CHAPTER - 7

Astronomy and Astrology

Stars have a major role to play in Jyothisha sastra. There are twenty-seven stars in Jyothisha – this is known from vedas. For each star there is a corresponding devata. There is a particular yoga associated with each star. The qualities of stars are also explained by vedas. In each of the four-vedanga Jyothishas - Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva- the divisions and numbers of Stars is mentioned. Janma, sampat, vipat, Kshema, Pratyaram, Sadhako, Vada, Maitra, Paramamaitra are the nine stars counted from a person’s Janma Nakshatra (Birth star) ¹. This counting system was later on developed in textbooks on Muhurtha and adopted for matching of horoscopes.

There are countless numbers of stars in the universe. But in the four vedas - more particularly Atharvana veda- only twenty-seven are taken into reckoning for the remedial measures to be undertaken by an individual. This is an astronomical principle, which later on came to be applied in astrology. These twenty-seven stars are divided into three categories. First category starts from Janma and ends with Parama Maitra. The second and third start with Anujanma and Trijanma respectively. This is the point of intersection between astronomy and astrology.

Atharvana Veda deals mainly with remedial measures for an individual man - not for the world as a whole. The stars have a direct link with the deity taken up for propitiation. The stars have a major role in astrology. Thus astrology imbibed these principles from Atharvana Veda.
In this world we come across several natural events. Some of them are given here as follows:

- Excess rainfall - (Ativrishti)
- Drought - (Anavrishti)
- Sankramika roga - (Epidemic)
- Trouble from Mooshikas - (Plague)
- Trouble from pests - (Salaba Peeda)
- Earthquake - (Bookambam)
- Volcanoes - (Agni Parvatam)
- Thunder - (Asani Padam)
- High tides - (Samudra Kopam)

These phenomena trouble all living beings in our planets - not merely man. Kala vidanam or astronomy brings all these about. The source for the above is the transits of planets.

For living beings other than man, the impact of these changes need not be mentioned as they live in harmony with Nature, since they do not have sixth sense. But man does not live in harmony with Nature. He functions sometimes against the trend of Nature. Thus Rishis did not bother to explain the impact of astronomy on living beings other than man. But Rishis discussed the impact of planetary movements on Man and his future elaborately. This science came to be known as Astrology.

Living beings, other than Man, undergo birth, modifications and death. Thus their lives are largely governed by nature. They have no intelligence. Hence they never go against Nature. Hence their entire life is dictated by nature according to a pre-determined plan. These beings live and die according to the dictates of Nature.
But Man, in general, attempts to change Nature according to his plan of life. The plan of Nature at times goes against his nature, which is dictated by his mind. Man’s mind gives him ideas. He attempts to implement his ideas even at the cost of going against Nature. Drought is a natural phenomenon. This is known as "Anavarishti". It is on account of certain planetary movements. This is explained in Astronomy. Vedas prescribe "Karitraishti" as a remedy for drought. This is an example of the link between astronomy and vedas.

We find certain couples who are childless. The vedas prescribe "Putra Kameshti Yaga" as a remedy for childlessness. If this ritual is prescribed for a couple who have crossed the age of fifty, then by that time both of them would have become incapable of giving birth to children. This ritual will then become an exercise in futility. To discover that couples would have difficulty in conception, we need astrology. This is an example of the link between astrology and the vedas.

There is a limit to the feelings of animals. When they do not find water, they migrate to places where there is water. Similarly we find birds that migrate to countries more favourable to their survival. The instinct of birds is governed by Nature. Thus Astronomy controls the lives of animals and birds. They are not relatable to Astrology.

The functioning of man is such that he does not hesitate to destroy dharma for his selfish purposes. To cure this rishis propagated Astrology.

To ward off disease and death, it is necessary to know the time of advent of these events before hand. For this astrology is required.
Astrology is subservient to culture and environment. Thus Indian Astrology will apply to other countries subject to certain modifications. Concepts like vaidavyam and Kalatra Dosham are familiar to India. But in countries where these concepts are non-existent, the principles of astrology ought to be applied, keeping in mind the modifications required

The Phalabhaga (Fruits of astrology) deal with the results of planetary positions and these are works of Rishis. It is a bye - product of Vedic thought. The day - to - day lives of Bharatiyas (Indians) have their foundation in Vedic thought. The thoughts of man lead to either joy or sorrow. The thoughts of individuals were in harmony with Vedic thought. The end of human thought is either joy or sorrow. What Rishis proclaimed in Phalabhaga is what is perceived as joy or sorrow from an individual’s perspective.

Widowhood, Marital doshas, inter- caste marriage, childlessness, santhana Arishta, Atma Vidya Prapti, Pravrajya Yoga, roga samprapti, Asalipatha Maranam (Death due to lighting strikes), visha prayogam, Atma Hatya, Daridryam, Chowryam (theft), Manusha vikrayam, Maitr Pitr thyagam, Brunahatyam are some examples of good and evil concepts which have their origin in vedic thought.

