

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

CHAPTER ONE

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN JYOTIṢA

*nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya
naraṁ caiva narottamam
devīm sarasvatīm vyāsam
tato jayam udīrayet*

“Before reciting this Vedic knowledge, which is the very means of conquest, one should offer respectful obeisances to the Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the supermost human being, to mother Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author.” -- *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.4.

The Beginning of Creation

Everything has its inception or beginning. If we trace out the origins of even the most simple or ordinary things, there is an intelligence lying at the basis of its existence, and from this intelligence, the means of creation becomes manifest. Through logic we can assume that if the cognizing abilities in an ordinary human enable his creation of something, then it is not hard to understand that the origin of all existence is an omniscient being who also has a specific intent in the matter of creation. In the Vedic scriptures, the remote origin of creation is Nārāyaṇa,¹ the Supreme Being, He from Whom everything is created. This fact and themes resulting from it are repeated throughout the course of this book. So, at the onset of the discussion, let us first talk about the cosmic creation and its remote origins, and how the grahas (planetary deities) represent and carry out the functions or intent of the Creator.

Nārāyaṇa as the Origin of Everything

In order to define the creation and its origin and the relevance of this information to Jyotiṣa, we can make good use of some quotations from Vedic scriptures.

eko vai nārāyaṇa āsīn

¹ References to Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva indicate the personal form of God. There are innumerable such names for the Supreme Being in Vedic literatures, and in scriptures of other traditions as well. If the reader prefers a different name describing specific attributes and personality traits of God, then substitute ones can be made for the above references. Names of God such as Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva and various other *avatāras* (incarnations) as They are described in Vedic literatures, are made throughout this work.

“In the beginning of the creation there was only the Supreme Personality, Nārāyaṇa.”
Mahā Upaniṣa 1.

atha puruṣo ha vai nārāyaṇo ’kāmayata prajāḥ sṛjeyeti:

“Then the Supreme Personality Nārāyaṇa desired to create living entities.”
-Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad

This statement indicates the intent of the Supreme Personality, Nārāyaṇa, in that there is a desire to create the living beings that will inhabit the material universes. Of course, living beings, like Nārāyaṇa, are eternal as described in many places in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures, and so this “creation” is more a matter of providing the means and material vehicle for them to take form. Nārāyaṇa exists in His own right in the spiritual world, which is called *Paravyoma*, and which consists of the quality of pure goodness. The *Paravyoma* consists of three quarters of the entire creation, whereas the material world, called *jagat*, consists of the remaining one-quarter. Creation takes place through the *śaktis* or potent energies of Nārāyaṇa. In order to understand this better, we can define the energy or *śakti* of Nārāyaṇa as existing in three basic categories, as taught by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu²:

1. *antarāṅgā-śakti* (internal or spiritual potency)
 2. *bahiraṅgā-śakti* (external or material energy)
 3. *tatasthā-śakti* (marginal spiritual potency)
- *antarāṅgā-śakti* is further classified in three categories as *hlāḍini-śakti* (pleasure potency, which is exhibited in His confidential pastimes); *sandhinī-śakti* (potency of eternal existence); and *samvit-śakti* (potency of cognition). The *sandhinī-śakti* refers to both the Supreme Personality in the spiritual world, as well as His separated parts and parcels (*jīvas* or individual souls). The *hlāḍini-śakti* is reserved for the confidential pastimes of Vāsudeva, excluding all those who do not have entrance into His *līlā*. The *samvit-śakti* applies in full to the Supreme Personality, whereas partially so with regard to the *jīva* souls.³
 - *bahiraṅgā-śakti* or *māyā-śakti* refers to the illusory energy of Vāsudeva, through which living beings (*jīvas*), having chosen to remain separate from the *antarāṅgā-śakti*, stay in illusion regarding their true identity. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu states that the “true identity” or *svarūpa* of the living entity is that he is the eternal servant of the Supreme Being.⁴ Were it not for the fact that a small, almost infinitesimal portion of living beings chose to remain within the realm of *māyā*, then there would be no need of Vedic scriptures for their enlightenment and

² Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 2.101–103.

³ Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.12.69.

⁴ Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 20.108.

guidance, what then to speak of Jyotiṣa, which defines their karmic path and ultimate *mokṣa* from this temporary material world.

- *taṭasthā-śakti* means “marginal” and refers to the existence of *jīva* souls who, by correct or incorrect self-determination, can choose to remain in the spiritual world in their eternal constitutional positions; or, they can fall to the manifested cosmos, which is called the material world, in varieties of material forms. The *taṭasthā-śakti* exists between the *antaraṅgā* and *bahiraṅgā-śaktis*.

Paramātmā and Jīvātmā

Among the many expansions of Viṣṇu is the *Paramātmā*, Who is His form existing within the hearts of all living beings. The *jīvātmā* are the innumerable individual souls who come into contact with the three *gunas* (material qualities), and are thus given material forms and senses with which to pursue desire. As the *jīvātmā* performs actions (*karmas*), he becomes accountable to the results of such actions lifetime after lifetime. The residual effects of *karma* thus determine the future births as well as advantages and disadvantages experienced by the *jīvātmā*. The *Paramātmā* is eternally aloof and transcendental to the modes of nature, whereas the living being becomes entangled in them. This principle is enunciated in many places in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and specifically in the following verse, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti
guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho
dehe dehinam avyayam*

“Material nature consists of three modes - goodness, passion and ignorance. When the eternal living entity comes in contact with nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, he becomes conditioned by these modes.” -*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.5.

Karmas of the Jīvātmā - Three Essential Categories of Desire

Desire (*kāma*) of the *jīvātmā* results from the interaction between the senses and their objects. The pursuit of such desire results in *karma*, which may be grouped into three general categories: fruitive activity for material gain and sense enjoyment according to scriptural injunctions (*punya-karma*); fruitive activity against scriptural injunctions (*vikarma*); and work for which there is no attachment and for which the results are offered to God (*akarma*).

Punya-karma is further divided into three categories as follows:

- *Bhukti-kāmī* – The desire for sense enjoyment and material gain, yet sought according to scriptural injunctions. Such activity promotes one to *svarga-loka* (heaven), yet the aspirant again falls from that position to Earth at some point.

- **Mukti-kāmī** – The desire for merging into the Brahman effulgence of Nārāyaṇa (a type of liberation, although not complete *mokṣa*). After attaining this liberation, the aspirant falls from this position also and takes birth among human beings finally.
- **Siddhi-kāmī** - The desire to achieve mystic powers by performance of the *yoga* system. Empowerments due to mystic *siddhis* do not guarantee a position in the spiritual world either. The *yogi* ultimately returns to lower planetary systems.

Akarma or Naiṣkarma: Work Which Frees One from the Cycles of Births and Deaths

Karmas have been listed which bind the soul to the modes of material nature, and thus oblige that soul to repeat births and deaths in this world. Even elevation to *svarga-loka*, the heavenly planetary sphere, does not free one from *samsāra*, the repetitions of birth and death. *Karma* in which one renounces the fruits of actions is called *akarma*. Such activity dissolves the results of fruitive actions, and ultimately leads to the path of *mokṣa*. This goes by the name *karma-yoga*, the ultimate expression of which is *bhakti-yoga*. Liberation attained as a result of such action is permanent, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*.⁵ Thus three distinct levels of *karma* are given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *akarma* (that which liberates the soul); *karma* (good or bad action which binds the soul to the three *gunas* and births and deaths; and *vikarma* or inauspicious actions, which lead to degradation to the lower planetary systems and *tamo-guna* (ignorance) in the future births. *Vikarma* is very dangerous, in that one loses the opportunity of being in the human form of life, and thus must descend to another lower species in one of 8,400,000 forms.⁶

Astrological Perspectives on Different Types of Karma

The auspicious or inauspicious results of *karma* may be seen from the astrological chart. Different terminologies are given in the Vedic texts for the varieties of *karma* that accrue to the native. Generally, these may be grouped as follows:

1. **Sañcita-karma**: The aggregate of all actions, good, bad and mixed. This level of *karma* can be seen through the natal chart mainly.

