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BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR MAKING ASTROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS AND PREDICTIONS FOR REMEDY OF DISEASES ACCORDING TO PRAŚNAMĀRGA

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Praśna is an important method resorted to, as per *Praśnamārga*, to find out the cause of disease which afflicted a person, the time when the disease started, the direction it came from, the *grahas* which are responsible for it, the duration it will take for the cure, *prāyaścitta*, etc. *praśna* is a sure means of arriving at the right results based on the present time.

When it is found that the *grahas* are unfavorably stationed in the natal chart or the *praśna* chart, an astrologer is able to pronounce the disease that arises as a result of the positions of such *grahas* and also the method of treatment for the cure of the disease. It is also important to note that if some of the *grahas* are stationed favorably, the cure will be possible fast. *Prāyaścitta* rites will also have to be performed for appeasing the unfavorably stationed *grahas*. (Govindan M.K. Krishnalayam, *Praśnamārga*, 2011, 16)

According to *Jyotiśāstra*, the fundamental theory accepted regarding all modifications in this universe is that there exists *Agni*, *Appu* and *Vāyu* in the nature all around. When these combine with *Pṛthvi* and *Ākāśa* it results in *Sṛṣṭi*, *Sthiti* and *Samhāra* of all the perceivable objects in this universe. These are commonly termed as *pañcabhutas*. Among these, *pṛthvi* and *Ākāśa* form the basis for this process. *Agni*, *Appu* and *Vāyu* are involved in the formation of particular characteristics of the various objects. All living beings are endowed with consciousness in differing levels. Human beings are the most evolved living beings blessed with the power of discrimination resulting from a well developed intelligence. The physical body of the human beings is made of a combination of the *pañcabhutas*. *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* specifically states *bhūtabhavyo dehaḥ*. (*Vāgbhṭācārya*, *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, 8a) *Agni*, *Appu* and *Vāyu* stand for *Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. An equilibrium maintained by these three humors will provide one with good health.

Astrology is a vast subject made up of different distinct parts which calls for a high level of mastery, familiarity and a thorough analytical examination. There are certain basic requirements to facilitate this level of accurate astrological observations and predictions certain tools are of utmost necessity. These tools guide an astrologer in the right way so that he/she will be empowered to detect and suggest cure for any disease afflicting the body or mind of the sufferer.

The list of requirements is given below:

1. Accurate time, date, year and place of birth of the native.
2. *Rāśi cakra* with the planets marked as per the birth details of the native.
3. *Dṛṣṭi* and other influences of planets on each other in the *Rāśi cakra*
4. Placements of planets in various groups.
5. Thorough examination of the *Rāśi* based on the current location of the *grahas*.
6. Careful analysis of the *Rāśi tatvas*.
7. Critical analysis of the physical characteristics of *grahas* or planets.

The physical characteristics examined include:

1. *Jala tatva* or the liquid characteristics. *Śukra graha* is endowed with the lordship of the *Jala* principle. This *graha* governs all the various liquids produced by the physical body including blood, phlegm, urine, sweat, and others.
2. *Prthvi tatva* or the elements of the Earth. *Budha graha* is endowed with the lordship of the principle of *prithvi*. This *graha* governs various functions of the physical body including muscles, *nādis*, nervous system, the sense of smell, etc.
3. *Vāyu tatva* or characteristics related to air. *Śani graha* is endowed with the lordship of the principles of *Vāyu*. This *graha* governs features like the hands, feeling of touch, movements of the physical body, etc.
4. *Ākāśa tatva* or the characteristics of ether. *Vyāzha graha* is endowed with the lordship of the principles of *Ākāśa*. This *graha* governs the organ of ear, hearing, noise, lightning, etc.

For diagnosing a disease astrologically it requires a high degree of expertise and relies heavily on all the aspects of the *grahas* and their nature. A careful scrutiny of the *grahas* and their characteristics play a significant role in arriving at the right conclusion. The science of astrology has amply proven that a particular *graha* will certainly cause the disease attributed to it based on the nature or characteristics or *tatva* of that particular *graha*. “In astrology there is a doctrine that when Sun and Moon are strong, then *Tara grahas* also perform their functions well and when the luminaries are weak, the functions are impeded.” (Horasāra, Chapter 3, Verse 4.)

Sūrya denotes heat and *Candra* denotes cold. *Sūrya* indicates the soul and *Candra* indicates the mind. (Varāhamihira, Bṛhatjātaka, Chapter 2, Verse 1. Page 20)

When a horoscope is analyzed in depth, for the purpose of diagnosing diseases, details of the grahas including the *Rāsi* they are stationed in, their various aspects, the periods of *daśas* of the native, the changes that are likely to take place as a result of their continuous motion and transit, etc. are well scrutinized. For the sake of attaining the expected results, one must be an erudite in the subject.

