

Omens

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This is the complete text on Omens parts 1 & 2 for those of you who didn't get it because of the crash. I found this old article while rummaging through my files. It was originally published in the Newsletter of MAAS Metropolitan Atlanta Astrological Society.

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OMENS

Vedic astrology has been practiced in India since time immemorial. It is thought to be millions of years old (contrary to the speculations of Darwin.) The oldest complete text in Vedic astrology is the Brhat Parasara Hora Sastra. It was written around 3000 BC and contains one hundred chapters of pithy astrological aphorisms. This book is very old, yet the author tells us that it is only a digest of the works of previous sages. He says that he has simplified it for the less intelligent people that he predicts will populate the planet as Kali-yuga progresses. Kali-yuga is the present Iron Age that we are in. It is the last in a cycle of four yugas that stretch over a period of 4,320,000 years. Kali-yuga itself is 432,000 years long and we are about 5000 years into it. After reading this book and seeing the immense sophistication of the system one can only wonder what the more advanced astrological methods were. Parasara Muni, the author of Parasara Hora Sastra, says that astrology is divided into six parts, namely: Gola (astronomy), Ganita (mathematical analysis of astronomical data), Jataka (natal astrology), Prasna (Horary astrology), Muhurta (Electional astrology) and Nimitta (omens).

Today we want to discuss about Omens for the pleasure of my fellow astrologers. Omens relates to the happening of unusual events in the presence of one who has the ability to interpret the signs. It is understood in the Vedic culture that nothing happens by chance, everything is under the control of Sri Krsna (God). An astrologer is called a "Daivajna," one who knows the will of God, and he should be skilled in interpreting all kinds of signs not just the "signs" of the planetary configuration. This requires study,

practice, intuition and above all else the blessings of one's guru. The best way to understand how omens work is to recount a few anecdotes on the subject.

There is a common house lizard found in all parts of India called a Tik Tik because that is the sound that it makes. If during a conversation a Tik Tik is heard then Satya Vak is exclaimed, i.e. whatever was last spoken must surely be the truth. This may sound superstitious, but it is widely accepted as a reliable omen. Once, not long ago two persons approached an astrologer in South India. He was an astrologer of some repute and they had come to test him by tricking him. They came to him with the horoscope of a man who had already died and they wanted to know his future. Since he was already dead they hoped to make a fool of the astrologer. As they handed the horoscope of the dead man to the astrologer a Tik Tik simultaneously lost his footing from the ceiling he was clinging to. As he fell he passed through the blades of a rotating fan and you can just imagine the mess that was produced. The ever alert astrologer noticed this highly unusual occurrence and quickly stated without so much as looking at the chart that this was the horoscope of a dead man and thus caught them in their trick.

They were astounded, but not to be outdone they quickly asked how he had died. At that very moment the astrologer noticed that a man was passing by his house pulling a stubborn cow by a rope around its neck. Our hero, the astrologer quickly and correctly concluded that the man had died by hanging and promptly said so. The two men were awestruck by his powers and quickly fell at his feet. They went away firm believers in the power of astrology.

On another occasion a man approached an old astrologer in Madras and asked him about the future of his wife's pregnancy. At that moment a woman was seen by the astrologer pulling a cow with great difficulty. She was carrying a bag. In her struggle with the cow she dropped the bag and out came two large melons. The astrologer told the husband that his wife would have a difficult delivery but would give birth to twins. This of course is what happened.

The following is a very famous incident. Before independence in India there was a state in present day Kerala called Cochin. The Maharaja of this state happened to be an erudite astrologer. His scholarship was so profound that he had a large circle of great astrologers who were his students. There was a very wealthy business man in Cochin who wanted his daughter to marry the son of an equally wealthy family in a neighboring state (arranged marriages are still the rule in India). He brought both the charts to all the famous astrologers of the region and they all said that it was a very good match. Finally he decided that he would bring the chart to the Raja of Cochin. If the Maharaja agreed that it was a good match, then only would he proceed with the girl's marriage (the parents were very concerned about the welfare of their children). When he approached the Maharaja of Cochin he told the father to

give the charts in question to his illustrious students for their opinion. His students, all greatly learned scholars, after long deliberations unanimously concluded that this was a near perfect match. Then the charts were given to the Maharaja. He barely glanced at the charts and solemnly declared that if she married this boy it would prove to be a disaster. Naturally everybody was dumbfounded, especially the father, by this completely contradictory opinion. The father however had great faith in the ability of the Maharaja and cancelled the marriage. A few months later the family of the girl returned to Maharaja's court and declared that by his prediction he had saved the life of their daughter. It was revealed that shortly after the marriage was cancelled the former groom to be was killed in an accident by falling from a great height. If the girl had married him and then been widowed it would have been a great tragedy because in the very conservative Hindu society of that time widows didn't remarry no matter how young they were even if they were only teenagers. In any case her parents were extremely grateful for his saving their daughter from this tragedy. When the parents left the disciples of the Maharaja finally got the courage to ask their teacher how he knew this would happen. Previously they had wanted to ask him how he was so sure that he was right when he contradicted every other astrologer in the kingdom. But fearing that he would think them disrespectful of his learning they had declined. Seeing that his prediction had come true marvelously they summoned the courage to ask him how he had arrived at his answer. The Maharaja told them that just as he started to look at the charts he heard the horrible sound of a man screaming. He took this to be a very ominous omen so he immediately made his prediction. On a later inquiry he found out that the scream was that of a man who had fallen off a building to his death. He told his disciples that "an astrologer always keeps his eyes and ears open."

These anecdotes indicate the usefulness of omens and how they can sometimes supersede indications in the chart. It is said in Vedic astrological works that if the results of omens or horary charts are in agreement with the birth chart then the result is due to karma from a previous life. But if the omen or horary chart contradicts the birth chart then it is due to karma from this life itself.

The next incident is highly instructive. There was once a very learned astrologer who had several disciples studying under him. On one occasion a very desperate and depressed man came to them while they were discussing some astrological problem. He explained how his wife had just run off with another man. He was obviously devastated and he wanted to know if she would return or was the marriage finished. As the astrologers were preparing the charts the wife of the astrology guru came into the assembly. She told her husband that she had been drawing water out of the well with a bucket but the rope attached to the bucket had broken and the bucket had fallen into the well. She requested that he please have a servant recover the bucket for her. The guru

asked his disciples to interpret the omen. All of them said that since the rope had broken this meant that the marriage was finished and that they need not calculate any further. The guru wasn't satisfied by this answer. He said that the bucket naturally resided in the well and by being pulled away from the water it was leaving its abode. The breaking of the rope didn't indicate the break up of the marriage, rather the force that was pulling the bucket from the water had been blocked causing the bucket to return to the well. Thus the forces that were at work in separating the wife from her family would also fail and she would thus return to her rightful place. This he said was the proper interpretation of the omen.

We can see that to properly interpret an omen requires great skill and that it is not always as straightforward as we might think. Rather it requires some insight. There is much more to say about omens but it would be well beyond the scope of this short article to include them. Those who are interested in the study of omens should read Prasna Marga and Brhat-samhita. Both have been translated into English and deal extensively with the subject, especially the second book.

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