⁵ *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.21: “That which the Vedāntists describe as unmanifested and infallible, that which is known as the supreme destination, that place from which, having attained it, one never returns—that is My supreme abode.”

⁶ “There are 900,000 species living in the water. There are also 2,000,000 non-moving living entities (*sthāvarā*), such as trees and plants. There are also 1,100,000 species of insects and reptiles, and there are 1,000,000 species of birds. As far as quadrupeds are concerned, there are 3,000,000 varieties, and there are 400,000 human species.” Some of these species may exist on one planet and not on another, but in any case within all the planets of the universe—and even in the Sun—there are living entities. This is the verdict of the Vedic literatures.” -*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

2. *Prārabdha-karma*: *Karma* that is coming to fruition in the present lifetime. *Karmas* that are coming to fruition at present are best seen from the Navamsa (D-9) chart.
3. *Kriyāmana-karma*: The seeds of *karma* that are currently being sown. The *karma* being sown at present is best seen by way of the **Praśna chart** cast at the time the astrologer reads the chart.

Depending on the nature of signs and houses in the astrological chart suggesting the karma of the native, three degrees of immovability may be expected. These are generally listed as follows:

1. **Dridha** – This word refers to karmic planets emphasizing **fixed signs** (Ta, Le, Sc and Aq), and thus are very **difficult to change** by whatever measures.
2. **Adridha** – This refers to **moveable signs** (Ar, Cn, Li and Cp), the emphasis on which *karma* can be **overcome by right actions** or remedial measures.
3. **Dridha-adridha** – **dual signs** (Ge, Vi, Sg and Pi), which combines fixed and immovability. In other words, the *karma* can be alleviated, yet not without **perseverance and hard work**.

The Most Important Astrological Positions Emphasizing Karma

The 1st, 5th and 9th houses (trines) are the houses of *dharma*, and they indicate the good, bad and mixed *karma* performed by the native in the prior incarnations. Similarly, the arudha of the 5th (mantra-pada), as well as arudha of the 9th (guru-pada) indicate the extent to which such *karmas* rise, or the magnitude to which they are suffered or enjoyed by the native. Illustrations of these principles are given in the examples that follow.

An emphasis of natural malefics, especially Saturn, Mars and Rāhu in the trinal houses and their arudhas, bring challenging circumstances, up to untimely death for the native. Similarly, natural benefics assure good fortune and all-around spiritual and material prosperity for the native if found in these houses in the horoscope.

While the natal (Rāśi or D-1) chart is seen for the aggregate, or sum total *karma*, the Navamsa (D-9) is examined specifically for *prārabdha-karma*, the seeds for which had been sown previously, and which have come to fruition for the native in the current lifetime. If in some nativity the Navamsa chart is stronger than the Rāśi chart, and if benefics occupy the trinal houses from Lagnamsa as well as the Karakamsa lagna⁷, then the native reaps the results of good actions in the present lifetime. If, on the other hand, the Rāśi chart is stronger than the Navamsa chart, and if malefics join the above trinal positions in Navamsa, then the native must face a difficult existence in which the fruits of prior bad actions (*vikarmas*) accrue in the current lifetime.

⁷ The “Lagnamsa” refers to the Navamsa lagna, while “Karakamsa lagna” or KL is the sign in the Navamsa chart occupied by the Ātmakāraka planet. These are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

If the Praśna chart (cast at the time of the astrologer's reading) is stronger than both the Rāśi and Navamsa charts, then in the present moment the native is sowing the seeds (*bija*) of very good *karma* for his future births. The opposite is true if the Praśna chart is weaker than both the Rāśi and Navamsa charts natally.

Other Varga Charts and Karma

The native's hereditary *karma*, as passed down from his forefathers, may be seen from the Dwadasamsa (D-12) varga chart. Specific *karma* coming through the mother's or the father's lineage to the native can be seen from the relevant houses and karakas in the D-12 chart. Similarly, the Khavedamsa varga chart (D-40) may be examined for *karma* specifically coming to the native on the mother's side of the family. The Akshavedamsa varga chart (D-45) may be examined for *karma* specifically coming through the father's side of the family. *Karma* which completely belongs to the native himself from the prior lifetime may be seen from the Shastiamsa varga chart (D-60). A more detailed discussion of the principles of various varga charts is given in Chapter Six.

Quadruple Expansions of Nārāyaṇa for the Purpose of Material Creation: Vāsudeva, Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṅkarṣaṇa

While the *jīvātmā*, being part of the *taṭasthā-śakti* (marginal potency of Nārāyaṇa), becomes entangled within the results of his *karma* lifetime after lifetime, the various forms of Nārāyaṇa remain forever transcendental to the modes of material nature. Although remaining in His separate transcendental existence of knowledge, bliss and eternity, Nārāyaṇa (Vāsudeva), expands into three forms and unites with three *śaktis*, or potencies, representing His feminine counterparts. In the form of Aniruddha, He unites with Śrī-śakti (Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of fortune), thus creating the material quality of goodness (*sattva-guna*); in the form of Pradyumna, He unites with Bhū-śakti (Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning), thus creating the material quality of passion (*rajo-guna*); and in the form of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He unites with Nīla-śakti (goddess Kālī, the potency of destruction), creating the material mode of darkness (*tamo-guna*) respectively. This is the first phase of creation.

From these *gunas*, three deities of control are created: Viṣṇu, from whom the various *devata* (demigods) are born; Brahmā, from whom universal creation and *ahankāra* (false ego or identification) follow; and Śiva, from whom destruction and *mahatattva* (the aggregate material elements) are generated. This is the second phase of creation. These three deities of sustenance, creation and destruction, i.e., Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva, are referred to for the rest of this chapter as *guna-avatāras*, as mentioned in Vedic scriptures.

Following the generation of the three *gunas* and their controlling deities, *ahankāra* again associates with the three *gunas* in order to create: (1) further classifications of demigods from the quality of goodness; (2) the ten sensory organs (*indriyas*) from the

quality of passion. There are five knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriyas*), and five working senses (*karmendriyas*), thus making ten *indriyas* in all; and (3) the five gross, and five subtle material elements called *mahā-bhūtas* and *tanmātras* respectively. This is the third phase of creation.

In addition to these, there are four internal senses, which are as follows with their ruling deities: (1) consciousness – Viṣṇu; (2) mind – the Moon; (3) intelligence – Brahmā; and (4) false ego – Śiva.

All of these components of creation, i.e., *gunas*, deities, elements and senses, are easier to learn by way of Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 which follow.

Table 1.1: Deities of Creation, Three Gunas and Manifestations

Form of Vāsudeva	Potency (Śakti)	Guna	Creation	Devata (Guna-Avatāra)	Manifestations
Aniruddha	Śrī-śakti (Lakṣmī-devī)	sattva (goodness)	devatas (demigods)	Viṣṇu	devatas
Pradyumna	Bhū-śakti (Sarasvatī)	rajas (passion)	ahaṅkāra (false ego)	Brahmā	indriyas (ten senses)
Saṅkarṣaṇa	Nīla-śakti (Kālī)	tamas (darkness)	mahatattva (aggregate elements)	Śiva	gross and subtle elements

Vāsudeva, being situated in pure consciousness and transcendental to the material qualities, does not participate directly in the functions of creation. He is, however, the origin of the three Deities Who perform these functions, i.e., Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṅkarṣaṇa.