The chathurvidha Purusharthas (four ends of life) are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. This concept is peculiar to vedas. The Bharatiyas lead their life in accordance with this dictum. The obstacles to the attainment of these four objects can be found out through astrology and also the way of removal. Hence, astrology applies in toto to the Bharatiyas.
Again the following categories of people, will not be able to experience the results of astrology.

**Athisest**
One has abandoned Karma
One who has no rules or regulations in life.
One who has only, Artha and Kama as the objectives of life.
One who lives in animal instincts.
One who does not accept the views of vedas, shastras Puranas and Itihasas.

The above groups of people do not derive any benefit out of astrology.

Astrology is beneficial only to those people who have firm belief in the rules and regulations of life. The job of astrology is inference of future. To think in pursuit of potential good things to occur in future and to avoid the pitfalls of future is the prime benefit of astrological principles. In that way it is highly useful to a person who leads a principled life.

Longevity and modifications on account of growth are determined by astronomy. The joys and sorrows on account of an individual’s thought are determined by astrology.

Ayurveda deals with two types of diseases viz. physical and mental. "Roga" means disease, which is synonymous with grief. "Roga nivrirti" or cure of disease is synonymous with happiness. Indigenous herbs and indigenous food regimen are capable of curing diseases better than alien food regimen. People of south India are comfortable with rice while people of north India are comfortable with wheat. Similarly
mustard oil is conductive to health and used in North India extensively, while the same is formative of disease in south India. Thus, Ayurveda has to be applied using the principle of "Desasadhyam" (conducive to a particular place) and "Desacharam" (habits of people of particular place). Thus geography is relevant to both Ayurveda and astrology.

Both Jyothisha and Ayurveda are subject to the four principal objects of life viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Both these sciences prescribe Sattwic mode of life. Both Ayurveda and Jyothisha have a common aim - to promote happiness and to prevent sorrow.

An important area where Ayurveda supports astrology is with regard to birth of children. Santana Arishta, Santana Abhava and birth of handicapped children can be foretold by astrology. If the remedies suggested by Ayurveda are faithfully implemented, then the evil forecast by Astrology can be successfully warded off. For every modification there must be a cause. For every result forecast in astrology, there must be a Nimithakarana. When that Nimithakarana is absent there would be no adverse results. Even in astronomy Nimithakarana’s absence can foil the result. There may be heavy clouds. But in the absence of wind there will be no rain at a particular place. Cause leads to effect. Samavayakarana (direct cause), Asamavayakarana (indirect cause) and Nimithakarana (efficient cause) are all needed to produce results. Even when Samavaya and Asamavayakarana are present, absence of Nimithakarana foils the result. For instance, seed is the Samavayakarana, earth is the Asamavayakarana and rain is the Nimithakarana. Thus widowhood cannot result in a woman if the husband has longevity according to his horoscope, which is a Nimithakarana for widowhood.
There may be combinations for progeny in both the horoscopes but performance of sexual intercourse is the Nimithakarana. Dhana Yoga may be present in a horoscope but will not fructify in the absence of suitable efforts. A horoscope may show that a person will get a high post and thereby become famous but here again the pre-requisite for the attainment of this objective is hard work and untiring efforts. In a kitchen, there may be vegetables and all other materials required for cooking but if the cook is absent, the food will never get ready.

There is power that is required to activate things (chaithanya) and it is that which we are now discussing it under the banner of "Nimithakarana" and its absence will ensure work undone even if all other things required for that work are available.

If a person is destined to be childless, then that person will function in such a way that he will avoid getting a child. A man destined to go to jail will commit an offence. The deed produces the effect. For the performance of a deed the seed is thought. If that thought, could be neutralized then the resultant effects could be nullified. This art of performing remedial measures for neutralizing the potential evil is known as "Parihara". When the Parihara are performed the man's intelligence undergoes a transformation. Thus he either performs or abstains from performance, certain actions. He performs desirable deeds and abstains from performing undesirable deeds. This is the science behind remedial measures. The "Nimithakarana" which eventually leads to the effect is either created or avoided to yield the final result. This is an instance of free will modifying the effects of destiny.
In Jyothisha the Upadanakarana is poorvapunya. Time or astronomy is the Sahakari Karana. Nimitha Karana is purusha prayatna (human efforts). If one of the above factors is absent, the object will not be achieved.

The most important factor discussed above is human effort, which constitutes Nimitha Karana. Between destiny and free will, the stronger of the two will decide the course of events. The invisible destiny, if both evil as well as weak in nature, can be overcome by a strong effort. In Puranas we find an example of this principle. Savithri was able to overcome the fate of her husband Satyavan by performance of vows. Markandeya was destined to die at the age of sixteen. By devotion to Lord Siva, he was able to overcome an adverse weak destiny.