Praśna or the horary astrology is an aspect of astrology which arrives at results on the basis of the present time. Knowledge of the *Siddhānta* texts is an absolute necessity for the astrologer to know the time. A discriminative mind will have to be developed to realize what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected. Mind should have clarity which is to be attained through *mantra siddhi*. The unseen future events will reflect in the astrologer's mind only when he is ready with all the above.

It is seen that Jyotiśāstra takes the assistance of other *śāstras* including the *Vedas*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Tarka*, *Mīmāṃsa*, *Nyāya*, *Dharmaśāstra*, *Sampradāya*, etc. to establish its identity as a *śāstra*. All these are essential for arriving at the right conclusion, too. Astrology comes to different conclusions to different people because the result attained is arrived at based on the time, place and the stage of life the person is in. *Vedas* result in culture, *Mīmāṃsa* gives way to *Nyāya*, *Tarka* evolves into logic and *Dharmaśāstra* promotes the code of conduct. Since a sound physique and a positive mind are required for good health, *Dharmaśāstra* is relied upon which provides purity of mind.

An ideal state of sound health as per astrology would be when the *grahas* are stationed as given below:

At the time of making the query the unfavorably stationed *grahas* are in the third and eleventh *bhāva* from the *Lagna*. The favorably stationed *grahas* are in *bhāvas* other than the third, sixth, eighth and twelve. *Māṇḍi* is in any house other than the eighth *bhāva*.

It may be deduced that a person has ailments if the positions of the *grahas* are not as per the above. That means, the unfavorable *grahas* are placed in *bhāvas* other than the third and the eleventh. The favorable *grahas* are stationed in the third, sixth, eighth and the twelfth *bhāvas*. *Māṇḍi* is stationed in the first, fourth, fifth, eighth or the tenth *bhāva*.

An astrologer picks the *grahas* which cause ailments. The *grahas* will cause only those ailment ascribed it them. The disease will be affecting the parts of the body based on the unfavorable *grahas* in unfavorable positions. *Sūrya* affects the area around the naval. *Candra* locates itself in the heart area. *Kujan* targets the head. Mercury afflicts area of the chest. *Vyāzham* afflicts the thighs. *Śukran* afflicts the face. *Śani* afflicts the knees. *Rāhu* and *Ketu* affect the feet. *Sūrya* functions as the *kāraka* of *ātma*. *Ātma* is endowed with *caitanya*, but this *caitanya* is not functional. According to astrology, *Sūrya* is *Ātma*. (Varāha Mihira, *Bṛhat Jātaka*, Chapter 2, Verse 1. Page 20).

Mental activities which are negative in character, is one major reason for diseases and many unpleasant physical conditions. Mind can be said to be the cause of bondage and liberation. (Śaṅkarācārya, *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, Verse 172.) .

Regarding the types of diseases, there are two types of diseases – natural and accidental. The natural type is divided into two – physical and mental. The accidental type is also divided into two –type the cause of which is known and the type the cause of which is unknown. Eight types of ailments are delineated in the natural type which are the result of various combinations of *tridoṣa*. A thorough astrologer should choose the ailment caused by the strongest *graha* from the foursome of the *adhipati* of the eighth *bhāva*, the eighth *bhāva*, the *graha* which has *dr̥ṣṭi* on the eighth *bhāva* and the *graha* which is stationed in the eighth *bhāva*.

Jyotiśāstra gives emphasis on sinful deeds incurred in the past life as a cause of diseases. Deeds committed in the earlier life acts as the root cause for the happenings in the present life.

“When knowledge dawns, human beings attain liberation. Those in whom knowledge does not dawn, birth and death take place over and over again. It happens in this manner for the person to undergo the heavenly bliss and hellish sorrows resulting from the righteous and unrighteous deeds carried by the person in the earlier life, to undergo the little bit left over after the results of the deeds are undergone.” (Govindan M.K. Krishnalayam, *Praśnamārga*, 2011, Page 12).

The sinful deeds committed in the past life are stressed upon in *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayam* also as causing diseases. (*Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayam*, *Sūtrasthānam*, Chapter 12, Verse 42).

