn and the twelfth.

Rahu and Ketu, the lunar nodes, can be treated as joint significators with their planetary counterparts--Rahu with Saturn, Ketu with Mars. Yet Rahu is a special significator of foreigners, judged relative to the sixth house. Ketu is the special significator of liberation, judged relative to the twelfth house.

Some may wish to use Uranus, Neptune and Pluto in this regard. Pluto appears to correspond most to the eighth house, death and the hidden will. Neptune may be useful relative to the twelfth as imagination and the subconscious. Uranus appears like Saturn and the sixth house, as a disrupting influence.

All planets are signifiers of different things. Some of these we may not be able to define in terms of only one house. Venus, in this way, is the signifier of art. Art would be judged by the second, particularly poetry, and the fourth, the capacity for emotion, pathos or drama, and the fifth as a measure of general creativity.

It is usually good if the signifier of a particular house aspects that house. It is not considered so good if it is located in that house. For example, Jupiter in the fifth is not considered good for children. When a planet is located in a sign or house it owns or signifies any negative aspect would be double as it affects both the house and its indicator.

PLANETARY LORDS

Astrology presents us with the play of the archetypal forces at work in life, the great powers of the cosmic mind. On one hand, these extend down into the cosmic unconscious, the teeming inconscient ocean of the ignorance wherein great elemental forces struggle. It is here, in the dark sea at the beginning of the world, that the inertia of the lower forms of life persist tenaciously with their primeval fears, desires, aggression and attachment. On the other hand, these same forces extend upwards into the cosmic consciousness, the infinite ocean above the world, which contains in its great creative matrix, the potencies of all redemption and transformation. As the latter is, mythologically speaking, the domain of the demons or titans (asuras), the former is the domain of the Gods or Devas. These two domains are ever in conflict or opposition, the Gods with their ascending or evolutionary force and the demons with their descending or devolutionary force.

It is through the elements; earth, water, fire, air and ether that these two forces clash: the Gods aspiring to bring the flux of the elements into a vision of cosmos, the demons straining to return them to the dull sleep of chaos. From this came the Greek vision of the world as a conflict between the elements and a conflict between the Gods and the demons, a view the ancient Hindus also shared. In the Hindu view the Gods and the demons are the powers of light and darkness working through the senses, which is where our consciousness struggles between the inner and the outer worlds.

Yet these two warring forces are also related and, in some ways, complementary. The planets project both forces, the powers of both evolution and devolution, ascent and descent. These two powers are one--the undivine is the inversion or reflection of the Divine. The planets in their higher or harmonized nature function as deities to carry us up into the light. In their lower or conflicting nature, they become the demons that drive us into darkness and despair. It also depends upon how we use their energy. Using it consciously through self-knowledge, meditation, mantras and gems, it moves us upwards. Taking it unconsciously, not regarding the cosmic powers in our life, it drives us downward, puts us under a negative spell of illusion.

The planets as great Gods and great demons are the lords of great power we must respect. They may create or destroy, further or restrain, either the ascending or descending force. As each planet is the natural lord of certain forces, according to basic nature and sign rulership, so each planet is also a "temporal lord" or temporary ruler of certain forces through time according to the principles of house rulership. It is according to this principle of house rulership that much of the great power of the planets comes out, for good or ill.

One of the unique and most important principles of Vedic astrology is this principle of house rulership--that the nature of planets changes according to what houses each planet rules relative to the ascendant. What is a good planet for one ascendant may be a malefic for another. Vedic astrology does not ascribe to planets a simple fixed nature but modifies planetary nature according to each ascendant. This principle is of particular importance for understanding how planets project their effects through time.

LORDS OF HOUSES

Planets possess certain qualities relative to the houses they rule. The lord of the fifth rules over children. When Saturn, a sterile planet, rules the fifth, it becomes a creative force and loses much of his natural sterility. When Mars, an unspiritual planet becomes ruler of the ninth house of spirituality, he gains in spiritual force. The disposition of planets as house lords is as important as their natural disposition. For the prediction of events, in planetary periods, it can be more important.

The art of Vedic astrology revolves largely around the ability to combine natural and temporal status of planets for an integral interpretation.

Many yogas or planetary combinations are stated purely in terms of house lordship. For example, when the lords of the second and eleventh houses combine it is very auspicious for wealth, as both rule houses of income. It is only of secondary import whether the planet involved is Jupiter, a natural signifier of wealth, or Saturn, a natural signifier of poverty. Jupiter would enhance the yoga by its natural status. Saturn

would cause the yoga to manifest more slowly, with difficulty, or through such Saturnian domains as property. But the house lordship is the overriding factor.

In this way the meaning of the planets varies for each Ascendant. Each Ascendant has its own rules and the planets function uniquely relative to each. That is why the Ascendant is so important--it determines not only the basic nature of the person, by its orientation it determines the general meaning of all the planets. Saturn for a Libra ascendant, where it is a strongly benefic house ruler, has a radically different value than Saturn for a Leo ascendant, where its house rulership is highly malefic.

In Vedic astrology, therefore, we must learn not only the meaning of each Ascendant but how planets function relative to each. The ascendant colors the meaning of all the planets. The meaning of planets depends as much upon the Ascendant as upon their own nature. Each Ascendant is a different astrological game and requires a unique shifting of astrological rules.

LAWS OF HOUSE RULERSHIP

Planets are classified as temporal or temporary malefics or benefics according to the houses they rule relative to the Ascendant. Generally speaking, those which rule benefic houses become benefics; those which rule malefic houses, become malefics. In this way, a naturally benefic planet like Jupiter may become functionally malefic in a chart should it not rule any benefic houses.

Lords of trine houses, 1, 5 and 9 are considered to be always auspicious. Lords of quadrant houses, 4, 7 and 10 are regarded auspicious if natural malefics, like Mars and Saturn (and by some accounts the Sun). Yet they are deemed inauspicious if natural benefics, like Jupiter, Mercury, Venus (and by some accounts the Moon).

In other words, rulership of quadrant houses reverses the normal benefic or malefic status of planets. Rulership of trines, on the other hand, only enhances the nature of planets, makes them more benefic.

Lords of malefic houses 3, 6 and 11 are generally inauspicious, as these are houses of egoism, power, impulse, violence and disease. Lords of malefic houses 2, 8 and 12 are generally malefic but functionally neutral. Their nature depends upon what other houses their planet rules. Of these the stain of rulership of house 8 is greater than that of house 12 or 2.

Therefore, while it is more dangerous for planets to be in difficult houses like 6, 8 and 12, the lords of houses 3, 6 and 11 project a more negative force in the chart than the lords of these more difficult houses.

The reasons for this system are complicated but it is based upon principles of sign rulership.

DUAL HOUSE RULERSHIP

Planets rule two houses, except for the Sun and the Moon, which rule one house each (they are sometimes regarded as a single planet in terms of house rulership). For this reason the temporal status of planets has to be interpreted according to the meaning of both the houses the planet rules.

Planets thereby often rule both a benefic and a malefic house. In this way their influence becomes mixed. It will be good for the effects of the positive house it rules, but bad for the effects of its negative house. The planets in this way reflect the ambiguity inherent within the Ascendant and within life itself.

Saturn for Virgo ascendant rules houses 5 and 6. As the ruler of the fifth house it will be good for children, creativity, intelligence and gains through speculation. As ruler of the sixth it may give bad effects in terms of health or enmity. This reflects the nature of the Virgo ascendant, which is on one hand disciplined in its action but tends towards disease through too much sensitivity.

When a planet rules two houses, one benefic and one malefic, the house that is stronger or more important determines whether the overall effects of the planet are primarily helpful or harmful. Rulership of certain houses outweighs rulership of others.

The ruler of the Ascendant is always generally auspicious even if the other house the planet rules is the sixth or eighth or other malefic houses. Yet this malefic rulership does taint its status.

The ruler of the twelfth house generally gives the effect of the other house the planet rules. Venus as the ruler of houses 5 and 12 for Gemini ascendant is very auspicious and gives mainly the results of the fifth house. The negative effect of twelfth house rulership is most evident if the other house a planet rules is malefic. Saturn as ruler of houses 11 and 12 for Pisces ascendant is very inauspicious because the eleventh is a difficult house.

In this regard we must consider the Mulatrikona sign of the particular planet. Planets give predominantly the effect of the house ruled by their Mulatrikona sign. Saturn rules houses 8 and 9, the worst and best houses, for Gemini ascendant. Yet as Saturn's Mulatrikona sign Aquarius rules the ninth house, its effects will be on the whole more positive than negative. For Virgo ascendant Saturn is less auspicious, as its Mulatrikona sign governs the malefic sixth house.

Another important factor is the natural friendship or enmity of a particular planet with the lord of the Ascendant. Saturn, though it rules malefic houses from Mercury ascendants (Gemini and Virgo) as a natural

friend of Mercury tends to give better results than might otherwise be expected. If such a house lord is a temporal as well as natural friend of the planet, the effects of malefic lordship will be further reduced.

Also important is which sign is stronger in terms of aspect or occupancy. If Saturn is in Capricorn in a Virgo Ascendant, its fifth house influence will become more important than his sixth house affect.

THE SUN AND THE MOON

The Sun and the Moon rule only one house each. Two systems have come into being to deal with this. The first treats them as one planet. They rule the same houses as Saturn, relative to opposite Ascendants. Hence by the laws of house rulership, they are auspicious planets for Aries, Cancer, Leo, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Pisces ascendants--malefics for the rest.

By the second system they are treated as separate planets; the Sun as a malefic and the Moon as a benefic. In this the Sun is auspicious ruling quadrants and trines; the Moon is auspicious ruling trines. The problem with this system is that the Moon as a benefic becomes malefic as lord of quadrants. In fact the generally benefic Moon, the friend of all the planets, becomes more often malefic than benefic as house lord. For this reason we may not want to count the Moon a negative house lord for ruling quadrants. We do see, however, a number of instances of it giving bad results as the lord of the sixth, eighth or twelfth houses. This is particularly when it is under malefic influence or is the dispositor of malefic planets.

However, the Moon regarded as an ascendant in itself is thereby generally auspicious for all charts. When houses are counted from the Moon, the lord of the Moon-sign becomes auspicious from that perspective, just as the lord of the Ascendant in the usual order. When houses are counted from the Sun (a secondary procedure), the lord of the Sun-sign gains a similar auspicious status.

HOUSE LORDS AS SPECIFIC SIGNIFICATORS

Planets as house lords have more specific meanings relative to the houses they rule. For example, the lord of the eleventh house, though generally malefic in terms of health and prone to make the character egoistic or impulsive, is still the lord of the house of gains and as such is good for material acquisitions and often gives good intelligence and capacity to work with groups of peoples (these being the indications of the eleventh house).

When Mercury is the lord of the second and eleventh houses for a Leo ascendant, it is a ruler of two houses of gain and income and as such becomes a double significator of wealth and income. Hence, apart from its generally somewhat malefic nature for this Ascendant in terms of health or judgement, it is particularly good for wealth.

The rule is that a planet is good for the affairs of the houses it rules, though it may not be so for the ascendant or the chart as a whole. This is because houses only represent one aspect of life and some rule over negative things in life. The lord of the twelfth in this way is good for giving losses, that being the power of its house that it boosts up, but it is not good for the Ascendant as a whole. The lord of the sixth is good for promoting disease, or giving power to our enemies, as that is what he rules. The lord of the eighth can give death, negativity or devitalization and so on.

RAJA YOGA

When a planet rules both a trine and a quadrant sign (apart from the ascendant), it gains a special power. It becomes a "Raja Yoga Karaka" or significator of great power. It can confer status, power and prestige. In the most literal sense, it has the power to make one a king or to put us in a position of political or social power. This idea includes any great position of fame and power, like a judge, mayor or administrator, not necessarily a high position. Nor does it not necessarily give wealth, knowledge or spirituality. Most political leaders have such combinations. However, these combinations are not rare and should be reinforced by several factors to be really strong.

For some Ascendants one planet by itself can produce Raja Yoga. Such planet is a doubly powerful temporal benefic. Saturn for Gemini and Libra; Venus for Capricorn and Aquarius; and Mars for Cancer and Leo, have such power.

For Aries and Scorpio, Raja Yoga is produced by the combination of the Sun and the Moon. Other combinations of rulers of trine and quadrant lords (particularly the lord of the ninth with the lord of the tenth) can create Raja Yoga when well placed, and usually when the planet does not rule other bad houses.

House rulership is one of the primary methods of ascertaining the power and effect of planets. It is as important as the basic meaning of planets and signs and helps fine-tune those indications. The meaning of both natural and temporal statuses of planets must be blended properly. The basic rule is as follows:

Natural benefics even when temporarily malefically disposed will do some good, while natural malefics even when temporarily benefic will do some harm.

When a planet has the same significance both naturally and temporally, the effects will be clear, unmixed and relatively easy to predict.

POWER OF ASCENDANTS

According to this principle of house rulership, we can see that some Ascendants tend to be better than others, and for different things.

Libra is sometimes regarded as the best Ascendant to have, because for it Saturn, ruling houses 4 and 5, becomes a Raja Yoga planet, a great benefic, and the main malefic becomes Jupiter (otherwise the most benefic of planets), who cannot therefore usually do much damage. Some even consider that Jupiter can give good results for the Libra ascendant. Moreover, Libra is a quadrant sign, which gives strength. However, Libra may be the best ascendant for our capacity to affect the world, it is not necessarily the best for all other things.

On the other hand, Aquarius is sometimes regarded as the worst of Ascendants because the ruler of the Ascendant (which as Saturn is already a difficult planet) also rules the twelfth house, the house of loss. Aquarius types seldom develop much fame, prestige, or charisma and often end up losers (Mondale was a typical example in the political world). Yet at the same time, Aquarius is often regarded as the best of signs for spiritual growth for this same reason, the twelfth house also indicating liberation (as for example, Ramakrishna).

By a similar principle of house-sign correlation, we see that some ascendants are difficult. Virgo, for example, as the sixth sign, has some of the negative indications of the sixth house, the tendency towards disease. Scorpio as the eighth sign, has some eighth house properties as relating to death, vice or negativity. Pisces sometimes suffers as the twelfth sign from emotional confusion.

Quadrant signs often do better as ascendants, particularly for outer affairs, like Libra and Cancer. Mutable signs do not always make for strong ascendants; most notably Gemini, Virgo and Pisces; yet Gemini in particular gives much intelligence. Trine signs like Leo and Sagittarius are usually auspicious as Ascendants.

