

Presiding Deities of Vargas

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sarvaṁ jñānānandamāyaṁ
aum gurubyo namaḥ

The venerable Sage Parāśara begins his immortal Bṛhat Parāśara Horā Śāstra by praying to Lord Brahma, his consort Bhāratī and Sun, the leader of the planets and the cause of creation. The sage says that the Lord is in all beings and the entire Universe is in Him. The unborn God incarnated as the graha to give the results of karma to the living beings. The high degree of Paramātmamsa of the Graha incarnate as the Viṣṇu avatar - Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Narasimha, Varāha etc, while the jivātmā portions of the graha take births as human beings. Both these amśa merge in the Graha and the Graha in turn merge in the Lord at the time of pralaya (dissolution). Thereafter, he goes on to describe the limbs of the Lord by understanding, which, the Sage states with confidence, that the zodiac in its entirety can be understood better.

From the above it is clear that it is the Lord who is everywhere and every effort to understand the life in its entirety will ultimately lead one to the Lord. Just as the word removing the first letters of *aho* (day) + *rātra* (night) derives 'horā', similarly Lagna is derived on account of the contributions of Sun & Moon. Taking this hint given by the sage, if we attempt to understand the zodiac in its entirety, we will be blessed with twelve divisions/parts of the zodiac. Let us place Sun & Moon in the starting point of Aśvinī and closely observe their movements. By the time Sun moves to 27 degrees we find that Moon has already completed one revolution around the zodiac. By the time Sun reaches the 30th degree we find the second unison of luminaries taking place. If we continue this observation then we will be able to understand that 12 such unisons are required to cover the entire zodiac and that Luminaries are indeed the *ādhāra* or the base for the *brahmāṇḍa*/zodiac. This unison is technically called as amāvasyā tithi and is ruled by Rāhu, which is the causative factor for attraction/desire/creation. The lagna, which is considered as the seat/kamala¹ of 'Prajāpati/Brahma', needs to be charged with the power of ever expanding (Guru) illumination to know the workings of the invisible hands of Rāhu and to reverse the effects of 'pāta'².

We have understood that lagna/bhāva is the product of the unisons of Sun and Moon and has definite bearing on tithi. It is through the unisons of the luminaries we understand the brahmāṇḍa. The one single brahmāṇḍa is understood as twelve piṇḍa-aṇḍā. This is the basic mathematical clue given by the sage. Any decision to find out the divisions of the brahmāṇḍa will be echoed through the basic mathematical division of 12 piṇḍa/Bhāva.

¹ Kamala means lotus and refers to the lotus seat of the deities.

² Malignant aspect of the node like an attack or intrusion; the reverse of this word is 'tapa'

Let us now understand the limbs of the Lord as enunciated by the Sage as this is the first division of the Zodiac called technically as 'kṣetra'.

bhāva	Lagna/rāśi	dvādasa āditya	Various names of the lord	Limbs of the lord
1.	Meśa	aryama	keshava	head
2.	Vṛṣabha	mitra	narayana	face
3.	Mīthuna	varun	madhava	arms
4.	Karkaṭa	indra	govindha	heart
5.	Simha	vivaswan	viṣṇu	stomach
6.	Kanyā	pusha	madhusūdana	hip
7.	Tulā	parjanya	trivikrama	space below the navel
8.	Vṛṣcika	anshuman	vāmana	private parts
9.	Dhanus	bhaga	sridhara	thighs
10.	Makara	twastha	rishiksha	knees
11.	Kumbha	vishnu	padmanabha	ankles
12.	Mīna	dhata	damodhara	feet

By associating the limb with a deity we will be in a better position to understand the bhava. This practice of associating a deity with body parts is technically called as Nyasa and when it comes to this magnitude of identifying the limbs of the Lord then it can be termed as Maha Nyasa. The practice of doing 'UPACHARAS' to deities is considered to be the direct way of making the deities speak. The minimum number of 'Upacharas' is 16 in number and is called as 'Shodasa Upachara'.