The following table provides easier reference for details regarding the five knowledge-acquiring and five working senses (*mahābhūtas* and *tanmātras* respectively):

Table 1.2: Mahā-bhūtas and Tanmātras

Gross Elements (mahā-bhūtas)	Subtle Elements (tanmātras)	Knowledge-Acquiring Senses	Working Senses	Ruling Deity ⁸	Planetary Ruler
ether (ākāśa)	sound	hearing	speech	Viṣṇu	Jupiter
air (vāyu)	form	touch	hands	Śiva	Saturn
fire (agni)	light	sight	feet	Surya	Mars
water (jala)	taste	taste	genitals	Śakti	Venus
earth (pṛthvi)	fragrance	smell	rectum	Gaṇeśa	Mercury

Avatāras and Specific Functions

In addition to the three *guna-avatāras* (Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva), Nārāyaṇa expands Himself into four further groups of *avatāras*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has listed them as follows, although there are innumerable expansions of these:⁹

1. Incarnations Who appear during the reign of each *manu* (*manvantara-avatāras*);
 2. Incarnations Who appear in different millennia or ages (*satya*, *tretā*, *dvāparā* and *kali-yugas*) and Who are called *yuga-avatāras*;
 3. Incarnations of empowered living entities (*śaktyāveśa-avatāras*), who perform specific functions on behalf of divine will; and,
 4. *Līlā-avatāras*, or incarnations for the performance of specific pastimes.
- The fourteen *avatāras* who appear as Manu, known as *manvantara-avatāras*, are listed as follows in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:¹⁰ (1) Yajña, (2) Vibhu, (3) Satyasena, (4) Hari, (5) Vaikuṅṭha, (6) Ajita, (7) Vaivasvata, (8) Sārvabhauma, (9) Ṛṣabha, (10) Viṣvaksena, (11) Dharmasetu, (12) Sudhāmā, (13) Yogeśvara and (14) Bṛhadbhānu.¹¹

⁸ The five deities associated with each of the *mahā-bhūtas* and *tanmātras* are referred to as *pañca-devata* by Śrī Acyuta in his *Chayālisa Paṭala* (Chapter Thirteen). In that work, he has given the following names as associating with each: Nirāṅkāra, Śiva, Bhāskara, Ambikā and Gaṇeśa. These are respectively related to each of: ether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*) and earth (*pṛthvi*).

⁹ Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 2.246.

¹⁰ Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.1, 5 and 13.

¹¹ Manu is the father of mankind, and there are fourteen such manus existing within one *kalpa*, or daytime of Brahmā. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.1, it is stated that “By human calculation, a thousand ages taken together form the duration of Brahmā’s one day. And such also is the duration of his night.” An age in this context is one *mahā-yuga*, or complete cycle of *satya*, *treta*, *dvāpara* and *kali-yugas*. The *satya* (Golden Age) lasts for 1,728,000 years; *treta* age (Silver Age), for 1,296,000 years; *dvāpara* (Bronze Age) for 864,000 years; and *kali* (Iron Age) for 432,000 years. All totaled, there are 4,320,000 years in one *mahā-yuga*. A thousand such *mahā-yugas* is thus equivalent to one *kalpa*, or daytime of Brahmā, making Brahmā’s day equal to 4,320,000,000 (human) years. Since there are fourteen *manvantara-avatāras*, the existence of each equals 308,571,428 years.

The four *yuga-avatāras* are as follows, beginning with their names and colors.¹²

1. Śrī Hayagrīva; *śukla* (white), appearing in *satya-yuga* (the Golden Age). He is worshipped in the *satya-yuga* through the process of *dhyāyataḥ*, meditation.
2. Śrī Rāmacandra; *rakta* (red), appearing in the *tretā-yuga* (Bronze Age). He was worshipped in the *tretā-yuga* by way of *yajato makhaiḥ*, the performance of Vedic sacrifices¹³
3. Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *śyāma*, (dark blue), appearing in *dvāpara-yuga* (Bronze Age). People in the *dvāpara-yuga* worshipped the bluish incarnation Śrī Kṛṣṇa by performance of *ārcana*, temple worship.
4. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *kṛṣṇa* (black) is the color of the *avatāra* in *kali-yuga*. In special cases, however, the *avatāra* is *pīta* (yellow) as in the case of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The *kali-yuga-avatāra* is worshipped by way of *hari-kīrtanāt*, the congregation's chanting of His Names.¹⁴

The *śaktyāveśa-avatāras* are empowered entities, which appear with the mission of carrying out a specific purpose related to divine will. They can be both *jīvas*, as well as expansions of Viṣṇu (*Viṣṇu-tattva*), such as Śrī Paraśurāma. Most notable among these are as follows:

- **Brahmā**, empowered with the energy to create the cosmic manifestation (*śṛṣṭi-śakti*). He is also a *guna-avatāra*, as explained above.
- **Catuḥsana**, or the **Four Kumāras** (four child-saints), specifically empowered to distribute transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*).
- **Nārada Muni**, empowered to distribute knowledge of devotional service (*bhakti-śakti*).
- **Mahārāja Pṛthu**, specifically empowered to rule and maintain the living entities (*pālana-śakti*).
- **Paraśurāma**, specifically empowered to annihilate demonic and disturbing elements (*duṣṭa-damana-śakti*). He is also a *līlā-avatāra*, as is mentioned shortly.

The above five *śaktyāveśa-avatāras* are among the most noted in Vedic literatures. However, there are specific individuals who fall into this category of *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, whose contributions touch the lives of humans very directly, such as: Srila

¹² Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.21, 24, 27 and 32.

¹³ Lord Śrī Rāmacandra was greenish, not reddish, as is the case of most *yuga-avatāras* in the *treta-yuga*. In the most recent *treta-yuga* (approximately two million years ago), the *līlā-avatāra* Śrī Rāmacandra appeared as the *yuga-avatāra*.

¹⁴ According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.32, the *kali-yuga-avatāra* appearing during the reign of Vaivasvata Manu (the 7th *manvantāra-avatāra*), is of golden hue, and goes by the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The golden form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya does not always appear in every *kali-yuga*.

Vyāsadeva, the compiler of all Vedic literatures; Gautama Buddha, Śrīpād Śaṅkarācārya, Jesus Christ, Hazrad Muhammad, Guru Nanak, Srila Prabhupāda¹⁵ and many other great gurus and prophets who give knowledge to those souls seeking guidance.

Daśavatāra or Ten Principle Pastime Incarnations (Lilā-avatāras)

There are ten principle pastime incarnations of Viṣṇu (*lilā-avatāras*), which are mentioned in the Vedic literatures, and which are correlated to the nine grahas and the lagna in the *Bṛhad Parāśara Hora Śāstra*.¹⁶ According to these principles, the planets are incarnations of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu which administer His Will by dispensing the results of *karma* to the living beings. The planets are thus controlled on three levels: the deity which controls the planet itself; the *devata* or demigod which controls the planetary deity; and finally, all of them are controlled by an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Table 1.3 lists these for easy reference:

Table 1.3: Planetary Deities and Avatāras

Planet	Controlling Deity	Devata (demigod)	Avatāra of Viṣṇu
Sun	Surya (the Sun-god)	Agni (the fire-god)	Rāmacandra (incarnation of dharma)
Moon	Soma (Moon-god)	Varuna (god of water)	Kṛṣṇa (Supreme Personality of Godhead)
Mars	Kuja (god of Mars)	Kartikeya (god of war)	Narāsimha (half-man, half-lion)
Mercury	Buddha	Viṣṇu (the god of sustenance)	Buddha (the enlightened one)
Jupiter	Bṛhaspati (guru of the demigods)	Indra (king of the demigods)	Vāmana (dwarf brāhmaṇa)
Venus	Śukra (guru of the demonic)	Śaci (wife of Indra)	Paraśurāma (brāhmaṇa warrior)
Saturn	Sāni (the brother of Yama)	Brahmā (god of creation)	Kurma (tortoise)
Rāhu	A demon's head	Durga (material energy)	Varāha (boar)
Ketu	A demon's headless body	Gaṇeśa (son of Śiva)	Matsya (fish)
Lagna	Bhū-devi (Mother Earth)	Bhūmi (the cow)	Kalki (the incarnation Who delivers all souls at the end of kali-yuga)

¹⁵ Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, the late 20th century ambassador of Vedic knowledge and founder of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement in America, is known affectionately by his disciples and followers as Śrīla Prabhupāda. His teachings will be referred to in many places throughout this book, while the analysis of his horoscope is given in Chapter Eight.