However, it is better to have a generally weaker Ascendant with strongly placed planets than a stronger natured Ascendant with weakly placed planets. Stronger Ascendants often give high potentials or expectations in life, which if not met can give us a greater sense of failure.

PLANETS BY ASCENDANT

The laws of house rulership allow us to differentiate Ascendants and adjust the meaning of planets relative to each.

Each house represents a particular "field" of activity, the ruler of a particular house represents the "lord" of that field. Below is a list of the prime house significations:

- 1: self, body, general prosperity and well-being.
- 2: livelihood, speech, youth.
- 3: power, brothers, friends, motivation, interest.
- 4: happiness, home, property, mother.
- 5: creativity, intelligence, romance, children.
- 6: disease, enmity, foreigners.
- 7: partnership, marriage
- 8: death, destruction, longevity, research.
- 9: dharma, grace, fortune, father.
- 10: skill, achievement, success.
- 11: gain, aspiration, impulse.
- 12: loss, sorrow, limitation, liberation.

For example, if the lord of the self is in the field of destruction and the lord of destruction is in the field of the self (that is, if there is an exchange between the first and eighth house lords) then the individual is apt to have a short or difficult life. In this way, the system allows us to translate house nomenclature into meaningful terms.

By rulership of certain houses each planet becomes a temporal indicator of certain affairs in life, the most important of which are mentioned below.

INDICATORS OF POWER/ RAJA YOGA KARAKAS

This status has been discussed already. By ruling over two houses of power, a planet gains this strength.

INDICATORS OF WEALTH/ DHANA YOGA KARAKAS

When a planet rules over two houses of wealth (dhana), it gets this status. Strongest is when a planet rules over houses 2 and 11 (the houses of livelihood and gain). Mercury for Leo Ascendants and Jupiter for Aquarius gain this status.

Planets which rule houses 2 and 5, or 2 and 9 gain this power to a lesser extent. These are Mercury for Taurus ascendant, Jupiter for Scorpio, Venus for Virgo, and Mars for Pisces.

Dhana yogas depend upon the ruler of the second, as the second mainly determines wealth. The eleventh as the house of income, the fifth as giving gains through speculation and the ninth as giving luck and unexpected windfalls, are also to be considered.

INDICATORS OF KNOWLEDGE/ JNANA YOGA KARAKAS

Jnana is spiritual knowledge. Jnana yoga karakas give spiritual and other profound knowledge. Planets which rule both

houses 9 and 12, (the houses of religion and liberation) acquire this status. These are Jupiter for Aries ascendant and Mars for Libra.

Planets ruling houses 2 and 9 gain this status secondarily, like Venus for Virgo ascendant and Mars for Pisces. These give Divine grace or favor in life.

Planets ruling both houses 5 and 8 (intelligence and research) also can give extraordinary mental powers if strong. Such planets are Mercury for Aquarius ascendant and Jupiter for Leo.

INDICATORS OF DISEASE AND INJURY

The sixth house represents disease, as does the eleventh as the sixth from the sixth. Planets ruling both houses 6 and 11 become powerful disease signifiers. These are Mars for Gemini ascendant and Venus for Sagittarius. Mars is worst as it is naturally a difficult planet.

The eighth house represents death and chronic diseases. The eighth from the eighth is the third. Planets ruling houses 3 and 8 become strong signifiers of death and disease. These are Mars for Virgo ascendant and Venus for Pisces. Such planets are also signifiers of longevity as both these are houses of longevity.

Planets which rule houses 6 or 8 along with other malefic houses (3, 6, 11 and 12) become strong signifiers of disease. Such are Mercury for Aries ascendant, Jupiter for Taurus, Saturn for Cancer and Leo, Jupiter for Libra, Mercury for Scorpio, Saturn for Sagittarius, Jupiter and the Sun for Capricorn, Mars and the Moon for Aquarius, and Saturn for Pisces.

INDICATORS OF LIFE AND LONGEVITY

Houses of longevity are 1, 3 and 8. Planets which rule two of these houses have special power in this area. Mars for Aries ascendant and Venus for Libra ruling houses 1 and 8 have this status to the highest degree. Mars for Virgo and Venus for Pisces have this to a secondary degree as already mentioned.

SIGNIFICATORS OF PASSION

Houses of passion and sexuality are houses 5 (romance), 7 (marriage) and 12 (secret pleasures). A planet ruling over two of these houses can give a very strong passionate or sexual nature. Such planets are Mars for Taurus and Sagittarius ascendants and Venus for Gemini and Scorpio.

SIGNIFICATORS OF EGOISM

Houses 3, 6 and 11 indicate egoism, excess use of force, tendency towards a manipulative, aggressive nature and ulterior motives. When a planet rules two of these houses (sometimes house 10 is also considered in this regard), if strong it can make an individual overly impulsive and self-promoting to the point of blindness or violence.

Such signifiers of impulsiveness include Mercury for Aries ascendant, Mars for Gemini, Jupiter for Libra, Venus for Sagittarius.

Considering also the tenth house we also have Saturn for Aries. Saturn for Leo can function this way as well, ruling houses 6 and 7 (as the seventh is the tenth from the tenth).

Mars for Aquarius and Venus for Leo are also very impulsive and power-seeking, ruling houses 3 and 10.

Additional, more complicated indications can be derived through understanding the meaning of the two houses a planet rules. Mars for Capricorn and Venus for Cancer rule 4 and 11. Hence they can indicate gain

(eleventh house influence) through property (the fourth house). Or they can indicate violence or inclination to injure (eleventh house influence) in the mind (the fourth house).

Such meanings should be blended with other indications like the natural status of the planet or the attributes of other planets it may combine with. In this way much depth of meaning can be discovered in otherwise not prominent planetary placements. A planet must always be viewed according to the houses it rules and their meaning on all levels.

The Sun and Moon can be more easily interpreted as they rule only one house at a time and will give their influence more unmixed.

The following is an examination of house rulership Ascendant by Ascendant. One should learn this system of calculation based upon house rulership and see what other insights it can afford. A whole book could be written on this subject alone. It is one of the core insights of Vedic Astrology. Please note that this classification is general. Planets are not just simply good or bad, different factors have to be discriminated within this system.

HOUSE RULERSHIP TABLE

TEMPORAL DISPOSITION OF PLANETS

Sign:	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
Aries	5A	4A	1, 8A	3, 6, I	9, 12 A	2, 7 I	10, 11, I
Taurus	4N	3I	7, 12 I	2, 5 A	8, 11 I	1, 6 A	9, 10*
Gemini	3 I	2 N	6, 11 I	1, 4 A	7, 10 I	5, 12 A	8, 9 N
Cancer	2 N	1 A	5, 10*	3, 12 I	6, 9 A	4, 11 I	7, 8 I
Leo	1 A	12 N	4, 9*	2, 11 I	5, 8 A	3, 10 I	6, 7 I
Virgo	12 N	11 I	3, 8 I	1, 10 A	4, 7 I	2, 9, A	5, 6 N
Libra	11 I	10 N	2, 7 I	9, 12 A	3, 6 I	1, 8 A	4, 5*
Scorpio	10 A	9 A	1, 6 A	8, 11 I	2, 5 A	7, 12 I	3, 4 I
Sagittarius	9 A	8 N	5, 12 A	7, 10 I	1, 4 A	6, 11 I	2, 3 I
Capricorn	8 I	7 N	4, 11 I	6, 9 A	3, 12 I	5, 10*	1, 2 A
Aquarius	7 I	6 I	3, 10 I	5, 8 A	2, 11 I	4, 9*	1, 12 A
Pisces	6 N	4 A	2, 9 A	4, 7 I	1, 10 A	3, 8 I	11, 12 I

A = Auspicious, I = Inauspicious, N = Neutral or Mixed

A* = Very Auspicious, Raja Yoga Karaka, I* Very Inauspicious

PLANETARY ASPECTS AND COMBINATIONS

All systems of astrology, east and west, base their predictions according to the aspects which exist between the planets in the chart. By the theory of aspects, planets project their influence to certain points from their given position in the zodiac. These are determined by the angle or arc of the zodiacal circle relative to the planet's position.

Imagine the zodiac as a circle and the locations of the planets as points along that circle. Draw a line from the points of the planets to the center of the circle. If we then compare the positions of any two planets a certain angle or arc of that circle will be created. This can be measured in terms of degrees. Some of these degrees, like 90, 120 or 180, create various aspects according to the different systems of astrology.

ASPECTS IN WESTERN ASTROLOGY

Western astrology carefully considers the exact degrees between planets in its calculation of aspects. It has major aspects like the square or trine, 90 or 120 degree aspects, and minor aspects, like the semi-sextile, 30 degrees. These aspects are counted as effective if the planets are within a certain number of degrees or orb of each aspect (for major aspects orbs are around 8 degrees, for minor aspects 1--3 degrees). Aspects are considered to exist equally whether a planet is before or behind another planet in the zodiac. Both planets are considered to be affecting each other. Many western astrologers have gone into great detail and minute accuracy with these different aspects and it is a major consideration in the system, if not the most important.

Western astrology ascribes a different nature to the different aspects. Some aspects tend to be malefic or difficult (like the square); others tend to be benefic or easy (like the trine), whatever the planets involved.

ASPECTS BY SIGN

While Vedic astrology uses aspects it is in a different way, which may at first be difficult to comprehend for those familiar with western astrology. First of all, it judges aspects not according to the exact degree of angle between the planets involved but relative to sign. In the opposition or 180 degree aspect, the main one used in Vedic astrology, a planet aspects the sign opposite it (not just the degree). The aspects are not between planets but from planets via the signs they are in to other signs in the zodiac and whatever may be contained in them.

In this way, for example, Jupiter in Aries, by its opposition aspect would aspect the sign Libra, the house ruled by the sign Libra and any planets located in that sign. If Jupiter is in 5 degrees Aries and Saturn in 25 degrees Libra, the aspect would still count (though it would be too wide an aspect by standards of Western astrology, being 20 degrees from a direct opposition).

Some Vedic astrologers do consider aspects to be stronger the more they approach the exact distance of arc. They may regard such aspects to exist independently of signs, at least to a limited degree. If Jupiter is at 1 degree of Aries and Saturn is at 29 degrees of Virgo, the planets are not in opposite signs but the angle of their aspect is 178 degrees, very close to an exact opposition. In this instance, Vedic astrology may still count this as an aspect, though the orbs of such non-sign aspects would be considered small, perhaps less than 5 degrees.

Imagine the twelve signs as like keys on a piano keyboard. Each planet is like a finger striking that key. As long as a planet is in a particular sign, it will be affecting the whole of it. By another analogy, imagine each sign to be like a separate room and the planets to be like lights. Wherever the light is in the room it will light up the whole of it. The first and last degrees of signs are like doorways. At these juncture points the planets can influence both signs but once out of these small doorways, they have little influence on adjacent signs.

In addition, planets affect signs differently according to their nature, just as different pressures of the finger affect the keys on a key board differently. The basis of Vedic astrology is thus harmonic like music. Aspects are counted relative to the twelve signs as the main harmonic division.

Aspects by sign are easy to figure out and do not require knowing the exact degrees of planets. They do not have to be calculated in addition to the chart. For this reason Vedic charts do not have the list of aspects most western charts require.

With aspects counted by sign, Vedic astrology uses fewer aspects than Western astrology. It usually only considers a few major or full aspects. In addition to this it does have a complex way of showing the aspectual strength of planets that considers the exact degree distance between planets, but this is a special factor for subtle calculations, not the commonly used way of viewing aspects. A lot of the special and minor aspects now being commonly used in Western astrology, like quintiles, semisextiles or quincunxes are not used at all or used only in special instances in the Vedic system.

ASPECTS AS REFLECTING PLANETARY NATURE

Vedic astrology does not ascribe any particular quality to different aspects. Aspects are distinguished only by their strength as major or minor. All aspects represent a relationship between planets. The nature of that relationship depends primarily upon the nature of the planets, not upon the type of the aspect. It does not regard oppositions or squares as being bad or difficult, or trines as being good or easy. It depends upon the planets involved. An opposition of a badly disposed Sun, say in its fall in Libra, may prove very difficult, but when well disposed, exalted in Aries, it may prove very beneficial. A square from Mars in Aries, its own sign, to Jupiter in Cancer, its sign of exaltation, can be good, as both planets are well placed. Major or minor aspects change the strength of the relationship between planets but different aspects are not regarded as altering the quality of that relationship.

In the Vedic system all the information given on judging planetary nature is useful for determining the effects of aspects. An aspect from a great malefic like Saturn will tend to be difficult whatever it is. An aspect from a great benefic like Jupiter will tend to be helpful whatever it may be. The detailed way of determining the status of planets by nature and house rulership provides a similarly detailed way of judging the qualities of aspects. Once we have ascertained the nature of a planet and its action in the different domains of life, its aspects will reflect that.

SPECIAL ASPECTS

Vedic astrology ascribes certain aspects only to certain planets. While all planets share a general scheme of aspectual influence, some planets possess special aspects, which other planets do not have, except as minor aspects.

Trines, 120 degree aspects, are regarded as a special full aspect for Jupiter, which other planets possess only as a minor aspect. Squares, 90 degree aspects, are given as full aspects only for Mars (forward in the zodiac) and Saturn (backward in the zodiac). This may be the basis of the western astrological consideration of trines as good and squares as difficult, as trines are related to benefic Jupiter and squares to malefic Mars and Saturn.

According to Vedic astrology, aspects do not change the qualities of planets, but some planets change the power of aspects.

ASPECTS ONLY THROWN FORWARD IN THE ZODIAC

Vedic astrology regards the influence of planets in aspects as only thrown forwards in the zodiac, whereas Western astrology usually sees an aspect as coming from both planets. Whereas Western astrology considers a square to exist between one planet and another in an angle of 90 degrees, whether in front or behind it in the zodiac, the Vedic system would only, for example, consider the square of Mars to be thrown on planets 90 degrees in front of it in the zodiac, not to those planets a similar number of degrees behind it.

The Vedic system calculates aspects by degrees from a planet forward in its zodiacal position. If Saturn is at 3 degrees Gemini and Mars at 3 degrees Pisces, Saturn would have an aspect degree of 270 to Mars and Mars 90 to Saturn. Hence in calculating aspects in the Vedic chart it must be done forwards in the zodiac.