Where destiny is powerful and adverse, it will prevail irrespective of whether efforts are strong or weak. Despite Rama asking Lakshmana to stand security for Sita, Ravana abducted her. In Srimad Bhagvata, we find that Parikshit made great efforts but finally failed to overcome death. Viswamitra tried to create to another Indra but failed.

Dasaratha got four children through the performance of Putra Kameshti Yaga. This is an example of a powerful human effort overcoming destiny.

Where human effort is powerful but destiny is very powerful and also more powerful than human effort, then destiny will prevail. Kamsa imprisoned Devaki and also wanted to kill her child even when born, but still Sri Krishna was born and was also able to defeat the nefarious plan of Kamsa.
When a man performs his Karma diligently, then the planets, which are capable of doing evil, become incapacitated. Thus human efforts can overcome destiny which is adverse to him. We find an instance in Puranas of wrong efforts inducing evil. King Nala did not wash his feet properly and Lord Saturn was able to enter his body an account of this defect. Since the deed was defective, adverse destiny gained access.

Hence one need not know about fate or destiny and should always take maximum efforts. Efforts are always capable of subduing and nullifying the effects of an adverse destiny. But the existence of adverse destiny need not demoralise a man and on this account, he should not desist from performing actions.

Lord Krishna gives the following advice in Bhagwad Gita

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duty but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of activities and never be attached to not doing your duty"

(Bhagwad Gita, Chapter 2 Verse 47)

The advice given is to take all efforts without bothering to know whether it will be fruitful or not.

The Time of birth of a child is reckoned in the following ways:

Adhana Kala : Time when the sperm unites with the egg.
Chit Pravesa : Time when the soul pervades the child in the womb.
Jala sravam : Time when there is secretion of water prior to delivery.
Siro Darshanam : Appearance of the head.
Bhoo Sparsam : Time when the child touches the earth.

The Lagna can be fixed in keeping with the time of any one of the above stages of birth.

"Ayuh Karmacha vithamcha vidya Nidanameva Cha" "Pancha etani cha Sidhyante Garbasthasyeiva Dehinaha 3"

"Longevity, Karma, wealth, Education and death are decided even in the womb".

A tree bears flowers and fruits. But the substance required for all these is contained in the seed. Similarly what the abovementioned verse explains to us is that features like a man’s future knowledge, wealth, work, death are all pre-determined even when that person is at a formative stage in the foetus.

What is latent as the seed is made patent after that person is born and starts growing up. It is only when a person is born that he gets influenced by the planets. Thus "Bhoosparsam" is reckoned as Time of birth. When in the womb, the child is no different from its mother. For its physical and mental growth, the cause is the mother. It gets nourishment only through the mother. The child gets separated from its mother when the umbilical cord gets snapped.
An effect of astrology can be predicted only when a person gets connected to Time. The unborn child is not related to the planets in any way. When a child is born it gets into contact with earth. It automatically gets connected with the five elements. Thus "Bhoosparsam" is the Time denoting the "Lagna" of an individual.

When we compute the sistha Dasa (Dasa remaining at the Time of birth) we ignore the portion of Dasa which has expired when the child is in the womb. What is taken up for analysis is the unexpired Dasa at the time of birth. This shows that astrology has no relevance for an unborn child.

A person's birth star is the star at the time of "Bhoosparsam". The other four stages of birth may have occurred at the time of different stars. But these are not considered. There is a sequence of planets governing the embryo from conception till birth. But this sequence is changed at the time of birth and from then on the person gets into Vimshottari dasa.

It is the karma of previous births that determines the planetary position at the time of birth reflected in the horoscope. But the horoscope does not influence your past karma. The planets are common to one and all. But the individual horoscope is unique to that individual.

Astronomy is a science. It is common in application to the whole world. We always have drought in one place like Rajasthan whereas in a place like Cherrapunji in Assam, there is excess rainfull. Like this varying from place to place, the Lagna differs.
By reading the horoscope one can forecast the individual’s future. Thus it is with reference to an individual’s horoscope, the influence is inferred, not with reference to astronomy, which applies to the world as a whole.

There may be number of persons born in the months of April and May. All of them will have Sun in the Aries in exaltation. When we look at astrology, we find the sun similarly placed. But when we look at astrology we find that the persons would have been born in twelve different Lagnas. Hence effects vary from person to person.

Time is important since the seed is able to manifest its potential only in conjunction with Time. This is the work of Dasas and Bhuktis. To describe the effects of Dasas and Bhuktis, we have to reckon how the planets are placed in an individual horoscope along with how planets are placed in transit.