¹⁶ *Bṛhad Parasara Hora Shastra*. (This Jyotish classic text will be abbreviated *BPHS* from this point forward.)

Vedic Theology and its Relevance to Jyotiṣa

Thus, at the root of all Vedic theology, is the pre-eminent existence of Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa in His ultimate form), Brahmā and Śiva, Who in turn perform the functions of creation, sustenance and annihilation in this material world. Further to these three basic functions, there are sub-categories of *devas* mentioned above as born from the quality of *sattva* or goodness. These have direct relevance to four different principles of Jyotiṣa, and are given as follows:

Classifications of Devatas

There are 33 devas (godly entities or demigods), with about 330 million forms. These include eight *vasus*, eleven *rudras*, twelve *ādityas*, Indra (the king of the *devas*) and Prajāpati (the form of Brahmā who creates).¹⁷ These are all expansions of Nārāyaṇa, as mentioned in the *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* as follows:

*nārāyaṇād brahmā jāyate, nārāyaṇād prajāpatiḥ prajāyate, nārāyaṇād indro jāyate,
nārāyaṇād aṣṭau vasavo jāyante, nārāyaṇād ekādaśa rudrā jāyante, nārāyaṇād
dvādaśādityāḥ*

“From Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā is born, and from Nārāyaṇa the patriarchs (*prajāpatiḥ*) are also born. From Nārāyaṇa, Indra is born, from Nārāyaṇa the eight *vasus* are born, from Nārāyaṇa the eleven *rudras* are born, from Nārāyaṇa the twelve *ādityas* are born.”

Since Nārāyaṇa is the remote Creator of all these, He is the fountainhead of all other Incarnations as well.

- *Aṣṭau vasavah*, or eight *vasus*: The eight *devas* known as *vasus*, bestow light in the form of *ātma-vidyā* or spiritual knowledge, which includes knowledge of the self within and beyond matter. The eight *vasus* are a function of Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva. Their names are given in the *Sathapatha Brāhmaṇa* as well.¹⁸ These represent eight sources of light, which are associated with the process of sustenance, experience and learning for the *ātma* (soul). Here the symbolic relation to eight chara kārakas, those ruled by Viṣṇu, is poignant. They are also linked to the Kālacakra (*aṣṭadala padma* or eight-petal lotus), which is likened to the wheel of time.¹⁹ The functions

¹⁷ *Sathapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14.16.

¹⁸ *Sathapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14.16: The eight *vasus* are: (1) Agni; (2) Prithvi; (3) Vayu; (4) Antarīkṣa; (5) Āditya; (6) Dyau; (7) Chandrama; and (8) Nakshatra.

¹⁹ The kālacakra or “*aṣṭadala padma*” (eight-petalled lotus) lies at the foundation of Hindu-Vedic philosophy. It is based on the wheel of time, which aligns the 28 constellations with eight spokes constituting the wheel. Each of these spokes is in one of the cardinal (kendra), or intermediate (trinal or koṇa) directions, beginning from the east and moving in the clockwise direction. The kālacakra is

of sustenance, or the maintenance of living beings, ultimately comes through knowledge, and this knowledge originates in one single Veda, which later became four (*R̥g Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*). These were further delineated by Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the Vedas, in the form of the *Vedānta-sūtras*.²⁰

The *aṣṭau vasavah* represent the essential ingredients that define all created things. Specifically, these include the *pañca-tattva* or the five states of matter and energy; the Sun and Moon; and the naksatras or constellations. These, plus sub-categories are listed as follows:

1. *apah* – *jala tattva* or liquid
2. *dhara* – *prithvi tattva* or earth (solid matter)
3. *anila* – *vayu tattva* or air
4. *anala* – *agni tattva* or fire
5. *dhruva* – The Pole Star, which is also called *dhruva-loka* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.²¹ *Dhruva* represents the *ākāśa tattva* or outer space (*antarīkṣa*), and establishes the fixity of the sidereal zodiac. This introduces the relevance of the *ayanamsa* as well.
6. *soma* – The Moon
7. *pratyūṣa* – the recurring dawn, which is divided into two categories, as follows:
 - a. The Sun – the source of light behind the dawn; and
 - b. The lagna – The ascendant or the point in the eastern horizon representing the self, which is equated to the dawn.
8. *prabhāsa* – The splendid lights of the stars that are grouped into 27/28 nakshatras (constellations).

This list constitutes the *first principle of Jyotiṣa*, which defines the bodies that create all beings and the knowledge which guides them through various activities.

- *ekādaśa-rudrā* (eleven *rudras*): According to Mahārṣi Jaimini,²² the lord of the 8th from all the houses (except for the one occupied by Jupiter) is *Rudra*. Thus there are eleven such *rudras*, all of whom are defined as *devas*. The *rudras* are responsible for holding the *prāṇa* or life force within the body. They are called *rudras*, as the root word *rud* means “to weep.” At the time of death, it is the *prāṇa* that leaves the body first, and then the five *tattvas* (earth, water, fire, air and ether)

especially important in consideration of the deities that rule each direction, and the positioning of natal or transit planets in those directions. It has many other key uses in Vedic astrology.

²⁰ Śrīla Vyāsadeva was a specific *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* who was empowered to compile the *Vedas* in written form. He was the son of Mahārṣi Parāśara, the author of *Bṛhad Parāśara Hora Śāstra*.

²¹ *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.

²² *Maharshi Jaimini Upadesa Sutras* 2.1.35. Translated by Sanjay Rath (1997) Sagar Publications. New Delhi. (This classic jyotish text is abbreviated as *MJUS* from here on.)

disintegrate, thus causing a separation of the *mana* (mind) and *ātma* from the body. This results in the “weeping” of the native’s relatives upon his death. Thus, through the agency of eleven *rudras*, Lord Śiva’s appointment to the *tamo-guna* is carried out, resulting in the destruction of everything that has been created. The names of the eleven *rudras* are given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as well.²³ The eleven *rudras* destroy everything that has been created, and thus form *the second principle of Jyotiṣa*.

The 11th *rudra*, which is the lord of the 8th from the Ātmakāraka (AK),²⁴ is called Maheśvara. Maheśvara is responsible for separating the *ātma* (soul) from the *mana* (mind). Maheśvara therefore has direct control over the deliverance of the soul from material existence. Further, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa states that, “Of all *rudras*, I am Śaṅkara (Śiva).”²⁵ Śaṅkara is Maheśvara, the ultimate form of *Rudra* who takes charge of the *ātma* at the time one leaves the material body. In Chapter Three of this book, many details are analyzed with respect to the functions of death and re-birth, which are specifically deputed to Lord Śiva, the *guna-avatāra* for the mode of destruction or darkness. Specifically, re-birth is a function of Śiva, while death is a function of *Rudra*.

Rāhu and Ketu are very specific in their functions as *rudras*. Rāhu has the responsibility of destroying the luminaries (as in eclipses), as well as the *dvādaśādityāḥ*, which are the twelve signs. Ketu destroys the material creation represented by the *pañca-tattva* (which are related to the five planets Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn), as well as the *naksatras*.