ASPECTS TO SIGNS AND HOUSES

In Western astrology aspects are considered only between planets or from planets to special points like the ascendant or midheaven, sometimes the descendant and nadir. In the Vedic system, planets aspect houses as well, even if there are no planets located in them. They do this if they aspect the sign on the cusp of the particular house. Their aspect on houses can improve or detract from the affairs of that house, depending upon the nature of the planet.

The main rule in chart judgement is to examine an issue according to the house that relates to it, the ruler of the house, and the house significator, not only from the ascendant but also from the Moon. Aspects to all these factors are considered.

For spirituality or religion, for example, we consider the influences on the ninth house, its lord and Jupiter, and also the ninth from the Moon. In this regard we do not just consider the aspects between planets but the entire network of aspectual affects on all the factors in the chart that relate to a particular issue in life. Hence Vedic astrology may consider these aspects upon houses as more significant for judgement than the aspects between the planets themselves. Afflictions to the fifth sign, house, their rulers and significators may stand out more in a chart, for example, than afflictions to a planet like the Sun (which, however, is also considered).

ASPECTS EAST AND WEST, A COMPARATIVE VIEW

From the standpoint of Western astrology, the aspects of Vedic astrology appear general and non-specific. A few major aspects by sign appears as very limited compared to a diversity of aspect by degree and with different qualities. Such a Western astrologer may wonder how Vedic astrology can be accurate with such limited use of aspects.

It must be recognized that the Vedic system does not use aspects in the birth chart in such a primary way as Western astrology. In this regard Western astrology may be more developed and precise and it may be helpful to consider the western view of aspects in the Vedic chart. In fact, it may be this specialization on aspects that is the most important factor in the accuracy of Western astrology. Western sidereal astrology follows the same aspects as western tropical astrology and may be used as a model in this respect.

Yet we must not overlook that Vedic astrology judges aspects also in its series of minor or harmonic charts. This allows for many subtler type aspects and a finer analysis of exact degree relationships between planets. Western astrology may find twenty or more major aspects existing between the planets in the birth chart, and several dozen minor ones. Vedic astrology may only note perhaps ten major aspects between planets in most charts, but these are multiplied by up to sixteen harmonic charts.

Vedic astrology judges planetary relationships by a more extensive system of which aspects are only one part. These are based largely on planetary location, like the series of planetary relationships of friendship and enmity we have already examined, as according to other special planetary strengths and weaknesses (the factors of Shadbala). Of primary importance for it are special "yogas" or planetary combinations. These depend upon various factors including aspects, sign and house location and rulership. We will examine these in the later part of this chapter.

As such, taking the system of Vedic astrology as a whole, we find that it is very intricate, complex and precise, and includes many more calculations and considerations than Western astrology, though in some areas each system may be better developed than the other.

MAJOR PLANETARY ASPECTS (full aspect)

Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus	7th
Mars	4th 7th 8th
Jupiter, Rahu, Ketu	5th 7th 9th
Saturn	3rd 7th 10th

The primary rule is that all planets aspect the seventh sign from the sign in which they are located. This is similar to the opposition or 180 degree aspect in Western astrology.

Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, the distant planets, and Rahu and Ketu, the lunar nodes, possess special aspects.

Mars, in addition to the regular seventh aspect, aspects the fourth and the eighth signs. The fourth aspect is similar to a square or 90 degree aspect in Western astrology of an approaching nature. The eighth aspect is like a quincunx or 150 degree aspect in Western astrology, but it only throws this aspect on planets behind it in the zodiac; so the real angle is 210 degrees.

Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu, have special aspects on the fifth and the ninth. These are the same as trines, 120 degree aspects in Western astrology, operating both forwards and backwards in the zodiac.

Saturn has special aspects for the third and the tenth. Its aspect on the third is like a sextile or 60 degree aspect in Western astrology but only operates on planets in front of it in the zodiac. Its tenth aspect is a square or 90 degree aspect, but operates only backwards; hence its angle is really 270 degrees.

For most purposes in Vedic astrology only their full aspects are used. Some Vedic astrologers consider that a full aspect occurs from a planet located tenth from another. This is worthy of consideration. Planets in the tenth house have a full aspect on the Ascendant by this view.

SAMBANDHA

When planets are in mutual full aspect, they are said to be in "Sambandha", which means complete connection.

This complete connection or Sambandha exists by other factors. When planets exchange signs, ie. when Jupiter is in Aries, a sign ruled by Mars, while Mars is in Pisces, a sign ruled by Jupiter, this is considered a complete connection, like a mutual full aspect. It is called "mutual reception" in Western astrology, and is one of the most powerful connections possible between planets.

By some practitioners of Vedic or Hindu astrology, a mutual full aspect also exists between planets in quadrant houses; houses 1, 4, 7 and 10. For example, if Venus is in Taurus in the fourth house and Jupiter is

in Leo in the seventh house, that by some is counted as a full aspect, though no actual technical major aspects exist.

Some astrologers extend this rule to planets in mutual trines; houses 1, 5 and 9. Others figure mutual quadrant or trine aspects from the Moon and well as the Ascendant. These may be accurate particularly when the Moon is as strong or stronger than the Ascendant. I do not usually give aspectual power to these mutual house relationships, though they are often important for judging the strength of the chart via house positions.

CONJUNCTION

Planets in close proximity are said to be in conjunction. This is a kind of intimate association. In Western astrology, conjunction is counted as a full aspect and given an orb of around 10 degrees, depending upon the planets involved.

In Vedic astrology conjunction is not considered to be an aspect, as aspects are only regarded possible when there is a certain distance between planets. Yet, along with aspects, it is counted as a kind of planetary relationship, a full planetary relationship like a full mutual aspect, and constituting Sambandha.

Conjunctions, like aspects, are counted by sign; though the closer in degrees the planets are to each other, the affect of the conjunction may change, particularly relative to the Sun.

PLANETARY ASPECTS (all aspects)

All planets aspect the seventh sign with a full sight or influence. They aspect the fourth and eighth signs with a three-quarters sight or influence. They have one-half aspect on the fifth and ninth signs. They have one-quarter aspect on the third and tenth.

For Mars, to repeat, its special aspects, which are generally given three-quarters influence, are regarded as full. For Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu, the usual one-half influence aspects, their special aspects, are regarded as full. For Saturn, the one-quarter influence aspects, its special aspects, are counted as full. The rest of the additional aspects for these planets is like that of the other planets.

Minor aspects, including those of three-quarter influence, are usually not used in reading charts. Their main place is as added into other factors for determining planetary strengths, as part of the system of Shadbala. Moreover, these aspects increase proportionally to distance. They do not have orbs. For example, a planet in exact opposition would have a full 100% aspect. Located exactly in the eighth sign away, 210 degrees, it would have three quarters or 75% aspect. However, located in between, 195 degrees away, it would have 87.5% aspectual strength.

{Robben, note, here I would like to include the graph of Planets Aspects from pg. 41 of De Luce's Constellational Astrology if possible}

ASPECTS FOR URANUS, NEPTUNE AND PLUTO

As Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are not part of the regular Vedic system, no judgement of aspects for them exists. We can ignore them altogether but it can be helpful to use them. To use them we must consider that they possess the same major aspects as all planets. This is the seventh aspect or opposition, to which the conjunction can be added as a full planetary interchange.

However, we might want to count these by degrees, rather than signs, with an orb of 10 degrees or less, as their affect as distant planets may not be that strong (which is what I often have done).

I cannot say whether they should have special aspects and do not usually give them such. In one respect, we might consider that they should, because the other planets outside the Earth's orbit are given them. But, in another respect, we may not think so, as they may be too distant to have such a strong affect.

One could give them special aspects like the planets they resemble; Uranus like Saturn (third and tenth), Neptune like Jupiter (fifth and ninth) and Pluto like Mars (fourth and eighth). Or one could give them all aspects like the lunar nodes (fifth and ninth), which they also resemble. However, giving them special aspects would allow them great power in the chart and may unbalance, rather than fine tune, the general interpretation of Vedic astrology, unless their aspects are considered minor.

COMBUST

Planets in close conjunction with the Sun become combust or burnt up. They can be weakened and may be rendered powerless.

For Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, the orb of conjunction of combust is 8 degrees 30 minutes. For the Moon, a larger planet, it is 15 degrees. For the inner planets it is less, 4 degrees for Venus and 2 degrees for Mercury.

However, if a planet is in a favorable sign or house the effects of combust can be greatly mitigated. Planets in the same sign with the Sun are still counted as in full relationship with it (sambandha), even when not combust. Their affect is often better because of this.

Generally speaking, all planets function better if located some distance from the Sun. This is particularly true of the Moon, Mercury and Venus, which are subject to waxing and waning phases. Just as the Moon is strongest when full and becomes weaker as it approaches the Sun, so are Mercury and Venus strongest when at maximum distance from the Sun and become weaker as they approach it. To a certain extent, this is also true of the other planets.

The logic behind combust is that when in proximity to the Sun, the rays of planets are overcome by the power of the solar light. So conjunction with the Sun must be generally regarded as a negative for the energy of any planet.

PLANETARY WAR

When two planets are in conjunction of one degree or less, they are said to be in a state of "war". There is a clashing of the forces of their respective rays. The planet with the lower degree longitude becomes the winner of this planetary war. For example, if Mars is at 23 35 Sagittarius and Venus at 23 17, then Venus is the winner of the war. Benefics who have lost a planetary war with a malefic may be rendered very weak, whereas benefics who have won a war with a malefic become much stronger. The rules of planetary war do not apply in the case of the Sun (or the Moon). For the Sun the rules of combust apply. Conjunction with the Moon is usually considered to be benefic. Rahu and Ketu, as they possess retrograde action, have a stronger effect in the degree above a particular planet, but are also not regarded according to the rules of planetary war.

If a planet is retrograde and technically loses a planetary war, the damage is considered to be less.

HEMMING IN OF PLANETS

If the Moon is in Libra, with Saturn in Scorpio and Mars in Virgo, then it has malefic planets around it in both adjacent sides. In this instance it is said to be "hemmed in by malefics". While this is not technically an aspect, it does have a strong affect like a major aspect. The Moon will be strongly under the influence of these two planets and weakened by their malefic nature.

If the planets involved are Jupiter and Venus, then the Moon would be "hemmed in between benefics", which would thereby protect it and strengthen it. (Of course, for more accuracy, we must consider the full nature of planets, not just their natural status as benefic or malefic, but this is just an example). Such formations must be considered in determining planetary influences and they may constitute various planetary yogas.

A similar construction may be made by planetary aspects. If the Moon is in Libra, while Scorpio and Virgo are under the full aspect of malefic planets only without other influences, then the Moon also is hemmed in between malefic influences. This kind of condition as it is not as direct, is not as strong.

Planets hemmed in by malefics or by malefic influences can counter this to a great extent by receiving a full aspect of a benefic. The reverse is true of planets hemmed in by benefics or by benefic influences.

SEPARATIVE PLANETS

The Sun, Saturn, Rahu, Ketu, and the ruler of the twelfth house from the Ascendant are separative planets. They serve to separate or remove us from the things in life which they influence.

If several of these separative planets aspect the factors representing the marriage partner; the seventh house, its ruler, and the significator of the partner (Venus for the male, Jupiter for the female), then separation is likely to occur. Divorce will happen easily and long lasting relationships will be difficult.

If they aspect the tenth house and its ruler, there may be loss of one's job or an inability to hold steady employment. If they aspect the second house and its ruler, along with Mercury, one will live away from one's parents as a child. If they aspect the fourth house, its lord, the Moon and Mercury, one may be in danger of being separated from one's mind (going crazy). If they aspect the fifth house, its lord and Jupiter, we may be separated from our children or, more likely, we may be unable to have them in the first place, or for women in particular, surgery on the reproductive organs may be possible.

We can become separated or removed from the qualities of each house in this way, according to their nature. If the same houses from the Moon sign are similarly affected the results are more likely to occur.

The Sun creates independence or burns things up; Saturn creates loss, alienation or detachment; Rahu is dispersing and gives an attraction to what is foreign or distant; Ketu makes us contract and causes negativity; and the ruler of the twelfth house projects its energy of loss and retreat, which is the nature of that house. So all these factors possess a common separative effect. This rule is very useful in chart interpretation and should be memorized.

RETROGRADE

Planets can appear to go retrograde, or backwards in the zodiac, because of their different rates of orbit than the Earth. Western astrology usually regards retrograde as causing difficulty, delays or obstacles. A retrograde Mercury, for example, is considered to cause problems in communication.

According to Vedic astrology retrograde is usually a sign of strength. When retrograde, for example, Jupiter is thought to be good for giving children, even if by other factors it may be weak.

Retrograde is sometimes considered to reverse the energy of the planets. Planets when exalted lose strength when retrograde, but when debilitated gain strength.

Retrograde has an internalizing effect on a planet's energy. If Mercury is retrograde the intellect will be more introverted. The individual may be more interested in history or occult pursuits. When afflicted this may cause nervousness or speech difficulties, or just hesitancy in communication.

Retrograde planets often indicate a karmic result. They show an influence from the past. They may be functioning to fulfill some karmic debt or promise or for clearing up affairs from the past. The individual will not go forward with the influences of the planet but must take them backwards or inwards to consolidate or limit them.

PLANETARY YOGAS

Often more important than aspects in Vedic astrology are planetary "yogas". These are complex planetary combinations that consider many factors including sign, house and aspect. Yoga itself means "combination".

Many yogas are defined purely in terms of houses. For example, if the lord of the second house of income is in the twelfth house of loss and the lord of the twelfth house of loss is in the second house of income, this is a yoga for poverty. Many yogas require an exchange of signs between the two planets but not necessarily an aspect between them.

Many Hindu astrology books contain long lists of these yogas, which astrologers often memorize. Yet even when they exist in a chart they may require other supporting factors to be really effective. It is more important to understand the principle behind yogas than to memorize specific yogas. All chart interpretation, which must involve synthesizing or correlating indications in the chart, is like a building up of yogas. The more the same result is indicated by as many different factors as possible in a chart, the more it is likely to be true or take effect. It is the principle of "yogic thinking" that we must grasp, the capacity to draw connections. Some very powerful charts have no simple or classical yogas but have other combinations of planets that make for great strength. Indeed, the simpler yogas are not always as powerful as more complex formations which integrate the energy of a greater number of planets.