With the above background let us explore as an example, Meena the feet of the Lord. The deity we are praying here is Damodhara. This approach from the feet to the head is called as 'padadikesh' approach. We all know that unless the Lord is merciful his feet cannot be seen. To obtain the feet of the Lord the marga is to join GuruKula and do pada seva of Guru Maharaj. Meena is the holiest of holiest signs as it is called the sign of Maharishis. Guru rules Meena kshetra. It is in Meena that the Asura Guru Venus is exalted. It is in Meena that the Sadhus have their associations/offices and nivritti marga dwaja/flag. It is here that Paduka worship is taught. Paduka is nothing but footwear, which is basically made of wood (Guru). This Paduka uplifts the Jeeva who is being pulled down to Prithvi on account of samsaric/karmic pressures and pulls. By constant worship of the Paduka the jeeva, ultimately attains the Paduka. By boarding on the Paduka the prakrithic pulls of

samsara are brought under the soles and the jeeva becomes light and airborne. It is only through the Guru pada seva the jīva is lifted from pṛthvī to ākāśa (budha is debilitated in Mīna). As a first step one needs to address and invoke the Lord Dāmodara. The Lord is merciful and definitely attends the call of the sincere seeker. The next step is to offer him a seat (asanam). The first varga/division is called, as kṣetra/rāśi and it is the seat of the Lord. Offering of seat is the first upachara for the Devatha who is attending to the calls of the seeker. If one goes through the motions mechanically there will be no anubhavas. The secret of giving life to bhavas is to live through every moment of upachara. By living through every moment the jeeva automatically understands the śuddhi (cleanliness - internal & external) required before the placement of the seat. This churns the buddhi and śuddhi is attained. Once this is attained 'Vridhhi' & 'Siddhi' automatically follows.

Let us tabulate the other upacharas for easy understanding.

Sl.No.	Varga	Upachara	Remarks
1.	Horā	Padyam	Washing the feet
2.	Drekkāṇa	Argyam	Washing the hands
3.	Turyamsa	Achamaneeyam	Giving water to drink
4.	Saptāmśa	Madhuparkam	Offering sweet mixture
5.	Navamsa	Sudhodhakasnanam	Offering water for bathing
6.	Dasāmśa	Vastram	Offering two pieces of clothing
7.	Dvādaśāmśa	Yagnopavitham	Offering sacred threads
8.	Shodasamsa	Abharanam	Offering ornaments
9.	Vimsamsa	Gandam	Offering sandal wood paste
10.	Siddhāmśa	Pushpam/Mala	Offering garland and performing floral archana
11.	Bhamsa/Nakshatrams	Dhoopam	Offering incense
12.	Trimśāmśa	Dheepam	Offering lights
13.	Khavedamsa	Naivedyam	Offering food to eat
14.	Akshavedamsa	Tamboolam	Offering betel leaves & nuts
15.	Ṣaṣṭhāmśa	Anupachar/Others	Offer royal entertainments and concluding with a namaskaram

The sage has shown enough mercy to identify the deities associated with vargas/divisions just for the sake of the seekers and has taken enough pains to take us close to the deities and has lit the lamp in the sanctum sanctorum of the deities by giving out their names. It is the duty of every Jyotiṣa to participate in the upacharas that are to be given for each and every sign and varga.

Without the aid of the deities associated with the parts of Zodiac we will not be in a position to decipher 'what is what' or decode the Brahma lipi. The beauty of the immortal Brihat Parāśara Horā Śāstra is this identification of deities. The key to unlock the Departmental store of Karma is held by the presiding deities of vargas and without their help we will not be in a position to know the karmic exhibits.

Let us pay our respects and obeisance to the Sage to give us more knowledge in this direction. Hoping to meet you all again with the firm faith that Mother will be more merciful in making the Sage hand over the keys, if not the entire bunch, atleast one by one.