- *dvādaśādityāḥ* or twelve *ādityas*: The relation between life force and the twelve *ādityas* is easy to follow. “Twelve *ādityas* (Sun’s)” refers to the twelve solar signs of the zodiac representing the twelve months. With reference to Jyotiṣa, a *māsa* (month) indicates the period between two consecutive conjunctions of the Sun and the Moon. The average geocentric motion of the Sun in thirty days is thirty zodiacal degrees, which defines the *saura māsa*, or solar month. The entire gamut of knowledge relating to material sustenance as well as ultimate liberation is a function of these twelve *ādityas*. By movement through the degrees of the zodiac at a mean rate of one degree per day, the Sun completes an entire cycle of twelve signs in one *samvatsara*, or solar year. The symbolic evolutionary process of life force, or the soul, is thus intimately linked to the Sun, twelve zodiacal signs, 360 zodiacal degrees, and twelve *ādityas*. Thus, *the third principle of Jyotiṣa* is that of time and space, and which is based on the *dvādaśādityāḥ*.

²³ *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.17-18. The names of the eleven *rudras* are: Raivata, Aja, Bhava, Bhīma, Vāma, Ugra, Vṛṣākapi, Ajaikapāt, Ahirbradhna, Bahurūpa and Mahān

²⁴ The Ātmakāraka is the planet highest in degrees in its sign. See Chapter Two of this book for many details regarding the interpretation of the AK and its role in Jyotiṣa.

²⁵ *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.23.

- Indra and *Prajāpati*: Indra rules the region of the upper planetary systems called *svarga-loka*. He is the king of the *devas*, in the same way that the Ātmakāraka (as explained in Chapter Two), is the king of the horoscope. Indra's position or throne is at the meridian (10th house cusp) or midheaven. Indra, deputed by Nārāyaṇa, thus maintains and protects the universe. His function is to control the senses and the workings of the brain, as well as the intelligence of all creation.

Prajāpati refers to the father or progenitor of all living beings. There are numerous *prajāpatis*, the ultimate form of whom is Brahmā. Given the duty of creation, *prajāpati* Brahmā sits at the lagna, or ascendant of the horoscope. *Yajña* is the worship or praise of *Prajāpati*, the progenitor. Thus the lagna or ascendant represents the seat of *Prajāpati*, the progenitor. This is *the fourth principle of Jyotiṣa*.

Summarizing the Links to Jyotiṣa

Summarily, Jyotiṣa links to the above principles of *aṣṭau vasavah* (eight *vasus*), *ekādaśa rudrā* (eleven *rudras*), *dvādaśādityāḥ*, (twelve *ādityas*), Indra and *Prajāpati* in two categories: (1) Phalita Jyotiṣa (sustenance and results of *karmas*); and (2) Āyur Jyotiṣa (longevity determination).

Phalita Jyotiṣa

Phalita Jyotiṣa is divided into two sub-sections:

- (a) *Aṣṭau vasavah* (eight *vasus*), and Indra, which are associated with the knowledge of the origins of the soul, his spiritual existence both within and outside of the material existence, and his deliverance from the cycles of births and deaths. Since Indra is the king of the universe, he is likened to the Ātmakāraka planet astrologically. The Ātmakāraka is responsible for intelligence and knowledge relating to the soul's existence within matter.
- (b) *Dvādaśādityāḥ* (twelve *ādityas*) and all other *devas*. This second sub-section involves the study of the field of activities, the body and *karma* where the soul's maintenance and survival are concerned. The symbolic evolution of life force rests in the Sun's movement through the twelve signs of the zodiac, thus making the twelve *ādityas* relevant to the study of time and space.

Āyur Jyotiṣa

Āyur Jyotiṣa involves the eleven rudras including Maheśvara, and has to do with the longevity of the material form, and the return of the soul to his Creator, or God respectively. *Prajāpati* Brahmā is vitally linked to this category, as creation and destruction are polar opposites of the same principle. Āyur Jyotiṣa thus involves the creation of Brahmā, and then separation of the soul from the body and mind through *Rudra*. The deliverance of the soul from the sphere of the mind (*manas*) is controlled by Maheśvara.

This book concentrates on the first category (Phalita) and sub-sections, while touching on the second category (Ayur) briefly in some places.

Sign Types, Nakṣatras, Kāraṅkas and Progressions

Following these principles, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva, can be seen as underlying components to some very foundational principles in Jyotiṣa.

Sign Types

- *Cardinal signs*, associated with the energy of creation and manifestation, are ruled by Brahmā;
- *Dual signs*, associated with the principle of sustenance, are ruled by Viṣṇu (Nārāyana); and
- *Fixed signs*, associated with the principles of destruction, are ruled by Śiva.

Tattvas (Material Elements), Signs and Varnas (Vedic Social Orders)

The twelve signs of the zodiac are grouped into four categories, each associated with one of four *tattvas* or material elements. These in turn, relate to the four social orders of Vedic society, and finally Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively. Their groupings and categories are as follows:

Table 1.4: Groupings of Zodiacal Signs

Tattva (Element)	Astrological Signs	Varna (Social Order)	Deity
jala (water)	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces	Brāhmaṇa (priestly class)	Viṣṇu
agni (fire)	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius	Kṣatriya (royal class)	Brahmā
vayu (air)	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius	Vaiśya (mercantile class)	Brahmā and Śiva
prithvi (earth)	Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn	Śūdra (laborer class)	Śiva

The fifth *tattva*, i.e., *ākāśa* (ether), is all-pervasive, and thus is the binding force joining together all the astrological signs, as well as social orders.

Naksatras and their Relation to Three Gunas, and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva

There are 27 naksatras or constellations which are divided into three groups of nine each. These are categorized as follows: *deva* or godly, which are associated with Viṣṇu; *rākṣasa* or destructive, which are associated with Śiva; and *manuṣya* or human, which are associated with Brahmā. The following table shows their groupings and categories.

Table 1.5: Categories of Naksatras

Naksatra Groups	Guna (Quality)	Ganam (Attribute)	Deity
Aśvinī to Āśleṣa (0° Aries to 29°:59' Cancer)	rajas (passion)	manuṣya (human)	Brahmā
Māgha to Jyeshtha (0° Leo to 29°:59' Scorpio)	tamas (inertia or ignorance)	rākṣasa (demonic)	Śiva
Mūla to Revatī (0° Sagittarius to 29°:59' Pisces)	sattva (goodness)	deva (godly)	Viṣṇu

The logic behind the above breakdown of naksatras is as follows: Aries represents the beginning of creation and naturally equates to Brahmā, as this is chiefly his function being connected to the *rajo-guna* (material mode of passion or creation). Following birth, there must necessarily be death or destruction, as either end of the polarity is dependent upon the other. As it is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “For whatever is born, death is certain, and whatever has died, birth is certain.”²⁶ In Chapter Three Śiva’s relevance to the 7th house according to the Vedic cosmology of astrological houses is discussed. Śiva, ruling death and the 7th house, falls within the second group of naksatras shown above, and thus they are ascribed to the *rākṣasa*, or demonic *ganam*, which is about destruction of life force. Once the soul has undergone the anguish of *saṃsāra* (repetitions of many births and deaths in this world), he then desires *mokṣa*, or liberation, which is the function of Viṣṇu. Note that the house of the *guru* and *dharma*, the 9th house, as well as of *mokṣa*, the 12th, fall within the zodiacal sphere of the 3rd group of naksatras. These are of the *deva-ganam*, the quality of goodness or *sattva-guna*.

Specific Classifications of Naksatras

The above serves as a general breakdown of naksatras and their alignment with *gunas* (qualities), *ganam* (attributes) and their relevance to the deities of creation, sustenance and annihilation, i.e., Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively. There are some very specific classifications of naksatras as well, which are shown in Table 1.6. The important point made here, however, is that each of the naksatras resonates with the

²⁶ *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.27.

specific qualities, divisions of society and attributes which ultimately relate to the above primal deities.