LUNAR YOGAS

Many planetary yogas involve the Moon. The Moon is a sensitive, gregarious and motherly planet. She does not like to be alone or to function on her own. An unassociated Moon is generally inauspicious, often even if she is otherwise well-placed. For example, the Moon in Cancer or Taurus may not be good if she has no benefic planets around her or influencing her. She is more inauspicious if only aspected by malefics, if in difficult houses like the sixth, eighth or twelfth, if in her fall in Scorpio or in unfriendly signs.

The Moon does well in conjunction with benefic planets or with benefics in adjacent signs. It does better if Jupiter is located an angle from her (what is called "Keshari Yoga"). Aspected or hemmed in by malefics, particularly Saturn and Rahu, she suffers and with her our mind and emotions suffer. Many of the same issues occur if the ascendant is similarly influenced.

MAHAPURUSHA YOGAS

Among the most common and most useful of the yogas are the "Mahapurusha" yogas, the planetary combinations that create "great people". These occur when planets are located in their own sign or exalted and at the same time in an angle from the ascendant or the Moon. Only the five major planets are

considered, not the Sun or the Moon, but these also benefit from such positions. Such positions serve to magnify the qualities of the planet involved and stamp the chart with its nature, character and force. They may make the person of the type belonging to the planet. People with such charts often have the physical characteristics of the planet.

The Mahapurusha Yoga for Mars is called "Ruchaka Yoga", the "radiant combination". It endows a person with strong martian qualities like courage, daring, force of will, decisiveness, determination, independence, leadership, power of action and achievement. Naturally it is common in the charts of martian type people; military leaders, generals, politicians, lawyers, scientists, executives. It gives much success but the tamasic qualities of Mars may come out, including tendencies towards domination and violence.

The Mahapurusha Yoga for Mercury is called "Bhadra Yoga", the "auspicious combination". It gives strong mercurial qualities like good powers of speech, communication, commerce, intellect, wit, humor, mental sensitivity, humanism and a balanced psychology. It is common in the charts of intellectuals, teachers, writers, businessmen. It gives many powers and talents to the mind but may augment the rajasic, agitated or commercial side of Mercury; the acquisitive mind and its seeking to grasp life in terms of names, forms and quantities.

The Mahapurusha Yoga for Jupiter is called "Hamsa Yoga", the "swan combination"; the swan being the bird of spiritual knowledge in the Vedas. It gives strong Jupiterian qualities, an ethical, moral, philosophical or religious nature, optimism, creativity, health, faith, prosperity and affluence. It is common in the charts of religious people, of teachers, of more liberal social and business leaders, sometimes entertainers. It gives much joy and compassion and can give spirituality but may just serve to make us self-promoting, Jupiterian on a superficial level.

The Mahapurusha Yoga for Venus is called "Malavya Yoga". It gives strong venusian qualities like comfort and prosperity in life, command of vehicles and material resources, beauty, charm, grace, artistic talents. It is common in the charts of artists, beautiful women, those possessing wealth or social influence, sometimes even politicians. Again it can give lower or higher Venus affects depending upon its placement. On a higher level it gives powers of devotion.

The Mahapurusha Yoga for Saturn is called "Shasha Yoga". It gives strong Saturn qualities like power over people, positions of authority, control of material resources, strong work and achievement capacity. It is common in the charts of political and business leaders. As Saturn is a cruel planet, unless the Moon or Jupiter are strong the individual may be selfish, ruthless or destructive (Saturn in an angle is usually looked on with some suspicion). Benefically placed it gives detachment and spiritual insight, the capacity for silence.

These yogas are prominent in the charts of famous people. However, they are not uncommon; many charts have at least one of them. To really work they must be well-placed. Such yogas are stronger when the planet is in the tenth, the best angle, or if they occur both from the ascendant and the Moon. If the planet involved is the final dispositor in the chart or rules over many of the other planets also helps. Additional strength can be gained if such planets combine with friendly planets or planets of like nature, like Mars with the Sun or Jupiter with the Moon. Poorly aspected these yogas can show the destruction of the qualities represented by the planet (as both the planet and its sign may be ruined). While giving strength and power in the outer world, these combinations do not always give spiritual knowledge or an ethical disposition. Strong malefics in Mahapurusha Yogas, like the Mars and Saturn, can create tyrants (see the chart of Hitler for such a yoga for Mars).

An important principle in planetary yogas is that stronger affects may be created when a planet exchanges signs with another planet, than if it is simply in its own sign. For example, if one chart has a Saturn-Moon opposition with Saturn in its own sign Capricorn and the Moon in its own sign Cancer, and another has Saturn in Cancer and the Moon in Capricorn (both planets exchanging signs), the latter chart will tend to be stronger. The reason is that the power of the planets is more integrated. In this regard the Raja Yoga in Napoleon's chart is stronger with this placement than it would have been if the Moon and Saturn were in their own signs. For this reason some charts are very powerful even without any Mahapurusha yogas.

KUJA DOSHA

Mars in certain houses creates difficulties for harmony in marriage and relationship. These are very much stressed in Hindu astrology. They are the first, fourth, seventh, eighth and twelfth houses. Exceptions are for the first house if the sign is Aries, for the fourth house if it is Scorpio, for the seventh if it is Capricorn or Pisces, for the eighth if it is Cancer and for the twelfth if it is Sagittarius.

Such a placement of Mars shows potential conflict in relationship or difficulties in the life of the spouse. A person with such a planetary placement should generally only marry another person with a similar one. Mars in the seventh appears to be the most difficult of these (though it often gives success in the social world) and Mars in the first or eighth is often difficult as well.

Mars in the first can make us aggressive or contentious in our behavior. Mars in the seventh can cause conflict in relationship and the seeking to dominate. Mars in the eighth may give a strong sexual drive or indicate the early death of the partner. Mars in the fourth may show an aggressive subconscious or emotional nature. Mars in the twelfth may indicate hidden passion or the wasting away of our vital energies.

Hence each of these placements has a different meaning. A strong Mars in the chart of a woman is regarded as difficult for marriage from the Hindu point of view as it may make her dominate her husband and perhaps indicate his ill health or even death in extreme cases.

Such placements should not be interpreted simplistically since many charts have them to at least some degree. Again they should be reinforced by other negative influences to the seventh house, its lord and the marriage significator. Moreover, they reflect a more passive role for women in society and may not be so applicable in the modern world where the woman has to work and may therefore need a stronger Mars, which most of these positions gives. In this regard, Kuja Dosha for a woman may only require that she has a more independent type marriage, possibly her own career and perhaps no children.

If the factors representing relationship are afflicted by other malefics (like the Sun, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu), a person may have difficulties in relationship even without Kuja Dosha.

SHADBALA

PLANETARY POWER RATIOS

Shadbala is an elaborate system of computation to aid in determining planetary strengths and weaknesses. It is perhaps the most sophisticated and detailed of such astrological systems and probably the most reliable. While Shadbala is not necessary to give an accurate astrological reading it is helpful information to have. As the calculations are very complex and require much skill and time to do oneself, a computer program to do it is essential. For reason of its complexity we will only outline it here.

A planet strong in Shadbala will have power in the chart, but for good or ill depending upon its nature. One weak in Shadbala will be able to do little and may cause disease or difficulties. Along with Shadbala, signs, houses, aspects and yogas must still be considered. Shadbala is an enhancement not a substitute for a comprehensive examination of a chart. Shadbala tells us if a planet is likely to have enough strength to fulfill its role in the chart. The chart tells us what that role may be and if it is likely to be ordinary or extraordinary.

FACTORS OF SHADBALA

The six factors of Shadbala are 1) Positional Strength (Sthana Bala); 2) Directional Strength (Dig Bala); 3) Temporal Strength (Kala Bala); 4) Motional Strength (Chesta Bala); 5) Natural Strength (Naisargika Bala); 6) Aspectual Strength (Drik Bala).

1. POSITIONAL STRENGTH

This consists of five factors. These are 1) Exaltation Strength (Ucha Bala); how close a planet is from its point of exaltation. 2) Divisional Strength (Saptavargaja Bala); its residential strength in the seven harmonic charts. 3) Odd-Even Sign Strength (Ojayugmarasyamsa Bala); 4) Quadrant Strength (Kendra Bala); its strength in terms of house position. 5) Decanate Strength (Drekkana Bala); its strength in terms of decanate location.

2. DIRECTIONAL STRENGTH

This is one of the main factors of planetary strength and weakness and helps us understand the power of the planets in the houses; hence we explain it below.

Mercury and Jupiter are strong in the east, (the ascendant or first house). The Sun and Mars are strong in the south (the tenth house or midheaven). The Moon and Venus are strong in the north (the fourth house or nadir). Saturn becomes strong in the west (the seventh house or descendant). The same planets become weak in the opposite house or direction.

This factor should not be given too much weight by itself. Generally, any of these planets will do better in quadrants than other houses, but this scheme shows us which quadrants they prefer.

3. TEMPORAL STRENGTH

This is a combination of nine factors based upon the time of birth in hours, days, months, years etc. and the strength of planets at these times or as ruling them. These are 1) Day-Night Strength (Nathonnatha Bala); 2) Monthly Strength (Paksha Bala); 3) Four Hour Strength (Tribanga Bala); 4) Lord of the Year Strength (Abdhipati Bala); 5) Lord of the Month Strength (Masadhipati Bala); 6) Lord the Day Strength (Varadhipati Bala); 7) Lord of the Hour Strength (Hora Bala); 8) Declinational Strength (Ayana Bala); 9) Planetary War Strength (Yuddha Bala).

4. MOTIONAL STRENGTH

This is the most complicated of the Shadbala and relates to the motion of the planets around the Sun, including their movement of retrogression.

5. NATURAL STRENGTH

This is the same for all charts. The Sun is the strongest planet, then the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Saturn, in line with their apparent brightness as seen from the earth.

6. ASPECTUAL STRENGTH

This is according to the judgement of the arc of aspect as according to the extended rules of determining aspects. It is not meant to substitute for calculating aspects in the chart.

HARMONIC CHARTS

PATTERNS OF ASTROLOGICAL INTRICASY

In Vedic astrology a minimum of two charts are done, the basic birth chart (Rashi Chakra) and the harmonic ninth (Navamsha). Frequently six and often as many as sixteen such charts may be considered. These harmonic charts provide more detail and specificity in the delineation of planetary influences.

Some Western astrologers have begun to use harmonic charts, based upon the Hindu model. Yet they calculate these harmonic charts in what is sometimes a different manner than the Vedic one. They simply multiply the longitude of the planet. For a harmonic fifth of a planet for example, they multiply the longitude of the planet by five. Hence if a planet is at 20 degrees Taurus its zodiacal longitude is 50 degrees; that is, it is 50 degrees from the beginning of the zodiac at 0 Aries. Multiplying this by five we get 250 degrees or 10 degrees Sagittarius as its harmonic fifth position.

The Vedic system considers harmonic placement by sign only, not by degrees. Some of these, like the harmonic thirtieth, are not arrived at by simply multiplying the longitude of the planet.

CALCULATION OF HARMONIC CHARTS

As the calculation of these charts is time consuming, it is also best to do it by computer. The following are the general rules should you wish to do it yourself. It is helpful to know the principles behind the calculation of these charts.

HARMONIC SECOND (HORA)

The Hora chart is simple as it is the most basic of the harmonic charts. The first half of odd signs like Aries is ruled by the Sun, the second half by the Moon. Conversely the first half of even signs, like Taurus, is ruled by the Moon, the second half by the Sun.

For example, if Mars is located in 20 degrees Virgo, as it is in the second half of an even sign, it would be in the Hora of the Sun. Hence the Hora chart only gives solar or lunar status of planets and does not place them in signs like the other harmonic charts.

HARMONIC THIRD (DREKKANA OR DECANATE)

In this harmonic the first third or ten degrees 00 00--10 00 of any sign is ruled by itself. The middle third, 10 00--20 00, is ruled by the subsequent sign of the same element. The last third, 20 00--30 00, is ruled by the final sign of the same element.

For example, the first third of Sagittarius is in the harmonic third of Sagittarius, the second third in the harmonic third of Aries, the last third in the harmonic third of Leo. Hence if Saturn is located in a birth chart at 15 20 Sagittarius, it would be in the harmonic third of Aries.

Western astrology has long used the decanate but usually calculates it differently. It makes the first third of a sign that of the cardinal sign of the element, the second that of the fixed sign and the last that of the mutable sign. Hence it sees the first third of Sagittarius as Aries, the second as Leo and the third as Sagittarius.

HARMONIC FOURTH (CHATURTAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into four equal parts. The first fourth (00 00--07 30) is the same as the sign itself. The second fourth (7 30--15 00) is under the next sign of the same quality. The third fourth (15 00--22 30) follows the following sign of the same quality, and the last fourth (22 30--30 00) is of the final sign of the same quality.

For example, the first fourth of Aries is Aries, the second is Cancer, the third is Libra and the last is Capricorn. Hence if Venus is located at 20 15 Aries, it would be in the third harmonic fourth, that of Libra, the third cardinal sign from Aries.

HARMONIC SEVENTH (SAPTAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into seven equal parts of 04 17' 09". The first seventh of odd signs is governed by the sign itself with the rest following the signs in order through the zodiac. For even signs, the first seventh corresponds to the sign seventh from it, and the rest follow in order from that.

Hence the first seventh of Aries, an odd sign, is Aries, the second Taurus, the third Gemini and so on to Libra. The first seventh of Taurus, an even sign, would be Scorpio, the sign seventh from it. The second seventh division would be Sagittarius, the third Capricorn and so on to Taurus as its last seventh. In this way we are merely going through the signs in order.

The following are the harmonic seventh divisions of the sign.

1. 00 00 00-----04 17 09
2. 04 17 09-----08 34 17
3. 08 34 17-----12 51 26
4. 12 51 26-----17 08 34
5. 17 08 34-----21 25 43
6. 21 25 43-----25 42 52
7. 25 42 52-----30 00 00

Thus if the Moon is located at 25 10 Taurus it would be in the sixth division, which would be Aries (sixth from Scorpio).

HARMONIC NINTH (NAVAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into nine equal parts of 3 20'. The first ninth of a sign is governed by the cardinal sign of that element, followed by the rest of the signs from it in order through the zodiac.

In this way the first ninth of Gemini (mutable air) is Libra (cardinal air), the second is Scorpio, the third is Sagittarius and so on all the way to Gemini at the end as the last ninth of its own sign.

