

Astrology, A National Science

Dr. B.V.Raman

Founder President of ICAS

Dr. B.V. Raman, founder and President of ICAS known as the father of Modern Astrology. He was the editor of "The Astrological Magazine", the premier magazine of Astrology. He authored many books on Astrology and validated different methods and techniques of Astrology.



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In asking me to address the Fourth All India Conference held under the auspices of the Kanpur Chapter of the Indian Council of Astrological Sciences, Sri Shukla and his colleagues have done me a great honor. I am indeed grateful to them for this honor.

The subject of this morning's address will be 'Astrology as a National Science' relevant to modern times.

Ancient Hindu literature clearly reveals that there was great progress not only in observational astronomy but also in the region of creative speculation Or conceptual hypothesis of the deductive theory of an advanced type.

In astronomy, the Hindus reached a remarkable degree of approximation, their astronomical tables being used in a systematic process of verification and correction of the computed and observed results.

But it must be noted that achievement in the positive science of astronomy was a means to an end, namely the development of astrology which was built on the concept that human life is inseparably and intimately allied to the multifarious movements in the Cosmos.

During the Vedic period, Indian culture preserved its character as an astronomic astrological culture. The totality of the spiritual, intellectual and cultural life of India contains astrology, in perfect integration with itself. In fact, the ancient sages regarded astrology as the soul of astronomy. They did not play on the credulity of man when they asserted that for those who could understand, the whole history of creation and its evolution including several cosmic mysteries of great astronomical value lay concealed in the symbols left on record by adepts.

Astrology is one subject in the world that has tried to tackle the problems of life in its various aspects. If the basic issue of free will vs determinism is involved in this question, it only shows that - astrology unlike modern sciences goes to the very root of life and the experience of man as an individual and as a species. Modern science, by its self-imposed limits of method, is precluded from addressing man's most vital question about himself and the world.

Over many thousands of years, a long line of sages has deduced a connection between the motions of planets and the relative position of stars with every kind of terrestrial activity. Their ability to predict future trends - even actual events - has been repeatedly demonstrated.

Astrology is such a wide-bodied area of knowledge that it is not an overstatement to call it the mother of all sciences. However, in order to be able to appreciate it better, a simpler definition is necessary. One definition that comes closest to the idea is 'that science which links extra-terrestrial, terrestrial and life phenomena and which attempts to establish a correlation between all living things and the cosmos'.

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- a) natural phenomena occurring on earth such as weather, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions etc.,
- b) human physical phenomena, such as birth, death, disease and accident and
- c) psychological phenomena such as love, hate, jealousy, sex urge etc., and the physical actions resulting from these emotions such as mating, murder etc.

Today we spend millions of rupees on training scientists and managing our scientific laboratories. Yet many of these scientists have been vocal in criticizing astrology though a large number of them are known to privately consult astrologers.

Their indifference is more dangerous than their denunciation. Anyone has a right to criticize astrology or any other science but Only after attaining a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The claim that some scientists have disproved astrology is utterly false. The so-called scientific arguments against astrology are not really scientific at all but a mere rationalization of irrational and pseudo-scientific prejudices.

As Percy Seymour, a well-known British astrophysicist says, the so-called scientific method is no method at all one important approach which is known to all scientists but may not be known to non-scientists is that there is no such thing as 'scientific proof'.

Astrology claims to derive its predictive faculties from the positions and relative movements of the Sun, the Moon and the planets, with other stars in the background all exerting their influence individually and collectively. These influences are physical, biological and mental, individual and collective. Observations extending over thousands of years by generations of observers have gone into the making of astrology as a science and art of prediction without parallel.

What should be the scientific attitude to such claims?

Science claims to be rational in the method. It collects facts and verifies them. It traces relations between facts and forms hypotheses of their togetherness and interaction. then it draws conclusions tentatively. Now, what part of the procedure do the critics follow when they condemn astrology as hocus-pocus?

But astrology consists not of astronomy alone but of the astronomical facts - conjunctions, oppositions and movements and mutual influences of heavenly bodies.

Today astrology is being re-assessed in Western scientific circles but in India, while using astrology widely, no serious attempts are made to restore the subject to its rightful place. Let us hope that our Western-oriented scientists come out of their ivory towers and assess the scientific value and utility of this great national heritage.

