

Preface to Science of Light

Vedic Astrology is called Jyotiṣa in Sanskrit, the study of the light (*jyoti*). It is rooted in a tradition that goes back thousands of years. The Sage Paraśara, lived in the time period of approximately 2 to 3,000 B.C. according to Indian historians. For the benefit of all, Paraśara left a text called the Bṛhat Paraśara Horā Śāstra (abbreviated by us as BPHS), which has been a guide to astrologers for millenniums.

One day in correspondence, my Jyotiṣa guru, Pandit Sanjay Rath, told me, “Freedom, you have to work harder and get the text of BPHS *INSIDE* you completely.” He had given me the assignment of teaching 12 students the ancient Sanskrit astrological text of Bṛhat Paraśara Horā Śāstra in two years. Many students were not even at a level to begin understanding those teachings, and needed to learn foundational principles first. I then began to teach beginner classes based primarily on the text of BPHS, which led to the material in this book.

It is my vision to one day see Vedic Astrology taught in Western Universities. This text is written for the freshman university level mind. The aim is that a complete novice will be able to follow the text, but it is not baby food, nor watered down for the masses. It will require dedication and study to master this material. Utilizing a copy of Bṛhat Paraśara Horā Śāstra will greatly benefit you while reading this book, though the first time through it may not be necessary.

The translations of BPHS and other Sanskrit in this text are mine unless otherwise noted. I have worked hard to make translations accurate, to provide the Sanskrit words that have manifold meanings for easy reference, and yet keeping the reading enjoyable and flowing.

My study of this text has proven to me that BPHS is very systematic in its approach and order of chapters. There are some modern astrologers who believe BPHS is just a compendium of various ancient sources, but deep study and comparison will reveal otherwise. This present text aims to teach in a similar order as the material has been presented by the Ṛṣi Paraśara, and will reveal a traditional approach to Jyotiṣa that is found hinted at in other ancient texts on the subject. Once you study in this traditional format, the order of information presented in other ancient texts will be clarified. This reveals a style of teaching, or transmitting the knowledge, which I have tried to follow in this present text, while staying simple enough for the beginner to understand.

This text is designed to be an aid to prepare students to read BPHS. My Jyotiṣa Guru used to say that it is not about writing a new book, it is about understanding the ones we already have. This text will guide you through BPHS in a systematic manner pointing out what to read, when and how. Not everything in BPHS is covered in this introduction, as further texts will go through the material at

a higher level covering more aspects in greater detail. This text offers a foundation to understand classical Vedic Astrology. After completing this text one should have the ability to use BPHS as their primary Jyotiṣa text book, as has been the case for thousands of years in traditional learning. This text is not the end all; it is offered as the beginning of a journey into the tradition of the Sages of self mastery and universal understanding.

Understanding Ṛṣi Paraśara

This text is focusing on elucidating the fundamental teachings of Paraśara. The use of elements such as charakāraḥ, arudhas, and argala have been misunderstood in the west and labeled as “Jaimini astrology”. In the past, people have labeled anything they didn’t understand in BPHS as Jaimini astrology. Ṛṣi Jaimini was a student of Paraśara, and his book is called Upadesa (secondary notes heard from the teacher). This book is giving a clear view of Paraśara’s teachings from BPHS only. Jaimini’s clarifications and additions will be studied in more advanced books. Only one note of Jaimini is used in the argala chapter where Paraśara says shadow planet (singular) and Jaimini clarifies that he is referring to Ketu, not Rahu.

Chapter Overview for Teachers

The first chapter introduces the general idea of astrology and its basic principles. This is for the astrological beginner to become acquainted with fundamental terms and ideas. The astrological information is based on the first few verses of Paraśara’s Graha Guṇasvarūpa Adhyāya (planet chapter) where Paraśara very quickly mentions the planets and stars. This text is supported with some basic astronomy (*Gola*), to get a person acquainted with the sky and the natural movement of the solar system before trying to interpret it. I notice people often get lost on the paper or computer screen and forget that astrology is not merely numbers written before them but, actual massive bodies of energy moving through the universe. The beginning section aims to let that realization and understanding become part of the psyche and hopefully broaden the perspective of the factors being studied.

The second chapter sets a proper Vedic foundation through understanding the framework of Vedic philosophy. One’s awareness of the profound cosmology that Vedic Astrology exists within will deepen. Many of these points are often mentioned in the beginning of introductory Jyotiṣa works, but rarely are any deeper details given or is there any discussion on the important relationship the philosophical information has to the astrologer. This first section is an attempt to shed some light on this so the Vedas, their limbs, and the limbs of Jyotiṣa do not

seem foreign, but feel like a part of oneself. I have avoided Eurocentric beliefs on the Vedas and have focused on acceptable philosophy of traditional Vedic scholars.

The third chapter goes into depth on the planets. The first section is based on Paraśara's Graha Guṇasvarūpa Adhyāya (planet chapter). I have focused on the teachings of Paraśara with a few noted additions from supplementary traditional sources to give a well rounded understanding to the planets. The final section of this chapter introduces the three types of kārakas based on the Kārakādhyāyaḥ (kāraaka chapter). The next chapter, based on the Avatārakathana Adhyāya (Avatār chapter) uses the descriptions of the Hindu Avatārs to deepen one's understanding of the planets. Paraśara does this first and then introduces the planets, I switched the two for a western audience that unfamiliar with the avatārs.