1. 00 00----03 20
2. 03 20----06 40
3. 06 40----10 00
4. 10 00----13 20
5. 13 20----16 40
6. 16 40----20 00
7. 20 00----23 20
8. 23 20----26 40
9. 26 40----30 00

Hence if a planet, say Jupiter is at 22 40 Scorpio, it is in the seventh Navamsha. As Scorpio is a fixed water sign, its first ninth would be cardinal water or Cancer and its seventh would be Capricorn. This places Jupiter in Capricorn in the Navamsha.

HARMONIC TENTH (DASHAMSHA)

Here each sign is divided into ten equal portions of 3 degrees each.

The first tenth of Aries is Aries; the first tenth of Taurus is Capricorn; that of Gemini is Gemini; that of Cancer is Pisces; that of Leo is Leo; that of Virgo is Taurus; that of Libra is Libra; that of Scorpio is Cancer; that of Sagittarius is Sagittarius; that of Capricorn is Virgo; that of Aquarius is Aquarius; and that of Pisces is Scorpio.

Hence the rule is that the first tenth of odd signs is itself, that of even signs is of the sign ninth from them. Again we are just counting the signs off in order from the first tenth of Aries as Aries.

1. 00 00--03 00 2. 03 00--06 00 3. 06 00--09 00
4. 09 00--12 00 5. 12 00--15 00 6. 15 00--18 00
7. 18 00--21 00 8. 21 00--24 00 9. 24 00--27 00
10. 27 00--30 00

If the Sun is in 08 30 Gemini, for example, it would be in the third Dashamsha, which would be Leo.

HARMONIC TWELFTH (DWADASHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into equal sections of 2 30'. The first twelfth of each sign is the same as the sign itself with the rest counted off in order through the zodiac.

1. 00 00--02 30 2. 02 30--05 00 3. 05 00--07 30
4. 07 30--10 00 5. 10 00--12 30 6. 12 30--15 00

7. 15 00--17 30 8. 17 30--20 00 9. 20 00--22 30
10. 22 30--25 00 11. 25 00--27 30 12. 27 30--30 00

If Mercury is in 09 35 of Virgo, it would be in the fourth Dwadashamsha or Sagittarius.

HARMONIC SIXTEENTH (SHODASHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into sixteen equal parts of 1 degree, 52' 30". The first sixteenth of all cardinal signs begins with Aries; that of all fixed signs begins with Leo; that of all mutable signs with Sagittarius and the rest are counted off in order from these.

HARMONIC TWENTIETH (VIMSHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into twenty equal parts of 1 degree, 30'. The first twentieth of all cardinal signs begins with Aries; of all fixed signs Sagittarius; and of all mutable signs Leo and the rest are counted off in order from these.

HARMONIC TWENTY-FOURTH (SIDDHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided off into twenty four equal parts of 1 degree, 15'. All odd signs begin with Leo and all even signs with Cancer, with the rest counted off from these.

HARMONIC TWENTY-SEVENTH (BHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into twenty seven equal parts of 1 degree, 06' 40". All fiery signs begin with Aries, all earthly with Cancer, all airy with Libra and all watery with Capricorn. Again the rest are counted off in order from these.

HARMONIC THIRTIETH (TRIMSHAMSHA)

This chart is done in a peculiar way, the explanation for which I have not seen. With odd signs the first five degrees, 00 00--05 00 corresponds to Aries, the next five, 05 00--10 00, to Aquarius, the next eight, 10 00--18 00 to Sagittarius, the next seven, 18 00--25 00, to Gemini, and the last five, 25 00--30 00, to Libra.

For even signs the first five degrees, 00 00--05 00, relate to Taurus, the next seven 05 00--12 00 to Virgo, the next eight, 12 00--20 00 to Pisces, the next five, 20 00--25 00 to Capricorn, and the last five, 25 00--30 00 to Scorpio.

There are no harmonic thirtieth positions in Cancer or Leo.

HARMONIC FORTIETH (CHATURVIMSHAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into forty equal parts of 45 minutes each. All odd signs begin with Aries and all even signs with Libra, with the rest counted off in order from these.

HARMONIC FORTY-FIFTH (AKSHA VEDAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into forty five equal parts of 40 minutes. All cardinal signs begin with Aries; all fixed signs with Leo; and all mutable signs with Sagittarius, with the rest counted off in order from these.

HARMONIC SIXTIETH (SHASHTIAMSHA)

Each sign is divided into sixty equal parts of 30 minutes. Each sign starts with itself and the other divisions are counted off in order of the zodiac.

These sixteen harmonic charts (which includes the birth chart or Rashi Chakra) are called "Shodashavarga", the group of sixteen. "Shadvarga", the group of six, consists of the birth chart, the harmonic second, third,

ninth, twelfth and thirtieth. When the harmonic seventh is added to these it becomes the "Saptavarga" or group of seven. Adding the harmonic tenth, sixteenth and sixtieth, we get "Dashavarga", the group of ten.

MEANING AND USAGE OF HARMONIC CHARTS

Harmonic charts are commonly used for determining planetary strengths. Planets gain strength as they are located in the signs of their exaltation, own signs, or signs of friends, and lose strength in the signs of their enemies, or fall.

We can examine the signs in which each planet is located in each of the harmonic charts. We judge these by the same rules of planetary friendship and enmity as used in the basic birth chart.

Harmonic charts have additional specific usages and focus on particular areas of life.

HARMONIC FIRST

This is the same as the basic birth chart (Rashi Chakra), relative to which all the harmonic charts are judged. What is present in the birth chart may be heightened or diminished by the influence of the harmonic charts but cannot be overridden by them. The harmonic charts serve to fine tune the meanings in the birth chart but do not serve to radically change them. The birth chart always determines the field in which they operate and should be visualized behind them. The harmonic charts are thus like a series of concentric circles with the birth chart as the outside circle. The subtler harmonic charts are contained within the fields of the larger harmonics.

HARMONIC SECOND

As indicating the Sun and Moon, the second harmonic or Hora chart shows the nature of the individual and power of the planets relative to solar and lunar, yang and yin, active and passive, male and female, individual and social, mental or emotional energies.

Masculine planets like the Sun, Mars and Jupiter are stronger in the Hora of the Sun. Those of feminine nature like the Moon, Venus and Saturn are stronger in the Hora of the Moon. Mutable Mercury is does well either way but which is better depends upon the planets whose influence it is under.

Planets in the solar division tend to make the individual independent, active, energetic, assertive, willful, confident, self-reliant but in excess egoistic, selfish, harsh, unfeeling, manipulative or controlling. Planets in the lunar division tend to make the person sensitive, caring, nurturing, receptive, gentle but in excess can render them dependent, passive, unmotivated, overly emotional, sentimental or hypersensitive.

Solar division planets give more reliance on one's inner power and give initiative. Lunar division planets give more reliance on social influences, family, the past. Not enough

planets in solar divisions will make an individual unable to gain recognition for what they do. Not enough in lunar divisions will create a lack of understanding and taking undeserved recognition.

The Hora chart is often given a second house influence and thought to relate to wealth. When the ruler of the second is in its appropriate Hora it gives better results for all the affairs of the second house.

Hora means hour. As each sign governs two hours of the day, that being the time it takes to cross the ascendant, each hora governs about one hour.

HARMONIC THIRD

The harmonic third or decanate corresponds in meaning to the third house. It governs brothers, sisters, friends and alliances. It shows our capacity to work in a group or in association to achieve a particular goal. It indicates our energy, curiosity, courage, passion and prowess.

The position of the lord of the third in the birth chart should particularly be examined in the harmonic third, as well as Mars, the natural indicator of the third house.

The harmonic third is also useful for fine tuning Sun, Moon and Ascendant positions. For example, if Aquarius is the Ascendant, but Gemini the decanate, the communicative and intellectual power of Gemini will come out in the humanitarian influence of Aquarius. When an individual has many planets located in the same sign, we can often discriminate their action by their decanate positions.

HARMONIC FOURTH

The harmonic fourth like the fourth house is said traditionally to deal with general well-being in life, emotion, home and happiness. If benefic planets like Jupiter and Venus or the rulers of benefic houses are strong in this chart, then well-being is enhanced.

The positions of the Moon, Mercury and the lord of the fourth house should be examined relative to this chart and can be taken as an indication of our emotional contentment and psychological happiness.

HARMONIC SEVENTH

The harmonic seventh is said to relate to children and grandchildren. Again, this is not to be taken literally. It refers to the creative projections of the individual in general, which for the majority of us relates to procreation. In this chart we see our creative capacities and the extent to which they can be concretely realized or recognized.

I also like to judge seventh house and relationship issues from this chart. The position of the lord of the seventh and the significator of the seventh, Venus for men and Jupiter for women, in this harmonic can be important.

HARMONIC NINTH

The harmonic ninth or Navamsha is the main harmonic division and like the birth chart or harmonic first can be used for reading all the domains of life. It is said to traditionally refer to marriage and the partner. It deals with relationship in general and what we need to complement ourselves. Mainly it refers to our ability to share our inner or spiritual values in relationship. In comparing the Navamsha charts of couples we can get a better idea as to spiritual or dharmic compatibility.

The most important indications of the harmonic ninth are like that of the ninth house. It shows our dharma, our inner values, the spiritual or religious motivation we may have. It reflects more the nature of our soul and its aspirations, as the birth chart reflects more the nature of our particular incarnation and the ego. As showing the forces that move us on an inner level it is often a good index of our future life or the evolution of our soul. In this regard, it is often more reflective of who we really are and what our soul is aiming to achieve.

A strong Navamsha but a weak birth chart tends to show a strong soul choosing a difficult incarnation. A weak Navamsha but a strong birth chart tends to show a strong personality but a weak soul.

The positions of Jupiter, the lord of the ninth and the Atmakaraka or significator of the self in the Navamsha are of particular importance. All the planetary significators can be judged from this chart and are most specific to it. If a planet is strong in both the birth and the ninth chart it will give very good results. A planet in its own sign or exalted in the birth chart but in its fall in the Navamsha can be weakened.

A planet in the same sign in both the birth chart and Navamsha is regarded as strong. It is called "vargottama", which literally means in the best subdivision. This gives it greater strength, but for good or ill.

HARMONIC TENTH

The harmonic tenth is much like the tenth house in meaning. It should be examined along with it and the Sun, Mercury, Jupiter and the lord of the tenth. It indicates power, position, achievement, status and skill. If the lord of the tenth is strong here it indicates that the individual will accomplish great actions or achieve their goals in life. It shows the impact of the individual upon the world at large and their position in it. It is important in the delineation of vocation and career. It shows our karmic impact upon life.

HARMONIC TWELFTH

This is the chart of fate or destiny, of past karma. It is said traditionally to indicate the parents but it stands for past karma and conditioning generally, including hereditary factors, and shows past life influences. It is often used as an index of the last life and seen something like the birth chart of the last incarnation. It indicates what the soul brings with it into this life and what can be discovered by a deeper probing into our psyche. It often shows us the karmic reason for our particular character and destiny in life.

We can use the birth chart for the present life, the ninth for future life and the twelfth for the past life. In this way we can read the evolution of the soul.

The meanings of the twelfth harmonic are much like the twelfth house, showing the past, karma, the subconscious and the more hidden layers of the mind, secret motivations, compulsions, obsessions etc. The positions of the Moon, Saturn and the lord of the twelfth are important here.

HARMONIC SIXTEENTH

Sixteen is four times four; hence this chart traditionally refers to the affairs of the fourth house--happiness, home, property and the acquisition of vehicles. It is used like the fourth harmonic and along with it and shows the deeper wishes and desires of the soul, whereas the fourth harmonic often has a more outward value. If the fourth house lord is strong in this chart, then the affairs of the fourth house will be strengthened. This chart is also important in psychology, as relating to mental stability and emotional contentment.

HARMONIC TWENTIETH

This is said traditionally to be the chart of "Upasana" or devotional meditation. It indicates the religious development of the soul and our capacity for the yoga of devotion (bhakti yoga). It often shows our religious tendencies from past lives and the religions we have associated with. It shows the Shakti, the goddess-energy, at work in our lives and thereby indicates our capacity to surrender to the Divine will. It helps indicate the form of the Divine that we are inclined to worship (ishta devata). It can also show creative and artistic capacity.

Twenty is five times four. Many of the meanings of this house are much like the fifth house and the factors pertaining to the fifth house, like Jupiter and its lord, should be examined here. It shows the joy, love and creativity of the soul.

HARMONIC TWENTY-FOURTH

This is said traditionally to be the chart of mental or meditational achievements, including the siddhis or psychic powers. In the higher sense this is the chart of spiritual knowledge and shows the spiritual development of the soul from past lives. It shows our capacity for and development of the yoga of knowledge (jnana yoga). It is the most important harmonic chart for ascertainment of spiritual nature and the potential for enlightenment. Strong planets here have enhanced psychic and spiritual capacities for greater perception, skill and awareness.

On a general level this chart indicates the educational career of the individual. Whether the knowledge gained will be spiritual or material depends much upon the nature of the character from the birth chart.

The position of the ninth lord, Mercury and Jupiter is important here, as well as the Atmakaraka. Between the twentieth and twenty-fourth harmonics we can understand many of the hidden secrets of our spiritual unfoldment.

HARMONIC TWENTY-SEVENTH

This chart measures the strength or weakness of the planets relative to the twenty seven lunar constellations (nakshatra) in which they dwell. As such it is a further fine tuning of the Navamsha chart (which itself measures 1/4 of the nakshatra). This chart indicates particularly strengths and weakness of the Moon. It is also important for planetary signifiers.

HARMONIC THIRTIETH

This is the traditional chart of misfortune, injury, enmity and disease. It is an important harmonic chart for discovering the dangers we need to avoid in life. Major health difficulties or potential injuries can be seen in malefic placement of planets here.

The power of the lords of the third, sixth, eighth and eleventh houses can be gauged here. Also any planets located in the sixth, eighth or twelfth houses in the birth chart should be examined here. If they are poorly placed in this chart they are much more likely to cause problems.

HARMONIC FORTIETH

This chart deals with special auspicious and inauspicious effects of planets, sometimes said to be good and bad habits, particularly the proclivities of the emotional and psychological nature. As four times ten it relates to the affairs of the fourth house.