In India, the desire to consult an astrologer is considered to be a normal feature of the human mind. Long before the advent of experimental the Indian sages found that life is a series of successful adjustments to the needs, demands and challenges of the environment.

Supposing a person is put to considerable trouble on account of a domestic problem, say a prolonged and baffling illness of some family member, or absence of a suitable job for a fully qualified member, or non-availability of a bride or bridegroom at the proper time – every one of is a challenge from the environment.

Very often such challenges proceed from the environment hit a subject hard, sometimes harder than he or she can bear. In emergencies, an Indian turn to an astrologer for guidance and light. When one is physically or mentally ill, whether he is facing a professional setback or litigation, the astrologer will be consulted first.

The guidance of the astrologer, after the examination of the horoscope, may be either negative or positive. Negatively the may pronounce a case of illness to be hopeless; but according to the ancient dictum that effort should be put forth and no fatalistic attitude should be adopted, he Will advise the client to have recourse to the treatment possible - medical as well as mantric - but reconcile to the inevitable. In these astrological consultations, most of the clients seek the necessary motive force for appropriate action and steps taken to avert the danger.

The nature of consultations may vary. The degree of consultation may differ. Whether it is the farmer, businessman, religious mendicant, doctor, engineer, politician philosopher or scientist - astrology continues to be a relevant factor in his daily life.

To the unlettered and the illiterate, astrology is a living faith for it denotes the Will of God. To think Indian, astrology is not superstition but interplanetary or cosmic forces.

Mundane astrology has become a part of the life of millions of our countrymen. Likewise horary is in many times to solve problems. Astrology has thus become an integral part of modern life.

Indian scientists must widen its horizon of making room for branches of knowledge which are the product of ancient Indian such as astrology which is the product of ancient Indian genius. They should not wait for their Western counterparts to nod their heads in assent. Strangely, some Western have begun to feel that the criticisms of many scientists are not valid because of their prejudiced unscientific nature.

If this is not done, our universities not only remain mere imitations to introduce astrology as a subject of study in our universities. This is a just demand and I hope all sane intellectuals will agree to this proposal.

The importance of astrology as the only national science capable of helping the individual, society the nation is beyond doubt. It is immense. It can help politics, agriculture, meteorology and psychology.

While astrology at the national level can predict a long range of weather, floods, earthquakes etc., On the individual, the horoscope can reveal one's mental structure, his and dislikes, his strong and weak points, his abilities, and his aptitudes giving scope for further improvement. It can diagnose disease supplant medicine, let alone fortune telling which aspect is literally exploited by the news media for the sale of their periodicals.

Such a national science as astrology has the first claim in our universities, to be studied. But unfortunately, many universities seem to think that it would be derogatory, to establish a chair for it, while the Western or modern superstition called 'Futurology' has become respectable enough to find a place in the Curriculum of studies.

If any branch of study, however hoary and established in historical culture it might be, seemed to contravene the assumptions of modern science of the West, such a subject or branch of knowledge is not worthy of study in a modern university of India. The implication is strange, Truth must bend and bow to official science and not vice versa.

There are many branches of astrology that need exhaustive exploration. There are various systems of Dasas by the great sage Parashara; which one is operative, and under what planetary configurations? There are many systems of determining longevity and a band of earnest and devoted scholars should determine this. Then again, the intricate system of jaiminy is not fully explored.

Problems like these are formidable. A few astrological savants cannot undertake this great task, since it needs many who can devote themselves fully to this task in a specialized manner.

Today, barring a few, most of our astrologers are engaged in other professions for their livelihood, and I congratulate them for their devotion to astrology. If we only have an adequate number of scholars and financial resources to match, we can unravel some of these mysteries.

Why does astrology continue to have such importance in India despite the fact that the objective traits of the technological culture of the West are exerting a strong influence on 's social life? It is not easy to answer this question satisfactorily.

There appears to be something inherently vital in India's way of life and India's cultural pattern that the attacks from the individual culture have not been able to into the soul of India. The integration of ancient ideals and values into the life and thought of the average Indian is so powerful that it acts as a shock absorber. The long history of India shows the process of assimilation. Many an attempt was made in the past to foist on India new ways of believing and thinking. Each attempt failed in the sense that the best in it was assimilated.