The *Prārabdha karma* accrued over time comes back in the form of effects, either good or bad, during the *daśas* and *apahāras* in one's life. It may be kept in mind that the *daśas* and *apahāras* are not capable of neutralizing the effects of the *Prārabdha karma*. Starting from *Kārtika nakṣatra*, the twenty seven *nakṣatras* may be divided in groups of nine. *Sūrya*, *Candra*, *Kujan*, *Rāhu*, *Vyāzhan*, *Śani*, *Budhan*, *Ketu* and *Śukran* may be awarded with 6,10,7,18,16,19,17,7,20 years respectively which will reveal the ruling years in their *daśas*. (Mantreśwara, *Phaladīpika*, 1992, 195).

An astrologer, through careful analysis of the horoscope of a person, can find out the deeds committed in the earlier life through the positions of *grahas*. Many such diseases can be cured by performing the required *parihāras*. In astrology, righteous deeds committed in the past life are indicated by the 5th *bhāva*. Intelligence, realization of the right things at the right time without any difficulty, grasping power, power of discrimination between the right and the wrong, righteous deeds committed in the past life, power to analyse things, ministers, sons, and beneficial mentality – all these will need to be considered with the fifth *bhāva*. It has been expressly stated that sinful deeds in the past life manifest as diseases.

Nimittas are indicative of diseases. A good astrologer will be able to predict the beginning of the disease, the duration the disease will take until cure, whether the disease is curable or not and many related things based on *nimittas*.

Another cause of diseases is the changes that occur to the seasons. As per astrology, *Sūrya* and *Candra* are the *grahas* which influence the seasons (Varāhamihira, *Bṛhat Jātaka*, 2004, 20). These changes take place due to the change of positions of the *grahas*. This can be calculated accurately by an expert astrologer.

Mṛtasañjīvani homa is what is normally prescribed for the cure of acute ailments including leprosy, lunacy, epilepsy, etc. As per experts, there are three *vratas* to be undertaken for a fast cure of serious ailments. These are termed *Mṛtyuñjaya Kalpa*, *Mṛtasañjīvani Kalpa* and *Mahāsudarśana Kalpa*.

Trouble strikes human beings when *grahas* come to have *aniṣṭasthānacāram*. Because of this reason *tridoṣa* and the resultant varieties of diseases afflict them. The reason for all these is certainly the accumulated sins alone of the self in the past life. Let the prescribed treatment and atonement be carried out for cure of the disease.

Atonements for curing of diseases play a highly important part. The persons afflicted with disease should provide other patients with medicine for the cure of disease, food of their choice, oil for application on the body and necessary articles for them to sleep on as charity.

Notes and references

जन्मलग्नतया प्रश्नलग्नं संकल्प्य पण्डितः

जातके यद्यदुद्दिष्टं तत्तत् प्रश्नेपि चिन्तयेत् इति I. Govindan M.K. Krishnalayam, 2011, '*Praśnamārga*', Kochi, Krishnalayam Publications, Chapter 1, Verse 47. Page 16.

Vāgbhṭācārya, Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya, Chapter 3, Verse 7, 8a

चन्द्राकौ बलयुक्तौ कुजादयः प्रोक्तमार्ग बलहीनः I

सुभभलदस्ते सर्वे दशासु योगेषु सञ्चिन्त्यः II Horasāra, Chapter 3, Verse 4.

कलात्मा दिनकरन् मनस् तुहिनगु स्त्वं कुजो जो वहो जीवो I

ज्ञानसुख शीतश्च मदनो दुस्त्वं दिनेशात्मजः II Varāhamihira, Bṛhatjātaka, Chapter 2, Verse 1. Page 20

कालात्मा दिनकृत् I Varāha Mihira, Bṛhat Jātaka, Chapter 2, Verse 1. Page 20.

मनसा कल्पयते बन्धो मोक्षस्थेनैव कल्प्यते I Śaṅkarācārya, Vivekacūdāmaṇi, Verse 172.

Govindan M.K. Krishnalayam, 2011, 'Prašnamārga', Kochi, Krishnalayam Publications, Chapter 1, Verse 33, Page 12).

भाशणं समिभुक्तस्य

रागद्वेष भयादिच I

कर्म प्रणथि पथति

दशधा यच्छ निन्दितम् II (Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayam, Sūtrasthānam, Chapter 12, Verse 42.

आग्नेयादितर पथयो रवि चन्द्र भोव सर्प मरेद्यासनि चन्द्रज केतु शुक्रः

तेन नदः सनिजय चडु दन्य सोव्यस्थाने नख निगदिथः सरदस्तु तेषाम् II Mantreśwara, Phaladīpika, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1992, Chapter 19, Verse 2, Page 195).

राजानौ रविशीतगू Varāhamihira, Bṛhat Jātaka, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 2004, Chapter 2, Verse 1. Page 20.