HARMONIC FORTY-FIFTH

This helps fine tune all general indications, though it is often said to relate to the moral or ethical nature of the individual. As nine times five it has the fifth and ninth house indications of good or bad karma. It indicates which of the three deities, Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva, the creator, preserver or destroyer that the nature of the individual most reflects.

HARMONIC SIXTIETH

This is the most subtle of the harmonic charts and often used in the case of twins. It is used for the subtlest fine-tuning of planetary effects.

These charts have different degrees of importance. Most important are the harmonic ninth, third, second, twelfth, twentieth, twenty-fourth and thirtieth.

The position of the Ascendant in these charts is the most specific factor but unless the birth time is highly accurate it cannot be relied upon in the subtle subdivisions. For example, an error of five minutes in the time of birth would change the Ascendant in harmonics more subtle than the twelfth. For this reason we often rely more upon the position of the Moon and the Atmakaraka in these subtle charts. These are turned into the Ascendant and houses are read from its placement.

As the distant planets move slowly all their subtle subdivisions can be accurately calculated. They are often more revealing than their sign placements in the birth chart. The positions of Jupiter and Saturn in the subtler divisions is important for indicating general fortune or misfortune.

PLANETARY PERIODS

DETERMINING PLANETARY INFLUENCES THROUGH TIME

The planetary periods of Vedic astrology provide an easy and comprehensive system for judging the effects of planets throughout the development of our lives. They can be used in place of more cumbersome systems of progressions and transits, or these can be added to them for fine-tuning. The planetary periods are perhaps the most accurate system for showing how the planets distribute their effects through time and the different stages of our lives. A Vedic chart is worth having done for them alone. A reading is not complete without them. We should all know the periods we are in and contemplate the course of our lives according to how our periods change.

Vedic astrology always considers planetary periods in any reading. It does not require an additional chart or even transits to see this, but is in evidence in the birth chart itself and the positions within it. The Vedic chart gives us a list of planetary periods that provides an overview of the development of planetary forces through our entire life. These periods are very helpful for examining our life and for planning long term goals. They can show us major transitions in our life and character. Most of us undergo major changes periodically. Some of us change personalities in a dramatic way at certain times. The planetary periods provide the key to these events. Some periods may be so different from each other that the whole nature of the destiny, health or personality may change with them.

A few different systems are used for determining the planetary periods. The most common is "Vimshottari Dasha" or "the 120 year cycle", which will be examined here. In it each of the seven major planets plus the two lunar nodes are given periods of from 6 to 20 years. They are in cyclical order the Sun 6 years, the Moon 10 years, Mars 7 years, Rahu 18 years, Jupiter 16 years, Saturn 19 years, Mercury 17 years, Ketu 7 years, Venus 20 years. The order is the same as that of the rulership of the lunar constellations (nakshatras), as the periods are based upon them. No specific rationale is given for these amounts. We notice that the period of Rahu, a shadow planet, is much longer than that of major planets like the Sun and Moon. In order of length the periods are the Sun 6, Ketu 7, Mars 7, the Moon 10, Jupiter 16, Mercury 17, Rahu 18, Saturn 19, Venus 20. We see something of an order here (16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 equalling 90 and 6, 7, 7, 10 equalling 30) , though it would be more logical if Mars were 8 years in its period and the Moon 9. Still even though we can't quite make sense of it, the system works quite well.

HOW TO DETERMINE PLANETARY PERIODS

We must determine the major period (Maha Dasha) in which the planet is in and then the minor period (Bhukti Dasha) within it. The minor period we can divide into smaller increments if we wish.

First, find the Lunar constellation, Nakshatra (see table), in which the Moon is located at birth. For example, if it is 12 26 Virgo, then its lunar constellation will be "Hasta". Look to the table and see what planet rules it. This is the Moon. Hence the major planetary period at birth would be that of the Moon.

Then determine how many more degrees and minutes it has to travel to complete the course of this constellation. Each constellation is 13 20' or 800 minutes in length. In this case, Hasta begins at 10 00' Virgo. Therefore, it has already travelled through 2 26' of it and 10 54' remain in the constellation (654 minutes). Divide this remainder by 800 and this will show you what percentage of the period remains to be traversed (in this case .8175).

Next look to the table and see how long the period of the ruling planet lasts. In our example, Hasta is ruled by the Moon, whose period is 10 years. Multiply the duration of the planetary period by the percentage of the constellation yet to be travelled (here 10 years by .8175 or 8.175 years).

Multiply the remainder minus the years times twelve to get the months (.175 x 12 or 2.1 months). Finally, multiply the month remainder by 30 for the days (.1 x 30 or 3 days). This gives the total yet to be transpired in the planetary period from the moment of birth (here 8 years, 2 months, 3 days).

If the date of birth is Oct. 10, 1952, for example, we add the remainder of 8 years 2 months and 3 days to it. The Moon's period would begin at birth and end on Dec. 13, 1960.

All the other planetary periods will begin on the month and day that the first planetary period ends. In our case, the period of Mars of seven years would begin 12/13/1960. It would be followed by Rahu on 12/13/1967 and so on through out the cycle of planetary periods. Hence the day our first planetary period ends is an important date in the year for us, as it marks the time when all our other major planetary periods will start in different years.

(It should be noted that this method of calculation is approximate. A computer version with detailed year to month and month to day conversion tables will give a figure which may vary a few days and will be more

accurate, but the periods are not that rigidly divided from each other and so this difference is seldom significant.)

TABLE OF PLANETARY PERIODS

MAJOR AND MINOR (DASHAS AND BHUKTIS)

Minor periods (Bhuktis) listed as years, months and days.

1. Sun Major Period (Maha Dasha)/ 6 years

Sun 0 3 18
Moon 0 6 0
Mars 0 4 6
Rahu 0 10 24
Jupiter 0 9 18
Saturn 0 11 12
Mercury 0 10 6
Ketu 0 4 6
Venus 1 0 0

2. Moon Major Period/ 10 years

Moon 0 10 0
Mars 0 7 0
Rahu 1 6 0
Jupiter 1 4 0
Saturn 1 7 0
Mercury 1 5 0
Ketu 0 7 0
Venus 1 8 0
Sun 0 6 0

3. Mars Major Period/ 7 years

Mars 0 4 27
Rahu 1 0 18
Jupiter 0 11 6
Saturn 1 1 9
Mercury 0 11 27
Ketu 0 4 27
Venus 1 2 0
Sun 0 4 6
Moon 0 7 0

4. Rahu Major Period/ 18 years

Rahu 2 8 12
Jupiter 2 4 24
Saturn 2 10 6
Mercury 2 6 18
Ketu 1 0 18
Venus 3 0 0
Sun 0 10 24
Moon 1 6 0
Mars 1 0 18

5. Jupiter Major Period/ 16 years

Jupiter 2 1 18
Saturn 2 6 12
Mercury 2 3 6
Ketu 0 11 6
Venus 2 8 0
Sun 0 9 18
Moon 1 4 0
Mars 0 11 6
Rahu 2 4 24

6. Saturn Major Period/ 19 years

Saturn 3 0 3
Mercury 2 8 9
Ketu 1 9 9
Venus 3 2 0

Sun 0 11 12
Moon 1 7 0
Mars 1 1 9
Rahu 2 10 6
Jupiter 2 6 12

7. Mercury Major Period/ 17 years

Mercury 2 4 27
Ketu 0 11 27
Venus 2 10 0
Sun 0 10 6
Moon 1 5 0
Mars 0 11 27
Rahu 2 6 18
Jupiter 2 3 6
Saturn 2 8 9

8. Ketu Major Period/ 7 years

Ketu 0 4 27
Venus 1 2 0
Sun 0 4 6
Mars 0 4 27
Rahu 1 0 18
Jupiter 0 11 6
Saturn 1 1 9
Mercury 0 11 27

9. Venus Major Period/ 20 years

Venus 3 4 0
Sun 1 0 0
Moon 1 8 0
Mars 1 2 0
Rahu 3 0 0
Jupiter 2 8 0
Saturn 3 2 0
Mercury 2 10 0
Ketu 1 2 0

HOW TO USE PLANETARY PERIODS

The life cycle used in this main system of planetary periods (Vimshottari dasha) is 120 years. Naturally, most of us do not live that long and difficult periods limit our lifespan. Those periods coming after death, however, help us determine the nature of the after life state, the sojourn in the astral plane of the respective soul.

Time is not the same on the astral as on the physical. It is more subtle. If, for example, one dies during the middle of a negative planetary period the remainder of that negative influence will affect the after death state.

The Major period, Maha Dasha, varies from 6-20 years of the life depending upon the planet. The average is 13 and 1/3 years.

The Minor period, Bhukti Dasha, varies from 8 months to 2 years and 3 months, with an average of 1 and 1/2 years.

The Subminor period, Antar Dasha, varies from 30-90 days or 1-3 months depending upon the planet, with an average of 60 days. To get these we divide the minor period by the following amounts, starting with the period of the planet which rules the minor period. For the Sun 1/20, for the Moon 1/12, for Mars 7/120, for Rahu 9/60, for Jupiter 2/15, for Saturn 19/120, for Mercury 17/120, for Ketu 7/120, for Venus 1/6.

The Subsubminor period, Sukshma Antar Dasha, varies from 3-10 days, with an average of about a week. We can get these by dividing the subminor periods by the same proportions.

It should be noted that unless the birth time is very accurate, the subsubminor periods may not be exact. For confidence in using these periods the birth must be exact to one minute (which is seldom the case except by careful rectification). An error of two minutes in the birth time will put the subsubminor periods approximately one entire period off. Hence some astrologers do not put so much emphasis on these periods.

Moreover, depending upon the Ayanamsha used the timing of major planetary periods may differ. A difference of one degree in the Ayanamsha will vary the major planetary periods for a year or more,

depending upon their length. Hence planetary periods are one of the best testing grounds for the different Ayanamshas.

BACKGROUND TRANSITS

We should consider current transits of planets relative to planetary periods. The transits of the strongest planet or lord of the ascendant in the birth chart are always important. We take special notice of the transits of the planet ruling the period, particularly the Major and Minor lords. We also note transits of planets to the period lords. These transits have about 1/3 value in judging the effects of the periods. The rest is determined by the positions and relations between these planets in the birth chart. Strong transits are of particular importance when they occur at the juncture between planetary periods.

For Minor planetary periods we note especially transits of the distant planets, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, as well as the lunar nodes, as these often have an effect for a period up to one year.

For Subminor periods we examine more the transits of the closer planets, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, as their influence

tends to dispense itself during this lesser period.

PLANETARY RETURNS

Returns of Planets to their natal positions are considered with transits. They are the most important form of transits. Monthly lunar returns, yearly solar returns, 12-13 year Jupiter returns, 18-19 year nodal returns and 29 year Saturn returns are particularly important.

It is most important to note the returns of Major and Minor lords. A chart can be drawn up for that time and compared to the birth chart for showing the effects of the period.

USE OF PERIOD LORDS

The Lord of the major period will give the results of the houses it rules and the houses and house lords it aspects. TO USE THE PLANETARY PERIODS CORRECTLY ONE MUST FIRMLY UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES OF HOUSE RULERSHIP AND THE TEMPORAL STATUS OF PLANETS AS ALREADY OUTLINED. THIS SYSTEM IS SPECIFIC FOR INTERPRETING THE RESULTS OF PLANETARY PERIODS. The Major lord is considered to be casting an aspect towards all the planets and houses but doubly so those it has an aspect on in the birth chart.

The Lord of the minor period will also be casting similar aspects as the Major lord. Most important is the relationship between the Major and Minor lord. Whatever relationship is present between them in the birth chart will be magnified. Generally, the Minor lord will be considered to be casting aspect on the Major lord, modifying therefore the nature of its results.

If no direct aspect exists in the birth chart, their influences will still be combined as if a direct aspect did. For example, if Jupiter and Venus are both benefically disposed in the birth chart but have no aspect there, still during the Jupiter major Venus minor period (or vice versa) many of the effects of a Jupiter-Venus aspect will be in evidence, though not as strongly as if a full aspect existed between them in the birth chart.

Note, besides aspects, house relationships. Planets in inauspicious houses from each other, like the sixth, eighth or twelfth will not tend to work well together. Those in auspicious houses, like trines or quadrants will have affects even without aspects between them.

Also note friendship and enmity. Friendly planets will give better results as Major and Minor period lords. Inimical planets will cause some difficulties, even if they both have some auspicious nature relative to the birth chart as a whole.

These different factors should be weighed and synthesized and used to adjust the effects of the periods.

The lord of the subminor period should also be considered as making aspects or forming relationships with the Major and Minor lords, as well as strengthening those which may exist in the natal chart. The Subminor lord will modulate the effects of the Minor lord.

HOW TO DETERMINE FAVORABLE PERIODS

The general rule is that most favorable times are when there is a combination of different benefic lords; that is, when all the Major, Minor and Subminor lords are benefic in nature and different planets. Next best is if all are benefic but one is repeated twice (so there are still no malefics in the sequence) among them.

Of similar nature is a condition in which all period lords rule the same domain of life, as it is seldom that a group of planets is benefic for all domains of life. A time in which the lords of the ninth, eleventh, second and fourth (or fifth) houses combine, will naturally be very good for business and income.

On the other hand, for a negative example, when the lords of the sixth, eighth, twelfth, third (or eleventh) combine, disease or difficulties will be more likely.

Particularly auspicious is when a Major planetary period of a benefic planet begins. Of it, the first minor, subminor and subsubminor periods will be ruled by it also. This is a good time for projecting the goals or actions to be achieved within the planetary period as a whole. However, a good planetary period does not always give its results immediately. In the beginning the seeds of its positive developments will come forth but not necessarily the fruit.

When Minor periods begin, the Subminor period will also be ruled by the same planet. This is also a favorable time for the affairs of the Minor lord that are in harmony with the Major lord.

The beginning of planetary periods, particularly the Major and Minor, is a good time for balancing via gems, mantras, deities or other remedial measures the possible negative influences of the period lords.

If the planet is benefic but weak we can strengthen its influence via its gem. If it is malefic, we can propitiate it via mantra, ritual or worship. If it is malefic we can strengthen the Lord of its ruling period if the lord is benefic. For example, if a negative Saturn minor period is staring within a positive Jupiter major period, one can either propitiate Saturn or strengthen Jupiter.

Of these period rulers the Major lord is most important for determining the general nature of the time, then the Minor, Subminor and Subsubminor lords in order.