The assimilation makes the culture of India one of integral humanism. The philosophy of astrology is in tune with the philosophy of the people - the common factor being Karma. The universe is Brahma, and the individual is the atman. The physical aspect of the universe - Brahmanda has its

counterpart - the of man, Pindanda. Therefore, changes occurring in the universe must have repercussions on the individual also.

Why do Predictions fail?

Astrology is widely and successfully used Yet there are complaints that sometimes astrological forecasts are not fulfilled. If one could keep a statistical record of the predictions made by different experienced astrologers one would be surprised to find that the majority of predictions get fulfilled.

A counter question Can be to the critics. Why does medical diagnosis fail? Why do surgeries result in deaths? Why do meteorologists with all the latest instruments at their disposal miserably fail in their weather forecasts? Why do lawyers fail? Why do bridges construct according to an expert engineer's collapse? Why do space scientists also fail in their attempts to send satellites in spite of physics being exact science? Why do politicians fail and heap miseries on the people they govern for the time being? Yet politics is a science!

And most importantly why astrology alone is singled out for such criticisms while all other sciences with their blunders, sometimes run into not only losses of crores of rupees but countless lives are allowed to go scot-free.

To answer the question of why sometimes astrological predictions do not happen, three factors have to be considered:

- 1) The philosophy of astrology
- 2) Correctness of birth-data
- 3) Want of interpretative skill

One of the first philosophical questions that come up in one 's mind regarding astrological claims is human freedom. If the future of man is determined by the planets and stars, there is nothing that he can achieve through his own efforts. His life will be reduced to that of a puppet which has to make every movement in mechanical obedience to the pulls of the operator.

Astrology reveals only the general influence of the planets and stars on our life careers at different times in our life and development. It reveals tendencies. It reveals good times and bad times for certain kinds of choices.

The real situation is that man is purely free and partly bound. His physical nature, his heredity, and his position in the cosmos and even in society are determined. He begins life with a certain number of facts that cannot be changed - he cannot change his parentage, his nationality (at least the majority), his place in the geographical region or country, his temperament, even the life-fund of energy these are his capital.

He can use this capital in various ways, such as to rise higher or sink lower in the scale of value. He can better himself in character and social status or diminish his nature through bad conduct. Man has enough freedom to command nature and history to suit his fancies,

There is no reason to think that astrology seals the fate of every human being at birth determining every one of his acts of choice every moment of his life. Astrology does not support the idea of fate or the complete life of a man like a mechanism moved by previously operating causes. In accordance with the general background of Indian thought, Indian supports the idea of rebirth and Karma.

Then we have the remedial side, Certain Mantras and propitiatory ceremonies are suggested to counteract certain afflictions, which if such palliatives are not to, may express themselves in a variety of troubles. Sound vibrations and the suggestion of sacred formulae were understood by our ancient seers.

Even according to science matter is resolvable into energy the nature of different things is derived level by level from the rhythms of their vibrations, their complexity and their pattern. It is possible that people can receive benefits from the Mantras, Tantras etc., which have been done according to recognised sastric principles and fortified and protected against the evil influences of the planets for the time being. This is akin to scientists' thinking that adverse effects on individuals during magnetic disturbances can be neutralized by changing the magnetic field.

Since sages give importance to *icchasakti* or human volition since certain afflictions in the horoscope can be offset by human effort and other palliatives, absolute determinism is ruled out in astrology. This is one of the reasons for certain predictions not because of the exercise of man's volition power.

Correct Birth Time:

Generally, the time of birth is furnished after birth takes place, which means a few minutes could have elapsed from the actual time of birth. Doubts still persist among astrologers as to what constitutes the moment of birth - Adhana or time of conception, Shirodaya of the appearance of the head Or Bhupatna or the child being separated from the mother by the cutting of the umbilical cord.

The great Satyacharya is very clear in suggesting that the first two should be rejected and only the time of Bhupatna must be accepted as marking the moment of birth. In any case, the given time of birth should be studied in the light of important happenings in life and then the accuracy is decided. Predictions based on an incorrect time of birth cannot be accurate. This is a task only experienced astrologers can undertake.

Inferential Ability:

A significant part of the skill of astrologers lies in interpretations applying general rules and situations to individual cases. This requires in addition to knowledge of stars and planets, a sagacious insight into humans.

According to Satyacharya, astrologers must be well-versed in different branches of the subject and adept in weighing the pros and cons of the horoscope. He must have the creative ability to interpret the horoscope above all he must have spiritual equipment.