Thus all horoscopes deal only with an individual’s destiny. The planets influence a man’s intelligence, which in turn influences his thoughts and actions, which lead to the future course of events.

The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Again the next day it rises in the east. This is proof that planets travel in the same orbit again and again. The planets are nine in number. They travel in the respective orbits. Time is reckoned only with reference to the nine planets. There cannot be a tenth planet. Only the nine planets in the respective spheres can occupy the space in orbit. A new planet cannot come into being through creation.
All the nine planets have a role to play in shaping a man’s intelligence. Planets have no individual effects. Only the planets indicate the fruits of karmas.

A planet in a particular Bhava gives the effects of that Bhava in accordance with the poorva Karma of that man and the propensity of that planet. The attributes of planets should not be applied in an individual’s horoscope without appropriate modifications. Jupiter, who can give marital bliss, can also cause death of spouse in certain places. The giver of grief, Saturn can also confer great happiness.

The individual qualifications of planets are mentioned in textbooks. They differ while differences in Lagna come into force. It is on account of the differences in Lagna, planets behave differently. Planets are disqualified from giving effect to their individual qualities. They give the effect based on their position in an individual’s horoscope. For an experience to occur, we require astronomy, astrology and the individual. Reasons like Sahakarikarana and Nimithakarana are also required.

Textbooks on astrology talk about whether a planet in its Dasa will be a benefic or a malefic. But to what extent an individual will experience the effects will vary from one horoscope to other. When it will be experienced can be judged from Gochara and the extent from the analysis of Shadvargas.

In conclusion astrology is a subject which deals with a individual’s destiny and is different from astronomy which is common to all living beings on earth.
Astrology is the work of Rishis, who by the their intelligence taught the world, the effects of motion of celestial bodies, which is found in astronomy. The effects of planets are not uniform to all people, but varies on account of Poorva punya. The laws of astrology cannot transgress the law of Karma. When the body and mind are kept healthy, the effects of adverse planetary transits can be overcome. Astrology is the science that helps us in that direction. The remedial measures prescribed in Dharma Sastras also help us in this task. When the remedial measures are performed the mind and intelligence undergo a change for the better and the adverse results are mitigated.

Astrology has its origin in vedas. What Rishis have done is to make the Science clear to laymen by their teachings. Upadanakarana for Jyothisha Sastra are Grahas, Nakshatras, Poorva Punya of individual, time of occurrence. Astronomy in the form of Gochara (transits of planets) is Nimithakarana.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the past Karma of individuals which may be good or evil, manifest themselves as the effects of planetary positions in a given horoscope and astrology is the science, promulgated by Rishis, which deal with the effects of planets and determine the Time of occurrence of events and the impact they have on an individual.

Let us consider the example of a student who wishes to pursue education. His intelligence is the Upadanakarana. The school textbooks and other accessories constitute Sahakarikarana. The Guru is the Nimithakarana.
If a person is endowed with Poorva punya then we may say that the Upadanakarana is in good condition. But if the Sahakarikarana (Dasa and Gochara) and Nimithakarana (efforts) are weak or deficient, then the effects will undergo a modification and the results may not be fully manifested.

As efforts constitute Nimithakarana, what is potentially evil can be mitigated and what is indicative of good can be augmented. Remedial measures ensure that we either avoid evil, which is likely to occur in future and augment good events to occur in future.

Prajna Aparatha is cause of disease (wrong thoughts can create disease). Wrong thoughts are caused by wrong (Past) Karma. To change the courses of thoughts, one has to change the food habits and attitude. Thus the reformed mind and diet help us to avoid future problems.

Body and mind are the field for disease. Thoughts occur in mind as a consequence of past Karma. Ahara and Vihara are the Nimithakarana. Environment and Time are the Sahakarikarana. When Nimithakarana is favourably altered by our efforts, the Upadanakarana is forcibly rendered non-functional. Human effort is common to both Ayurveda and Jyothisha.

Ayurveda and Jyothisha are linked to each other and therefore an interdisciplinary study would be fruitful. A comparative study of Jyothisha and Ayurveda is feasible, as the outlook and goal of both sciences are similar to each other.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1) Janma Sampat vipat kshebaya pratvaraha sadhakasthatha | Naidano
   Mitra vargascha paramo maitra eva cha || (Bharatiya Jyothisha Sastra, Page 99)

2) Adhane Janmaniva Prasnaiva Dwadasamsake Chandraha Yasmin
   Avastithasyat lagnam Va Tatsamam satwam (Saravali, Ch 8, Ve 3)

3) “Ayuh karmacha vithamcha vidya nidanamava cha”
   “Pancha etani cha sidhyante Garbasthanayeiva Dehinaha” (Pancha tantram, 2.85, Subhashita Ratna Bhandakaram, 162/428)