For example, if the Major lord rules the second, a house of livelihood, the Minor the eleventh, a house of income, the subminor the ninth, a house of fortune, material gain is likely. On the other hand, if the Major lord rules the ninth, a house of religion, the Minor the fifth, a house of intelligence and the Subminor the second, a house of intellect, it would be more favorable for communication of spiritual, religious or legal principles.

Of course, the natural status of the planets must be considered as well. If one is in a period in which the Major lord rules the sixth, the Minor lord the eighth and the Subminor lord is a temporally benefic Mars or Saturn, the natural malefic nature of these planets may quite likely be brought into play along with the general difficult nature of the predominant period lords.

DETERMINATION OF FAVORABLE TIMES

Once we have come upon a time period when the Major, Minor, and Subminor are favorable, we should then look for a day when the Moon and the lord of the day are favorable. Finally, we should examine a time on that day when the Ascendant and Navamsha ascendant are favorable, then we will have a most excellent time for a particular venture. Lastly, we should pick a favorable hourly lord, if possible.

The nature of this venture, starting a business, a marriage, spiritual initiation or whatever, will determine the nature of the factors we give emphasis to. For spiritual initiation, we would consider the ninth house, its lord, Jupiter and the Atmakaraka as most important.

For partnership we would have to examine the charts of both individuals and find a day good in both of their charts. Naturally, this may involve some compromise. We would aim at finding the best possible day with the required period, a month, several months or whatever the venture requires.

The use of Planetary periods is not only for determining the nature of the influences operative at their specific times but also for determining within them favorable times for different actions. This does not mean that we have to live by astrology, using the ephemeris or examining the birth chart every day or week. A monthly examination, however, is helpful and a yearly examination is a good thing for most of us to follow. The purpose is not to make us slaves to time and the planets but to increase our perception of the forces at work in our lives. It is mainly for important decisions and changes that we should consult our planets.

Planetary periods can also be used to determine good times to do rituals (like pujas or homas).

PLANETARY HOURS

Each planet governs certain hours of the day. They will give their main results at these times. Auspicious planets in the chart will give good results at their hours, inauspicious planets will cause difficulty, as per all the general rules.

Influences will be compounded according to the favorable or unfavorable nature of the planet ruling the day (like the Sun for Sunday) and its relationship with the planet ruling the hour. The disposition of the Moon at the time is also important, as is the nature of the ascendant.

Planetary hours should be considered relative to True Local Time. Daylight Savings Time should also be subtracted when in effect. Four minutes should be added or subtracted from clock time for each degree west or east of the standard time meridian, depending on where the place is located.

Planets governing the respective hours are as follows. Their influence commences with the beginning of the hour and concludes with its ending. The planet ruling the day starts off the hourly sequence at midnight. The sequence is backwards according to proximity of the planets in orbit to the earth, by the ancient laws; Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon.

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY

A.M. A.M. A.M. A.M.

12 Sun-----Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 1 Venus-----Saturn----Sun-----Moon
 2 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 3 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury----Jupiter
 4 Saturn---Sun-----Moon-----Mars
 5 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 6 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter---Venus
 7 Sun-----Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 8 Venus-----Saturn----Sun-----Moon
 9 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 10 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury----Jupiter
 11 Saturn---Sun-----Moon-----Mars

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

12 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 1 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter---Venus
 2 Sun-----Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 3 Venus-----Saturn----Sun-----Moon
 4 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 5 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury----Jupiter
 6 Saturn---Sun-----Moon-----Mars
 7 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 8 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter---Venus
 9 Sun-----Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 10 Venus-----Saturn----Sun-----Moon
 11 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn

THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

A.M. A.M. A.M.

12 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 1 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter
 2 Sun-----Moon-----Mars
 3 Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 4 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus
 5 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 6 Saturn---Sun-----Moon
 7 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 8 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter
 9 Sun-----Moon-----Mars
 10 Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 11 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus

P.M. P.M. P.M.

12 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 1 Saturn---Sun-----Moon
 2 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 3 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter
 4 Sun-----Moon-----Mars
 5 Venus-----Saturn----Sun
 6 Mercury---Jupiter---Venus
 7 Moon-----Mars-----Mercury
 8 Saturn---Sun-----Moon
 9 Jupiter---Venus-----Saturn
 10 Mars-----Mercury---Jupiter
 11 Sun-----Moon-----Mars

HORARY ASTROLOGY

Astrological charts can be done for any important moment, event or decision in life, not just the moment of birth. They can be done for marriages or for the moment of death. They can be done for the initiation of businesses, for moves, for charting the course of anything. The branch of astrology that deals with such things is called "Horary Astrology" and the chart so done is called a "Horary Chart".

Astrologers may do a chart for a client based upon the moment they see them. This is helpful for predicting various aspects of the client's life, particularly the important issues they need to deal with in the reading.

Generally for horary astrology, the client comes with a particular question, like how their health will proceed. The moment they put the question to the astrologer becomes the time for erecting the chart. It is then interpreted for finding out how this issue will develop. At any moment a chart can be drawn and this will plot the course of events decided at that moment.

Nothing in life is without meaning or is entirely coincidental. Each event follows cosmic law and can be interpreted according to prevailing planetary positions. With computers to calculate charts, it becomes relatively easy to examine charts for a variety of conditions in life. It is helpful to do such charts for important moments in our lives.

In this regard, the astrologer may be called upon to judge the course of events that began at a particular time. Or he may be called upon to choose an auspicious time for beginning a particular enterprise. The astrologer aids in attunement to cosmic law and helps thereby for human affairs to flourish in harmony with it.

In judging marriages, for example, a Horary chart for the time of marriage may be as important as comparing the birth charts of the couple. Charts done for the moment of death of a person will usually give indications of their next life. Charts done for the time of accidents or the onset of serious illnesses are helpful in prognosis.

Horary charts are interpreted similarly to birth charts, yet the issue has to be interpreted rather than a person. If it is a marriage issue, for example, the factors of marriage, the seventh, its lord and significator, becomes most important. If it is a business issue, say something of the stock market, we will look to the fifth, ninth and eleventh houses. While this book focuses on the birth chart and its ramifications, the same principles can be applied to the Horary Chart. Even the planetary periods can be used to trace the development through time of a particular issue.

MEDICAL ASTROLOGY

AYURVEDA

Ayurveda is the classical medical tradition of India, its natural healing system. It also goes back to the original ancient Vedic culture and science and has a close relationship with Vedic astrology. It contains within its vast scope all forms of healing from herbs to surgery to yoga and psychology. It provides an integral and holistic system of diagnosis and treatment, aiming not only at the cure and prevention of disease but also at rejuvenation and the mutation of the mind. Its basis is a system for determining individual constitution, for ascertaining the unique nature and health needs of each person. It provides methods of treatment which aim at enabling each individual to take responsibility for their own health, including many forms of self-care.

AYURVEDA AND ASTROLOGY

Ayurveda and Vedic astrology are related aspects of Vedic science, the all-comprehensive cosmic science of yoga. Many astrologers in India have practiced Ayurveda and many Vaidyas, Ayurvedic doctors, have been astrologers. Even when not trained in Ayurveda, astrologers still consider disease and its treatment. Even when not trained in astrology, Ayurvedic doctors may refer to astrology or astrological treatment methods.

I have studied and trained in both systems and have found them to be very helpful in supplementing each other. Astrology gives us a broader understanding of our energy patterns through the whole of life and all aspects of our nature. It is a subtler healing science than any form of physical medicine. Ayurveda aids astrology in giving an applicable energetic system of medicine that can use the astrological model, that in origin is in harmony with it. Anyone practicing medical astrology should have some training in a medical system. Astrology reads our nature in such a broad and general way the specifics of daily or monthly fluctuations in physical problems may be hard to discern through it. Nor does the study of astrology alone give us the understanding of the appropriate tools of medical treatment, like diet and herbs. Yet such a medical system should have a naturalistic and energetic basis in harmony with that of astrology itself.

Astrology examines disease, as it considers the entire life of man and all aspects of our being; body, mind, soul and spirit. There is a special branch of "medical astrology" dealing specifically with health problems, though not limited to the physical body in its examination or treatment. Health, after all, is the basis of all our human endeavors, as without it, we may lack the energy to accomplish anything.

Astrologers can determine the basic physical constitution of the individual from the chart; the physical appearance of the individual, the predomination of elements in their nature. They can calculate basic health, longevity and disease tendencies. They can see which planets have the power to cause disease, what kinds of disease are likely to occur, what parts of the body are likely to be effected, and when. As health and longevity are primary, they are often the first things examined in the chart.

MEDICAL ASTROLOGY

Medical astrology one of the main branches of astrology. As it includes remedial measures for harmonizing planetary influences on both body and mind, it is the most practical branch as well. It includes the entire astrology of healing. It is not only helpful for ordinary disease conditions, astrology also has means of diagnosis and treatment for diseases which are not curable by usual medical methods. It gives us a better picture and methodology for dealing with disease that come from internal causes.

Diseases, like all disharmonies in life, are associated with negative planetary influences. There are several methods whereby planetary influences can be balanced and harmonized. The foremost of these is gem-therapy, to which is often allied color therapy on which it is based. The gems corresponding to the planets are used to redirect planetary influences in a positive way.

Mantras (words of power), yantras (power diagrams), special rituals (pujas and homas) and other yogic methods for modifying planetary forces are also used. These work more directly on the level of the mind. They are particularly effective for mental disorders, including psychic disorders (on which most mental disorders are really based). They strengthen the aura and the autoimmune system, and clear out negative occult influences, which include a variety of things from our own bad karma from past lives, to the negative thoughts of others to subtle environmental pollutants, like low level radiation.

The planets represent the basic energies operating in the cosmos, the prime qualities which operate in all life. As such, all of our life can be arranged to counteract negative planetary influences in our chart. The right diet, the right herbs, the right location to live, the right livelihood, the right spiritual practices and so on, can all be used to balance planetary forces. For example, Mars is a hot planet and can cause heat disorders like fever, inflammation, infection, as well as traumas and injury, if it is too strong. Its influence can be countered by cooling food, cooling herbs, a cool climate, cool colors, etc., as well as special gems and mantras for the planet.

THE THREE HUMORS, THEIR LOCATION AND FUNCTION

Ayurveda classifies individuals and body types according to the three biological humors. These correspond to the predominant element in the individual.

The biological air-humor is called "Vata", which means literally "what blows", the wind. The air-humor governs all movement in the body from the brain as it guides the nervous system. It is responsible for the discharge of all impulses and as the directing force moves the other humors. It allows for sensitivity, agility and facility in the action of body and mind.

The biological fire-humor is called "Pitta", which means "what cooks". The fire-humor governs all transformations in the body from its primary location in the small intestine as the digestive fire. It is responsible for heat and light, including all chemical reactions and also governs perception, judgement and discrimination.

The biological water-humor is called "Kapha", "what sticks". The water-humor governs all form and substance in the body from its primary location in the stomach and lungs. It is responsible for weight, cohesion and stability in the body and provides for the proper lubrication and easy discharge of secretions.

Each humor also possesses a site of accumulation, where its excess condition develops and from which it causes disease. The air-humor has for its site of derangement the colon, where it accumulates as toxic gas and spreads through out the body deranging motion and nervous function. It creates various "wind" diseases like arthritis, paralysis and other nervous disorders.

The fire-humor accumulates in the small intestine as hyperacidity or excess bile. From there it enters the blood and spreads through out the body as toxic heat, causing various inflammatory and infectious disorders.

The water-humor accumulates in the stomach and lungs as mucus and from there it spreads through out the body creating various diseases of excess phlegm, fat and water, including edema, asthma and bronchitis.

CHARACTERISTIC TYPES

AIR TYPES

Vata-types, those in whom the biological air-humor predominates are usually tall or short, seldom average in height. They are often thin, bony, with muscles not well developed and have prominent veins. The skin is dry, cracked, rough, usually brown or dusky in complexion. The teeth are not always well formed. They may be crooked or have spaces between. The digestion is variable. The appetite may be great at sometimes, totally absent at others. Air types often do not realize they are hungry until they are starving. They must often eat every two or three hours to keep themselves grounded. They frequently suffer from constipation, abdominal distention and gas.

Their urine is scanty and they seldom perspire much. They are light sleepers and often suffer from insomnia. Once disturbed do not fall back into sleep easily. They may have restless dreams and nightmares, particularly the fearful type. They are sensitive to cold, wind and dryness. In short, they are dominated and agitated by Saturnian influences.

Air-types are physically active and energetic. They enjoy speed and like running, flying and skiing. Yet they tire easily and lack stamina. They are often athletic, particularly in youth, but lack the physique and endurance for strong exercise. They easily get muscle spasms or stiffness and commonly develop arthritis (Saturn's influence on the bones and muscles). They suffer quickly from overwork exercise and tend to overextend themselves. They are the weakest type physically and often suffer from chronic diseases and nervous disorders (the influence of Saturn and Rahu).

Mentally, they are quick and agile and are often talkative. They are often commonly highly intellectual and can understand many different points of view (as their Mercury is often strong). Sometimes they are superficial in their ideas and talk on mechanically. Their will is usually indecisive. While they may be knowledgeable of many different opinions, they often cannot determine which is right and waver in their views.

Air types are often good school teachers, computer programmers and excel at working with the mass media. They are good at thinking, writing and organizing data (mercurial occupations). They make good musicians but may be oversensitive to sound.

They can be highly socially oriented and like to mix with others (particularly when Mercury is stronger). Yet when the air element is too high (Saturn and Rahu), they become loners. This is often because they have too much to say and don't know how to relate it, not because they are really of a solitary nature.

Air types suffer most from fear. They may be afflicted by anxiety, depression or ungroundedness and usually lack stability. They easily get spaced out and may be absent minded. Their memory is often short term or erratic. They are not entirely present in their bodies and may be a bit clumsy (such influence are largely due to their susceptibility to Rahu, the north node of the Moon). Yet when well developed they possess the greatest agility of body and mind.

Air types need to be nurtured and should be approached with sensitivity. The rule is to treat them like a flower. They easily feel frightened and are prone to withdraw, if approached forcefully.

FIRE TYPES

Pitta-types, those in whom the biological fire-humor predominates, are usually of average height or build. They have well developed muscles and good skin color, which may be flushed or red. Their skin is prone to acne, rashes and other such inflammatory skin disorders, and is usually oily. Their eyes are red, they are sensitive to the sunlight and often have to wear glasses. Their hair is thin, and they tend towards early greying or balding. The hair color is often red or blond. Their gums tend to be soft and may bleed easily. They are sensitive to heat and prefer all things which are cooling.