It must be noted that in the matter of interpretation each branch of astrology calls for its own particular technique. While the general concepts of the Rishis continue to form the basis; modern conditions - political, economic and social - necessitate certain modifications in judgment and application just as a medical practitioner has to modify medical knowledge to suit the constitution of each individual patient in adjusting dosage etc.,

For an astrologer practice of a code of ethics is very much needed. Making an astrological forecast is not an easy task. For example, in the determination of one's avocation, the most difficult part is an analysis of a horoscope. The number of avocations today is so vast that it is impossible to

ascertain with any degree of accuracy the exact nature of one's profession. In former times occupations were few the differentiation between one occupation and another was clearly marked.

Before judging the profession, it is necessary to ascertain the mental, intellectual and physical abilities of the native by careful consideration of the strength or otherwise of the Sun, the Moon, the Lagna and Mercury. For purposes and study, the various occupations may be roughly classified into six broad categories viz.

- 1) intellectual avocations
- 2) economic vocations
- 3) aesthetic activities
- 4) routine works
- 5) electronic and other activities
- 6) mechanical profession and trade

This classification is too general because it is impossible to draw a line of distinction between different categories. An author, whose main work is intellectual, may spend a part of his time in composing and printing or an insurance business. In his occupation, therefore, both the intellectual and economic aspects come in. There are people who suddenly change their careers from teaching to business. This explains the fact that there is a special stimulus to certain qualities at certain ages, probably depending upon the nature of the directional influences (Dasas and Bhuktis) operating then.

Each one of the se avocations can be divided into a number of sub-divisions. For instance, an artist may be a sculptor, photographer or etcher; a musician may be a vocalist, composer or flautist. An engineer may be an inventor, designer or mechanic. Hence it would be impossible to make an entire catalogue of professions and group them to suit factors. Here lies a vast field of savants to probe.

Generally speaking, Jupiter and Mercury refer to avocations, Venus to the aesthetic profession, Sun, Moon and Mars to political and economic occupations, Mercury to traders, Saturn to hard jobs and Rahu and Ketu to routine workers.

In a chart, there may be blends of different planetary influences. A philosopher and a scientist are both intellectual workers; but in the former case, Jupiter will be predominant and, in the latter, Mercury. If these influences are further affected by those of the Sun or Mars, then service under the state is indicated.

I wish to make a few observations on marriage:

Marriage is a very important event in life. It is a complicated structure made up of a whole series of subjective and objective factors of a heterogeneous nature. In India marriage was and still continues to be the equality of the partners in respect of Dharma (right conduct), Artha (financial matters), Kama (sex relations) and Moksha (spiritual progress or salvation).

(Physical fitness, mental qualities, heredity, sex- compatibility, and social and economic status are the factors to be considered. No other nation except perhaps India has devised a system whereby the compatibility between the marrying couple could be ascertained. Astrology is the only practical science which has devised a fairly dependable method of judging marriage compatibility.)

Venus is indeed associated with many fascinating aspects of life. He rules the wife, conveyance, sex harmony and union, art, attachment, family happiness, marriage in general, vitality, fertility, physical beauty and friendliness. Mars abounds in energy, aggressiveness, fortitude, driving force, and in association with Venus, an excess of sensual gratification.

Venus-Mars disposition is an important factor for physical attraction. But in the absence of Jupiter's or even Saturn's benign influence, real compatibility may be lacking. Venus- Mars conjunction makes one fond of pleasure, demonstrative and adds zest to one's sensual life. When Venus and Mars are involved in adverse aspects, difficulty through excesses and trouble through marriage follow as a matter of consequence. Venus in a good sign or constellation can temper the roughness of Mars, but if Rahu is also involved it makes one lascivious, lewd and wicked. In the horoscope of a boy or a girl, the Ketu, Venus and Mars combination is not desirable unless the constellations involved belong to Jupiter or Mercury or even benefic Moon, though the last circumstances might render the native's thinking highly sensual. Ketu-Venus- Mars (or Saturn) denotes the danger of scandal in marriage.

But if the 10th house of Karma is well disposed, affliction becomes somewhat tempered. Undue importance need not and should not be given to the so-called Kuja Dosha or Mangalik affliction. Quite several antidotes are available to neutralize the effects of Kuja Dosha.