Table 1.6: Detailed Categories of Nakṣatras

Number	Nakṣatra	Vimśottari Daśā Lord	Guṇa	Ganam	Type
1	Aśvinī	Ketu	tamas	deva	dharma
2	Bharani	Venus	rajas	manuṣya	artha
3	Krittika	Sun	rajas	rākṣasa	kāma
4	Rohini	Moon	rajas	manuṣya	mokṣa
5	Mrgaśīrṣā	Mars	tamas	deva	mokṣa
6	Ārdrā	Rāhu	tamas	manuṣya	kāma
7	Punarvasu	Jupiter	sattva	deva	artha
8	Puṣyā	Saturn	tamas	deva	dharma
9	Aśleṣā	Mercury	sattva	rākṣasa	dharma
10	Maghā	Ketu	tamas	rākṣasa	artha
11	P. Phalguni	Venus	rajas	manuṣya	kāma
12	U. Phalguni	Sun	rajas	manuṣya	mokṣa
13	Hasta	Moon	rajas	deva	mokṣa
14	Citra	Mars	tamas	rākṣasa	kāma
15	Svātī	Rāhu	tamas	deva	artha
16	Viśākhā	Jupiter	sattva	rākṣasa	dharma
17	Anurādhā	Saturn	tamas	deva	dharma
18	Jyeṣṭhā	Mercury	sattva	rākṣasa	artha
19	Mūlā	Ketu	tamas	rākṣasa	kāma
20	Purvaṣādhā	Venus	rajas	manuṣya	mokṣa
21	Uttaraṣādhā	Sun	rajas	manuṣya	mokṣa
22	Śravaṇā	Moon	rajas	deva	artha
23	Dhaniṣṭhā	Mars	tamas	rākṣasa	kāma
24	Śatabhiṣā	Rāhu	tamas	rākṣasa	dharma
25	Pūrvabhādra	Jupiter	sattva	manuṣya	artha
26	Uttarabhadrā	Saturn	tamas	manuṣya	kāma
27	Revatī	Mercury	sattva	deva	mokṣa

Kāraḱas

There are three types of kāraḱas or signifiers in Vedic astrology, and they too have relevance to the primal principles of universal creation, sustenance and destruction, as follows:

1. **Brahmā**, creation. These are called **Naiskargika kāraḱas** (universally applicable);
2. **Viṣṇu**, sustenance. These are the **Chara kāraḱas** (variable or temporary);
3. **Śiva**, destruction. These are called **Sthira kāraḱas** (fixed).

Naiskargika Kāraḱas

Since Brahmā is in charge of creation, everything that exists, both moving and non-moving, resides under his jurisdiction. The system of signifiers (kāraḱas) which assigns relations of the planets to all general areas of life is called *Naiskargika*. These include the luminaries plus five planets, as well as Rāhu and Ketu. Rāhu and Ketu are included within this scheme, as they respectively represent material desire as prompted by the continuum of *karma*; and, ultimate freedom from desire, *mokṣa*, or release from the repetitions of birth and deaths (*samsāra*). Such kāraḱas indicate not only desire and its emancipation, but persons or individuals in a person's life who contribute to such purposes. In addition, they represent the physical, intellectual, mental and emotional realities of the native's life as well. In other words, everything that exists comes under the heading of naiskargika karakatwa, and is a manifestation of the function of Brahmā. Naiskargika kāraḱas are thus nine in number:

1. **Sun:** *ātma* (soul or true self), *satyam* (seat of truth), ego and father, authority
2. **Moon:** *manas* (mind), perceptions, perceived identity and emotions; mother
3. **Mars:** *pālana-śakti* (power of protection), courage and potency to rule and maintain; self-determination, ambition, competition, activity; brothers, siblings
4. **Mercury:** *dhi-śakti* (intelligence), comprehension, articulation and communication; uncles and relatives, both paternal and maternal
5. **Jupiter:** *jñāna-śakti* (power of knowledge), *guru*, spirituality, *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and self-realization; elder brother and elders in general
6. **Venus:** pleasure principle, love, sensuality, intuition and relationships; wife
7. **Saturn:** position, achievement, sacrifice, austerity and renunciation; servants or assistants.
8. **Rāhu:** desire, compulsion and the necessity to bring incomplete *karma* into manifestation; grandfather
9. **Ketu:** *mokṣa*, the function of liberation from repetitions of births and deaths; grandmother

Chara Kāraḱas

Chara means “temporary or variable,” and thus the chara kāraḱas differ from one chart to the next. Viṣṇu, having relevance to the principle of sustenance or maintenance, presides over the chara kāraḱas. These kāraḱas represent the persons in the life of an individual who contribute to his support and sustenance, and include the luminaries, five planets, plus Rāhu. (In some cases, Rāhu is excluded and seven chara kāraḱas are used instead. This is discussed shortly.) Ketu is excluded from the scheme of Chara kāraḱas, as he is without a body, and thus represents the path of the soul toward mokṣa, or that which leads him outside his material existence. Many details on the Chara kāraḱas are given in Chapter Two, especially the Ātmakāraḱa. The Chara kāraḱas include the following, in order of highest to lowest zodiacal degrees attained

by the planets. Mahārshi Jaimini, in his *Upadeśa Sūtras*, lists eight chara kārakas as follows.²⁷

Table 1.7: Chara Karakas

	Rule	Chara Kāratwa	Definition
1	planet with highest longitude irrespective of signs	Ātmakāraka (AK)	self, king
2	planet with 2 nd highest longitude	Amatyakāraka (AmK)	aide, minister
3	planet with 3 rd highest longitude	Bhrāṭṛkāraka (BK)	brother, guru
4	planet with 4 th highest longitude	Matṛkāraka (MK)	mother
5	planet with 5 th highest longitude	Pitṛkāraka (PiK)	father
6	planet with 6 th highest longitude	Putrakāraka (PK)	children
7	planet with 7 th highest longitude	Jñātikāraka (GK)	relatives
8	planet with 8 th highest longitude	Dārākāraka (DK)	spouse
9	For the purpose of assigning his position within the hierarchy of chara kārakas, the longitude of Rāhu is reckoned from the end of the sign (i.e., 30° – Rāhu’s longitude = the recalculated degree for Rāhu.)		

Significance of the Ātmakāraka (AK)

Of these chara karakas, the Ātmakāraka especially carries greatest importance throughout this book, due to its prevalence over the spiritual evolution of the native. The AK has a preeminent position like a king, in that he agrees with or sustains the activities or purposes of all other kārakas. The results of *rāja-yogas* or other beneficial combinations in the chart are largely dependent on the disposition of the AK to energize such combinations. For example, if the AK endorses or encourages a particular result in the chart, then the adverse or damaging effects of malefics toward those purposes are not pronounced. Similarly, if other planets indicate favorable results, yet the AK is not so favorable for those intended purposes, then negative results supercede, while positive results escape the native. Further details regarding the AK are given in Chapter Two.

The Bhrāṭṛkāraka (BK) has further relevance to our studies of spirituality in Jyotiṣa, in that it can also be considered indicative of the *guru*. The BK is the planet third highest in degrees in its sign. This establishes the link to one of three *ṛṣis* (great *gurus*) who rule each of the three divisions of the Drekkana (D-3) chart. (Please see Chapter Three for details on drekkanas and their ruling deities). The *guru* gives knowledge and guidance and is conceptually related to elder “co-born” in the sense that the elder brother (whose naiskargika kāraka is Jupiter) gives protection, instruction or guidance. These themes are all applicable to the Drekkana, or third division, as well as the planet third highest in degrees serving as the BK. We also find in our studies of various charts, that the BK is an important significator of the *guru*. We also learn that

²⁷ MJUS 1.2.12 –18.

the BK is the *Guru-devata* or protector, and from his vantage point in the Navamsa chart we can find the times when knowledge and Vedic teachings come to the native.

Similarly, the mutual conjunctions and *rāśi dr̥ṣṭi* of various *kāra*kas, such as the AK plus AmK, or AK plus PiK, form a set of *Rāja-sambandha-yogas*, the interpretations of which are important to bear in mind in the assessment of the spiritual potentials in the horoscope. Details on such *yogas* are presented in later chapters.