The chapters on rāśi (signs) and bhāva (houses) rely primarily on Paraśara's own chapters with only a few supplementary sources as clearly noted in the text. The divisions of the sign (varga) are given while introducing the rāśis as this is how most classical texts mention the signs. I have followed the traditional order to reveal that the sign is a collection or heap (rāśi) of many 'signs'. With the bhāvas chapter, I have first broken down the various house formats that are utilized through out India with explanations for each according to the Śri Achyuta tradition. The actual information on the houses is in a similar order given by the Sage. The end of the chapter includes the houses of a praśna chart according to HariHara's Praśna Mārga to elucidate how the meanings of the houses change according to the situation. For the same reason, the varga houses of the D-9 and D-10 are analyzed only briefly as they are covered in more depth in the divisional chapter.

The chapter on strengths and states is a chronological collection and summary of various teachings on placement that Paraśara has mentioned throughout the text, from the Graha Guṇasvarūpa Adhyāya to the Iṣṭa Kaṣṭha Adyāya. I have removed much of the mathematical calculation for this introductory lesson. The exact calculations of Viṃśopaka, Ṣaḍbala, etc. with thier specific meanings will be covered in later lessons.

The chapter on bhāvapadas follows strengths according to BPHS. It is a very abbreviated introduction with little attention paid to the Upapada (marriage point), but hopefully a beneficial lesson for the beginner. This is followed by the argala chapter showing the interaction of houses from multiple lagnas to learn a more alive, free moving approach to the chart. In this version I have not done a whole section on the kārakāmśa as Paraśara has done, but instead include the beginner information on kārakāmśa in the divisional section. In the next book I plan to present the depth of this chapter.

The chapter on Yogas is a very brief introduction to the multiple chapters that follow in BPHS on a variety of Yogas. I have been more general here as it is a huge

work in and of itself to explain all of these various chapters. Importance has been placed on understanding the conceptual framework of perceiving planetary combinations and interaction.

The chapter on Nakṣatras is supplementary to the general teaching of Paraśara. It is supported by the Sage's statement in the graha quality chapter (verse 7) that an "understanding of various Nakṣatras should be learned from the general śastra". For that purpose a chapter has been provided here. His quick mention implies that he assumes students have readily available access to this information as modern people have access to the 12 signs of the zodiac. Later, Paraśara speaks of various nakṣatra techniques where one will need to understand the information presented in this introductory text in order to understand BPHS. I will devote a future text fully to the traditional use of the nakṣatras. A highlight of this chapter is the descriptions of Vedic deities for each nakṣatra. These interpretations come from a combination of Vedic research as noted which was guided by Varahamihira and Vaidyanatha Dikṣita's interpretation of the nakṣatras and the professions advised in Dhruva Nāḍi as translated by Sanjay Rath (COVA).

The preceding chapters will correspond to what is presently the second volume of the English translations of Bṛhat Paraśara Horā Śastra. The dāśa chapter follows directly after the nakṣatras and only focuses on nakṣatra based daśā techniques. Since it is a beginner's introduction, I have chosen to save other daśās for the next level. In this chapter, there are practice exercises where students are requested to follow up on the techniques by reading specific sections in BPHS. This will serve a dual purpose of acquainting the student to the existence of other daśās also situated in the text and guide them to stay on track among the large amount of information offered in these chapters. Paraśara goes into great depth with aṣṭakavarga after speaking of daśas, but it is only briefly introduced here.

I have added a chapter on interpreting divisional charts here. Paraśara does not speak directly about interpreting all these these vargas, he just ensures that planets are examined in all the divisions. The basic Paraśara principles of argala and yogas are used to understand most varga situations.

The final part of BPHS addresses curses, doṣas and their remedies. The remedy chapter in this book is primarily based on BPHS, with information from other traditional texts helping to understand the conceptual framework needed to use remedies. The Pañchāṅga chapter goes into the foundation principles of the five limbs of time as taught by the Śri Achyuta Paramapara. This is followed by a summary of Paraśara's teachings on flaws of time at birth and their remedies. This area has been extremely overlooked by modern Vedic astrology in the west as there are no western astrology correlations. Paraśara gives several chapters on this area including remedies showing the large emphasis that traditional astrologers place on

these time conditions. The results indicated by the Pañchāṅga will show fruitful or barren results in chart interpretation. In Ayurveda, herbs are prescribed along with a proper balancing diet. Without the foundation of a proper diet, the herb will have only a short-term effect. In the same way, the 'flaws of time' are the elemental foundation that needs to be balanced for other remedies to be effective.

In the final chapter on interpretation of the chart, I have tried to bring all previously mentioned techniques into perspective for proper application in reading a chart. Examples have been given in the oral classes, uploaded online at www.vyajasjc.org, and it is advised to listen to them to see these techniques applied. It is important for a beginner to follow these principles step by step at first until it becomes second nature. Then one is advised to begin to develop their own approach to the chart, understanding the fundamental principles and utilizing intuition.

Freedom Tobias Cole
September 14, 2006
El Cerrito, California