Fiery types usually possess an appetite that is good, sharp or excessive. Their discharges; feces, urine or mucus, tend to be of yellow color and tend to be large in quantity. They possess an excess of bile which often colors these discharges. They more commonly have loose stool or diarrhea. They sweat easily and their sweat and other discharges may be malodorous. They often bruise easily and bleed more easily than the other types. Their sleep is moderate in duration but not always good. They have many dreams, which may be violent or disturbing. In short, their nature is dominated by Mars.

Fire-types are prone to anger and may be aggressive or domineering. They have a strong will and can be overly impulsive or self-willed in their actions (owing to strong Sun and Mars influences). They like to be leaders but can be fanatic or insensitive. They like the use of force and may be prone towards argument or violence. They like color, drama and passion. They may be orators, singers, painters or dancers.

Fire-types are often very intelligent, perceptive and discriminating. They make good scientists and often have a good understanding of mechanics and mathematics. Often they like to work with tools, weapons or chemistry. They have probing minds, good at research and invention. They may be good psychologists. They may have the deep insight that goes with Ketu, the south node of the Moon.

Most military persons or policemen are fire-types, as Mars for them is a strong planet for all aspects of their nature. They are good at law and punishment. Most lawyers are of this type, including most politicians. Yet fire-types may lack compassion and have a hard time seeing another's point of view.

Fire-types must be approached with tact and sensitivity, as they don't like to be given directions or told what to do. One must appeal to their native intelligence, discrimination and logic. Opposing them will only encourage their basic aggression and will not help them learn. They like to work in friendship or in common alliance towards a particular goal. It is by the commonality of goal that we can guide them.

WATER TYPES

Kapha-types, those in whom the biological water-humor predominates, are usually short and stocky. Sometimes they are tall but they always possess a large frame. Their skin is thick and flesh well developed. They tend towards corpulence or obesity. They will hold excess weight and water unless they work hard to prevent it. They possess well developed chests. Their eyes are large, white and attractive, with large lashes. Their hair is abundant and thick. Their teeth are large, white and attractive. They sleep easily, often excessively and may be lazy. They suffer from cold and dampness but possess strong endurance.

Water-types tend to accumulate phlegm and suffer most from bronchial and pulmonary disorders. They also accumulate water and suffer from edema and weak kidneys. They are most prone to overweight. This is from the influence of the Moon or Jupiter which rules them.

Water-types may be very emotional. They have much love, devotion and loyalty (the Moon and Venus). Yet they also possess much desire, attachment and may be greedy (Venus and lower Jupiterian influences). They are romantic, sentimental, perhaps even mushy in their emotions. They may cry easily and superficially. They are possessive and often attached.

Water-types are conservative and are often traditional or conventional in their behavior and beliefs. They like to belong and seldom rebel. They are largely contented and like to accept things as they are. They are

stable but sometimes stagnate. They do not like to change and find it difficult to even when they want to. They are friendly, particularly with people they know, and hold closely to their families. Yet they have difficulties relating to strangers or foreigners. While they do not like to hurt others, they are often insensitive to the needs of others. They do not take hints. Often they have to be confronted or criticized but they do not usually react with anger but more often respond in a helpful manner.

Mentally, they are slower than the other types but what they learn is retained. Much repetition is needed for them in the learning process. They are not often creative or inventive but they do carry things out and make them practical. They are better at finishing ideas than at developing them. They like to bring things into form and create institutions and establishments.

Water-types are usually good parents and providers. In women they are good mothers and wives, again owing to the lunar influence upon them. They are good at cooking, baking and homemaking. The men may be chefs or work in restaurants. With their large chests, good lungs and good voices, they make good singers. They like to accumulate wealth and hold firmly to what they get. They excel at real estate and make good bankers.

Water-types must be approached firmly, as they respond slowly. Often they need to be shocked into taking action. They must be approached with force, determination and consistency.

We should note that astrology is not quite as general as this as it has not just three types but nine types relative to the influences of the nine planets. Its delineation of character and body types through the planets is more specific.

THE THREE HUMORS AND THE FOUR ELEMENTS

Ayurveda employs three humors, which are essentially the same as the three elements of air, fire and water. Astrology uses the four elements, including the earth. Ayurveda tends to include the earth under the water-humor.

Vedic astrology also contains a classification of planets by the three humors---

VATA/ AIR---SATURN, RAHU, MERCURY
PITTA/ FIRE---SUN, MARS, KETU
KAPHA/ WATER--MOON, VENUS, JUPITER

We can classify the distant planets similarly:

URANUS---VATA/ AIR (a higher octave of Mercury)
PLUTO---PITTA/ FIRE (a higher octave Mars)
NEPTUNE---KAPHA/ WATER (a higher octave of Venus)

Saturn and Rahu are most responsible for Vata (air) disorders. Mars and Ketu are most responsible for Pitta (fire) disorders. The Moon and Jupiter cause more Kapha (water disorders).

THE BIOLOGICAL HUMORS OF THE SIGNS BY ELEMENT

The twelve signs are classified according to the three humors. Air, fire and water signs generally represent the air, fire and water humors.

AIR SIGNS are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.
FIRE SIGNS are Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.
WATER SIGNS are Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces.

EARTH SIGNS are divided up among the three humors, though generally they are thought to possess all three. Fixed earth, Taurus, is more commonly water, as water is fixed in quality (the Moon, a watery planet, is exalted in this sign). Mutable earth, Virgo, is more commonly air, as air is mutable in quality (Mercury, an airy planet is exalted in this sign, which it also rules). Cardinal earth, Capricorn, is more commonly fire, as fire is cardinal in quality (Mars, a fiery planet is exalted in this sign). This gives us the following order:

BIOLOGICAL AIR HUMOR (VATA)-- GEMINI, VIRGO, LIBRA, AQUARIUS
BIOLOGICAL FIRE HUMOR (PITTA)-- ARIES, LEO, SAGITTARIUS, CAPRICORN
BIOLOGICAL WATER HUMOR (KAPHA)-- TAURUS, CANCER, SCORPIO, PISCES

The signs also have secondary characteristics and some are dual in nature.

ARIES: double fire (both primary and secondary fire)
 TAURUS: double water (both primary and secondary water)
 GEMINI: double air (both primary and secondary air)
 CANCER: general water (represents water element in the body in general)
 LEO: general fire (represents fire in the body in general)
 VIRGO: general air (represents air in the body in general)
 LIBRA: air and water
 SCORPIO: water and fire
 SAGITTARIUS: fire and water
 CAPRICORN: fire and air
 AQUARIUS: air and fire
 PISCES: water and air

The nature of the first six signs is singular and fairly clear; that of the second six is dual and can often go either way.

THE BIOLOGICAL HUMOR OF THE SIGNS BY RULING PLANET

As per our general rule, it is the planets which are more important than the signs for determining the nature of things. The signs determine more the field of action and often are more indicative of the site of disease. Some astrologers classify the humors of the signs according to the planets which rule them---

ARIES, LEO and SCORPIO are FIRE, as they are ruled by fiery planets Mars and the Sun.
 TAURUS, CANCER, LIBRA, SAGITTARIUS and PISCES are WATER, as they are ruled by water planets Venus, the Moon and Jupiter.
 GEMINI, VIRGO, CAPRICORN and AQUARIUS are AIR, as they are ruled by airy planets, Mercury and Saturn.

From my own experience, Scorpio, a water sign by element, is generally very Pitta in nature, as according to Ayurveda, the biological fire-humor Pitta, also contains water or oil as its base. The Moon in Scorpio is usually quite Pitta (fiery and agitated).

HOW TO DETERMINE THE BIOLOGICAL HUMOR ASTROLOGICALLY

The most important factor for determining individual constitution is the ascendant or first house, which governs the physical incarnation generally. Usually people follow the ascendant in their physical type. Yet this is a general rule and other factors have to be considered. Planets located in the first house are important. Mars on the ascendant, for example, often renders a person fiery, particularly if it also aspects the lord of the ascendant.

Along with the ascendant has to be considered the influences upon it and upon its lord. The Sun has to be considered as significator of the first house.

It is good to examine more the Sun for men and the Moon for women, as indicating the physical type. However, when the Moon is stronger than the ascendant it may determine the physical type even for men.

Conjunctions of planets with the Sun or Moon are quite significant. Mars in conjunction with the Sun often make the person fiery.

Planets in the sixth house or aspecting it and its lord also affect the physical constitution by creating our disease tendency and general digestive power.

The main rule is that the planet which has the greatest strength of influence on the various factors representing the body--ie. the first and sixth houses, their lords, the Sun and Moon and their rulers, will generally determine the physical type. If two planets of the same humor (like the Moon and Jupiter which both are water) strongly affect these factors, then the judgement is more assured.

In other words, the Ayurvedic constitution usually follows the nature of the strongest planet in the chart or the planetary type which the person represents. However, it is a complicated issue and we do not have the space to go into it here in adequate detail as it presumes some knowledge and experience in astrology and medicine to discuss it.

We should be careful in judging Ayurvedic constitution by the chart alone as it is a complicated matter. A picture or medical history or Ayurvedic questionnaire on the person can be helpful. Astrology considers far more than health or the physical body and it is often difficult to determine which factors in the chart will affect these most specifically.

DISEASE-CAUSING PLANETS

Malefic planets, either natural or temporal, promote disease. Natural malefics are Rahu, Saturn, Ketu, Mars and the Sun; in order of their power to cause disease. Temporal malefics are the lords of the sixth, eighth, eleventh, third and twelfth houses; again in order of their disease causing powers. Planets when weak also cause disease or become the sites of disease, benefics as well as malefics.

Planets cause disease by occupying malefic houses. These are the eighth, sixth, twelfth, third and eleventh; in order of their power. Planets in the first three of these houses are particularly strong in this regard.

Malefics, however, are strong in the sixth house. Yet their strength is mainly in terms of power, prestige and wealth. They can still cause disease, particularly if under negative aspects.

In regard to house location, the strength of a planet as to sign and planetary relationships should be considered. The Moon in the sixth in Cancer would give good health but in Scorpio would be more likely to cause problems like hyperacidity (Pitta disorders). The Moon in Cancer in the sixth, weak in brightness and aspected by Saturn and Rahu, would doubly cause disease, as both the sixth and its ruler would be strongly afflicted.

PLANETARY LORDS

Malefic planetary lords are strong to cause disease. The lord of the sixth house causes injury, accidents, acute diseases, low vitality, poor digestion, poor resistance. The lord of the eighth causes poor vitality, chronic and wasting diseases, including premature death.

The lord of the eleventh functions like that of the sixth, but with less power. The lord of the third functions like that of the eighth but with less power.

The lord of the twelfth causes sorrow, grief, emotional disorders, and shows confinement to a bed or hospital--often a chronically sick person.

SIGNS AND HOUSES

The signs and houses correspond to certain parts of the body. These are as follows----

ARIES, FIRST HOUSE-----HEAD
TAURUS, SECOND HOUSE-----NECK
GEMINI, THIRD HOUSE-----UPPER CHEST
CANCER, FOURTH HOUSE-----BREASTS
LEO, FIFTH HOUSE-----SOLAR PLEXUS
VIRGO, SIXTH HOUSE-----NAVEL REGION
LIBRA, SEVENTH HOUSE-----LOWER ABDOMEN
SCORPIO, EIGHTH HOUSE-----PUBIC REGION
SAGITTARIUS, NINTH HOUSE-----THIGHS
CAPRICORN, TENTH HOUSE-----KNEES
AQUARIUS, ELEVENTH HOUSE-----CALVES
PISCES, TWELFTH HOUSE-----FEET

If both the sign and house of the same number are afflicted, the particular bodily part which corresponds to them is likely to be afflicted. For example, if Saturn aspects the ninth sign, the ninth house and their rulers, arthritis or paralysis of the hip is likely. If Saturn aspects the fifth house, the fifth house from the Moon and their rulers, there is apt to be infertility in women, with possible surgery or hysterectomy.

These correspondences can be made more specific. Aries and first house govern the head, the brain and the eyes. They govern the front of the head down to the eyes and the back of the head to the base of the skull.

Taurus and the second house govern the face, the upper neck to the larynx and the back of the neck to the shoulders, including the cerebellum.

Gemini and the third house govern the shoulders, the upper arm and upper chest, including the lungs.

Cancer and the fourth house govern the front part of the chest to the border of the ribs and the elbows, including the stomach. The breasts are included here.

Leo and the fifth house govern the solar plexus region and the mid and upper back, including the small intestine, as well as body vitality in general via the heart.

Virgo and the sixth house govern the midabdomen and the hands, including the colon. They govern the digestive system generally, as well as the body health as a whole.

Libra and the seventh house govern the lower abdomen and the lumbar region, including the kidneys and internal genitalia.

Scorpio and the eighth house govern the sacrum, rectum, bladder and external sex organs.

Sagittarius and the ninth house govern the arteries, as well as the lower back, hips and thighs.

Capricorn and the tenth house govern the bones and joints as well as the knees.

Aquarius and the eleventh house govern the power of exhalation, the skin, as well as the calves.

Pisces and the twelfth house govern the lymphatic system, as well as the feet.

THE SIXTH SIGN AND SIXTH HOUSE

The sixth house and sixth sign Virgo, which govern the digestive nerves, are particularly important in determining disease potential. The Sun in Virgo with the sixth house afflicted will give chronic poor digestion. The Sun in the sixth, aspected by malefics will similarly give long term digestive problems, as will any poorly placed planet in the sixth. Rahu's aspect on the sixth houses and sixth signs will give variable, weak and nervous digestion.

The sixth house and sign represent our basic health and purity. Afflicted they show disease and the accumulation of waste materials. They indicate how we are connected to our bodies and the way we take care of our bodies. Afflicted, they show devitalization, which usually occurs through our own wrong habits, like bad diet, insufficient rest or excessive sexual indulgence. They may, however, indicate congenital weakness.

Virgo governs Vata, the biological air humor in the body, in general. As most diseases are of the air humor and through weak digestion, planets in this sign tend to cause disease. On the other hand, planets in this sign can make one a healer, if they are more benefically disposed. Sometimes our own diseases make us turn to healing. Virgo shows service to the physical body, either our own or that of others.