Seven and Eight Chara Karaka Schemes

In his *BPHS* 34.1-2, Parāśara states as follows

athā'ham sampravakṣyāmi grahānāt mādikāra kān |
saptaravyādīśanyantān rāhvantān vā'ṣṭasaṅkhyakān || 1||
aṁśaiḥ samaugnahau dvau cedrāhvantan cintayet tadā |
saptaiva kārakānevaṁ kecidaṣṭau pracakṣate || 2||

In this verse, Maḥarṣi Parāśara speaks of two chara *kāra*ka schemes²⁸ involving (1) seven planets from Sun to Saturn and (2) eight planets including Rāhu. However, he acknowledges a view that in the seven planet chara *kāra*ka scheme, when the degrees (*aṁśa*) of two planets are the same, then Rāhu is also considered as a chara *kāra*ka. In the eight planet scheme, Rāhu is always considered.

From this, we can conclude the following:

1. There are two chara *kāra*ka schemes, the (1) seven and (2) eight planet schemes.
2. The seven chara *kāra*ka scheme uses the seven planets from Sun to Saturn and when the longitude (*aṁśa* means degrees only and does not specifically include minutes and seconds of arc) of two planets is the same, then Rāhu is also considered.
3. The eight chara *kāra*ka scheme uses the eight planets from Sun to Rahu.
4. Ketu is completely excluded from both schemes.

Differences Between Seven and Eight Chara Kāra

ka Schemes

In his *Jātaka Tattva* 1.66, Mahādeva makes the following assertions:

सर्वग्रहेभ्योऽधिकांशाऽऽत्मकारकस्ततः क्रमेण न्यूनांशा अमात्यभ्रातृमातृपितृपुत्रजातिदारकारकाः ।
sarvagrahebhyo'dhikāṁśā''tmakāra kastaṭaḥ krameṇa nyūnāṁśā

²⁸ MJUS 1.1.10.

amātyabhrāṭṛmāṭṛpitṛputrajñātīdārakāarakāḥ |

Translation: Among the planets, the one that has advanced the highest longitude (in a sign) is the (1) Ātmakāraka. In the order of decreasing longitude, the other kārakas are (2) Amātyakāraka (3) Bhratṛkāraka, (4) Māṭṛkāraka, (5) Pitṛkāraka, (6) Putrakāraka, (7) Jñatikāraka and (8) Dārakāraka.

The book *Jātaka Tattva* specifically addresses the horoscopes of living beings, as the word *jātaka* refers to organic births. Thus it is evident that the eight-planet chara kāraka scheme is used for the charts of all such living beings, more importantly those of humans. The inclusion of Rāhu as a kāraka in this scheme is significant, as Rāhu chiefly represents the underpinnings of desire, and it is desire only that perpetuates the repetitions of births and deaths. The inclination to pursue that which had been pursued in prior lifetimes is evident through the perpetual retrogression of Rāhu.

Parāśara recommends the use of eight chara kārakas for jātaka or human births. This may be inferred from the following statements in his *Hora Śāstra* re: “*rājayogādhyāyaḥ*” (chapter on *rāja-yogas*), 41.4:

आत्मकारकपुत्राभ्यां योगमेकं प्रकल्पयेत् ।

तनुपञ्चमनाथाभ्यां तथैव द्विजसत्तम ॥ ४ ॥

ātmakārakaputrābhyāṁ yogamekaṁ prakalpayet |

tanupañcamanāthābhyāṁ tathaiva dvijasattama || 4||

In these verses it is stated that the association of (1) the AK and the PK and (2) lagna and fifth house lords cause two kinds of *rāja-yoga*. Earlier, Parāśara had stated that the basic difference between the seven and eight planet chara kāraka scheme is that in the former, the Putrakāraka (PK) is merged into the Māṭṛkāraka (MK). Thus, the seven chara kāraka scheme does not have a Putrakāraka (PK). In verse 41.4²⁹, Parāśara teaches that a *rāja-yoga* is formed by the conjunction or mutual aspect between the AK and the PK. It is evident that Parāśara is also advising the use of the eight chara kāraka scheme for this purpose as only according to such an approach does a PK exist which is a pre-requisite for the generation of the *rāja-yoga*.

Seven Chara Kārakas

Parāśara also mentions a seven chara kāraka scheme in the *BPHS* 34.16, as follows:

मातृकारकमेवाऽन्ये वदन्ति सुतकारकम् ।

māṭṛkārakamevā'nye vadanti sutakārakam |

²⁹ *BPHS* 39.4.

“In the opinion of others (or in another viewpoint [*anye*]), the PK is merged into the MK, i.e., there are only seven Chara Kārakas where the PK is explicitly excluded. The seven Chara Kārakas are (1) Ātmakāra (2) Amātyakāra, (3) Bhratrakāra, (4) Mātrakāra, (5) Pitrakāra, (6) Jñatikāra, and (7) Dārakāra. In this connection, Maḥarṣi Jaimini has a similar opinion.³⁰

Several conclusions arise out of these statements, the most important of which are as follows:

- The specific exclusion of the PK, according to this scheme, indicates that this system (the seven chara kāra scheme) is not intended for jāta or the charts of human beings. It is used for charts of inanimate entities, such as institutions, corporations, events or other such horoscopes for which muḥurta is necessary.
- The practice of some modern astrologers of merging the PiK with the BK for use with a seven kāra system, while keeping the PK, has no basis in classical Jyotiṣa scriptures, nor is it followed by authorities on Jyotiṣa either. The idea of a son or daughter (PK) without a father (PiK), is not only ludicrous, but is also not supported in classical literatures.
- If, as mentioned by Parāśara, the MK is merged with the PK, then the concept of jāta does not arise, as gestation and birth of a child cannot occur without the mother. Thus in jāta horoscopes, there is need for a PK, whereas, in the charts of a non-living creation, the PK is not necessary. When the seven kāra scheme is understood in this way, then its use becomes highly valuable in consideration of the charts for which it is intended, i.e., non-living entities.

Thus, both schemes are relevant to Jyotiṣa. The seven-planet chara kāra scheme (without Rāhu) is to be used for the non-living creation, whereas the eight-planet chara kāra scheme that includes Rāhu (planet of desire and re-birth) is to be used for all living beings. In this work many chart illustrations using the eight-planet chara kāra scheme are given, as the focus herein is on the spiritual evolution and timing of spiritual events in the lives of humans. In a future publication, example charts of the seven-planet or non-organic chara kāra scheme shall be presented.

Sthira Kārakas – Ātma-saptama (7) and Ātma-aṣṭama (8)

Ātma-saptama means “being one’s self the seventh” and refers to the seven sthira kārakas which represent the physical body. This can also refer to the seven-planet chara kāra scheme applicable to the inanimate world, as discussed above. Literally, Ātma-aṣṭama means “being one’s self the eighth” and refers to the eight-planet chara kāra scheme applicable to all living beings.

³⁰ MJUS 1.1.19.

Sthira or fixed kārakas thus relate to the functions of Śiva (Rudra, i.e., death or destruction) and are useful in timing the deaths of relatives or other persons in a native's life. There are seven sthira kārakas, including the luminaries plus five planets, excluding Rāhu and Ketu. The nodes are excluded, as they do not have physical bodies, and thus cannot be considered physical entities whose longevity may be determined through the horoscope. For the purposes of longevity studies, Jaimini has given a number of Āyur daśās, the most important of which are Sthira daśā, Śūla daśā and Niryaṇa-śūla daśā, all of which have fixed lengths of operation, and thus have significant relevance to the theme of sthira kārakas.

Further, the principle of the 7th house, and seven sthira kārakas as applicable to death, is symbolized by the Sun's setting over the western horizon (7th house). Following death, there is immediate re-birth, and thus there are **seven mothers** mentioned in Vedic literatures,³¹ as well as **seven rasas** or "tastes," which are the root constituents of all material forms. Each of these *rasas* rules each of the **seven divisions** of the Saptamsa (D-7) chart, which describes the natives procreative ability, as well as the tastes or pleasures enjoyed by the mother. In this way, death comes through the principle of seven, as does re-birth, both of which are relegated to Śiva. More on these subjects are covered in Chapter Three.

The sthira kārakas are as follows according to *Jaimini Sutram*³²:

1. **Sun and Venus:** father (whichever one is stronger)
2. **Moon and Mars:** mother (whichever one is stronger)
3. **Mercury:** maternal aunts, uncles and maternal relatives:
4. **Venus:** wife (for a male chart), father and mother-in-laws, as well as maternal grandparents
5. **Mars:** younger brothers and sisters, sister-in-law and mother
6. **Jupiter:** paternal grandparents, husband (for a female chart) and children
7. **Saturn:** prosperity/evils to elder brothers and other elders

These are illustrated for easier reference in Table 1.8 as follows:

Table 1.8: Sthira Karakas

Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
Father	Mother	Mother, Younger Brother	Uncle	Grandfather; Children; Husband (female chart)	Father, sister, Daughter, wife (male chart)	Elder Brother, other Elders

³¹ The seven mothers are: one's biological mother, the wife of the *guru*, the wife of a *brāhmaṇa* (spiritual teacher), the wife of the king, the cow, the nurse and the Earth.

³² MJUS 1.20-24.

Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva and Daśā Progressions

The various *rāṣi daśās* taught by Parāśara and Jaimini³³ repeat the themes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and their respective deities: Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva.

Nārāyaṇa Daśā

In the Nārāyaṇa daśā system³⁴ (also called Padakrama daśā), three separate progressions are given depending on the nature of the sign rising in the chart. Beginning with the ascendant (or the stronger between the 1st and 7th houses), there are three separate progressions according to this system:

- For **dual signs rising** (Ge, Vi, Sg, Pi), the first daśā is followed by that of the 5th sign, then the 9th; then the 10th sign starts the next set, with the daśās moving to the 5th and 9th sign from there, etc. So the theme of the **Viṣṇu** progressions, relating to the primal principle of sustenance, or those starting with dual signs rising, resonate with the three *dharma* houses, 1st, 5th and 9th.
- The primal principle of action and creation [**Brahmā**] is appropriate to the cardinal signs (Ar, Cn, Li, Cp). Thus with **cardinal signs rising** in the chart, the progressions move to the next sign and follow one after the other, similar to Chara daśā.
- The theme of destruction belongs to Śiva, and thus Nārāyaṇa daśā calculated from **fixed signs rising** (Ta, Le, Sc, Aq), go to each sign in the 6th from the previous one, since themes surrounding limitation, hardship, obstruction and eventual annihilation come through the 6th house in astrology.

The above three classifications of daśā progressions, are separately mentioned in the *Jaimini Sutram* as well as *BPHS* as follows: **Trikona daśā**, **Chara daśā** and **Brahmā daśā** respectively, although their calculation modalities are slightly different. The point is, however, that creation through Brahmā, sustenance through Viṣṇu and destruction through Śiva, are the underlying principles of many progression methods in Jyotiṣa. There are various sub-sections of daśās in each category as well, which are not discussed here.

Kendrādi Rāṣi Daśās

There are also different types of Kendrādi daśās taught by Parāśara and Jaimini. They represent the progression of the kendras (angles) to various points in time in the

³³ BPHS 48.155-189; MJUS 2.3-4

³⁴ For lucid details on the principle, calculation, and interpretation of Nārāyaṇa daśā, see the book *Nārāyaṇa Daśā* by Sanjay Rath (2001) Sagar Publications, New Delhi.

native's life. While Nārāyaṇa daśās represents three different progressions based on the three sign types or modalities, Kendrādi daśās represent a progression of the kendras (angles) through each of three cardinal, fixed and dual houses.

Lagna Kendrādi Rāśi daśā (fructification of *rāja-yogas*): Lagna Kendrādi Rāśi daśā involves the progression of kendra houses starting from the lagna (regardless of what sign type is rising in the chart). According to this system, there are four **cardinal or moveable** [kendra] houses (1, 4, 7 and 10) in the first set of Kendrādi Rāśi daśās, starting from the lagna; then the next set of kendras, relating to the **four succedent houses** (fixed or panapara houses, 2, 5, 8 and 11) follows; and finally, the last set of kendras beginning with the **succedent or apoklima houses** (3, 6, 9 and 12), complete the daśās. Since each of kendra, panapara and apoklima houses respectively represent Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu, the root principles of creation, destruction and sustenance are represented by these rāśi daśās as well.

Other types of Kendrādi daśās are as follows:

Sudaśā or Rāśi daśā: In Sudaśā, the kendra sequence of daśās begins from the sign and house of the Śrī lagna (SL), which is a sign ascribed to Lakṣmī-devī, the consort of Viṣṇu. This particular variety of kendrādi daśās times the periods of prosperity or other forms of wealth in the native's life.³⁵

Ātmakāraka Kendrādi Rāśi Daśā: In this daśā system, the kendra daśās begin from the sign/house of the AK planet. This specifically predicts the points in time when the soul's desire to achieve self-awareness becomes the strongest. This is different from the Drig daśā, which is covered in detail in the second half of this book in Chapters Six through Nine. Drig daśā times the periods when divine will intervenes in the native's life and bestows the blessings of spiritual awakening. The AK Kendrādi Rāśi daśā, however, indicates the points in time at which the will or self-determination of the soul becomes very strong in the search for truth or enlightenment. If the periods of Drig daśā and AK Kendrādi Rāśi daśās overlap at the same point in the native's life, then very significant spiritual events may occur.

A full discussion of the above-mentioned daśā systems is beyond the scope of this book. However, in a sequel to this publication, the author intends to present the calculation and interpretation of the AK Kendrādi Rāśi daśā as an adjunct to Drig daśā. These two daśā systems are especially significant in timing the periods of spirituality in life.

³⁵ For details on Sudaśā, Ātmakāraka and Lagna Kendrādi Rāśi daśās, see the following book: *Vedic Astrology – An Integrated Approach* by P.V.R. Narasimha Rao (2001) Sagar Publications. New Delhi.

Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva and Divisional charts

Further to these principles, the Rāśi (D-1), Navamsa (D-9) and Drekkana (D-3) charts are the three most important divisional charts. Parāśara explains that the drekkanas (ten degree divisions of a sign) are ruled by Deva-ṛṣi Nārada (representing Brahmā and the *rajo-guna*, the material mode of passion), Mahā-ṛṣi Agastya (representing Viṣṇu and *sattva-guna*, the material mode of goodness) and Brahmā-ṛṣi Durvāsā (representing Śiva and *tamo-guna*, the material mode of ignorance or inertia) for dual, fixed and movable drekkanas respectively.

Similarly fixed, dual and movable navamsas (3°20' divisions of a sign) are presided over by Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā respectively. For example, if a planet is placed in Pisces in both Rāśi and Navamsa, it is stated to be vargottama (i.e., having acquired the strongest division of the sign). This placement connects the *sattva-guna* relating to the dual sign of Pisces, to Śrī Viṣṇu, Who is the presiding Deity of the dual signs in the Navamsa (D-9) chart. The daśā system used for examining the times of meeting one's guru, the acquisition of *mantra*, *dīkṣā* (initiation), renunciation, and a host of other significant events in the spiritual life of the native is the Drig daśā. Details regarding its calculation and usage are given in Chapter Six of this book, with several examples in Chapters 7-9.

So, given that the foundations of Vedic scripture underscore Nārāyana or the Supreme Being's existence in everything, we have a solid platform upon which to understand the analytical and predictive systems of Jyotiṣa. In essence, the relations between many important Parāśari systems that are explored in this book are based upon ancient Vedic scriptural knowledge.

:: OM TAT SAT ::