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faith and rituals





Vedic astrology is based on astronomical data that allows its practitioners to assess and understand behaviour, to measure the effects of the past, the influence of the present and the tendency of events to unfold in the future, says ACHARYA VIKAS KAUSHIK to REENA SINGH in an interview

How did you become interested in Vedic astrology?

I am from a brahmin family and am an engineer; despite that, I studied Jyotish. There is no pundit in my house — only doctors, engineers, scientists. I encountered difficulties at every step when I wanted to study this science. I studied at the Rai Foundation, and then I went in search of a guru, who would

help me predict and interpret a chart. In colleges, they teach theory, not how to interpret a birth chart. I believe astrology is not just a science but a Divine Science and requires Divine Grace and intuition.

Tell us how you have prepared yourself for such a task.

I started giving up lunch, then breakfast. I used to take just two rotis, without onion or spices. Now, I have even given up cereals. I take an apple in the morning, a few fried potatoes for lunch, and boiled vegetables for dinner. I sleep on a mat in all weathers, without AC or cooler and am up at 4.30 am. I never drink cold water. I am not married. If I marry, I will be busy in my own life, and will be unable to do sewa.

If you marry, you are attached to ego, to "I" and this keeps you attached to maya. A householder cannot do sewa of others — I will then only think of my wife and children.

What about Guru Nanak and Ram? They were married.

Even they went away to do sewa. Those are Divya Shaktis; we cannot discuss them. They were special avatars on earth — Nanak, Ram, Krishna. We cannot compare ourselves with them.

Do you charge people for the sewa you do?

I charge people. I am on TV answering people's questions. We need money for that, so we charge people Rs 500 each. We cannot control our destiny or time, but we can control our own karma. The Gita says you reap the fruits of your karma. With japa, or the mantra you chant, fruits will come to you. That is Krishna's message to Arjun. But we can't just leave everything to Him; you have to do your bit.

You say you are connected to Krishna and that He gives you messages. How do you explain that?

There is a lot of shakti in our mantras. Mantras are based on physics, vibrations, frequency, Newton's third law of motion — all are applied in our mantras. Our navgrahas are based on the laws of physics. That is why astrology is called astro-science. This ancient science is based on nine planets.

Can you interpret your life through the positions of your stars?

You have shakti within you. Why do you do puja? Only to energise yourself! What is destined to happen will happen anyway, but if you follow the message, the action will happen, but it will be mild a shock you can easily withstand.

What is an upaaya?

This is usually daan and mantra japa. Maybe a rudraksh will help. Sometimes a gem is good for you. But the best is daan. Give to the old, not to the people at traffic signals. There are others who are too weak to ask — search for them and give them daan. This controls the negativity of your planet. Give daan to the labourer's child — it can be small, chocolate, toffee, small packets of biscuits....

What is the shakti you are supposed to awaken within yourself?

You are the shakti — that which gives you strength to see and speak your name. Your body is the home of this shakti. Keep it healthy, clean and holy and it will be happy with you. It will give you blessings, what you want. Don't defile it with the wrong foods and thoughts. This body is your mobile temple, with shakti inside.

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Should You Dig Into Your Past?

What practices do you recommend people do daily?

There are three things that go with you after the soul passes out of your body — daan, satya karm, and your elder's blessings. Take your elders' blessings daily. Daan can be in the form of just Rs 10; spend half of it on a biscuit packet and give the rest in cash to someone who needs it. Giving anna daan or food and artha daan or money is decreed in the scriptures such as Atharva Veda. You need anna to maintain your body and you need money for material goods. You have to account for all days in a year. This has to come from within, but people only learn this after they are knocked around in life.

Wake up daily before the sun rises. This increases your happiness and prosperity. Begin your day's work. Worship a particular deity or whatever form of Supreme Being you believe in. Chant your deity's name 11 times — that's enough to connect with Him. Take the Shakti's name 11 times and look into His eyes. You form a connection with Him and there is energy transfer from the deity to you.

Mantras chanted at the wrong high frequency generate negative energies, instead of positive energy. At sunrise and before sunset, light a desi ghee diya or incense stick. If you are not a home, ask someone in the family to do this in front of the deity. This burns off negative energy in your environment.

Sweep your home with a broom twice a day. This is for prosperity. Also, women must be well-dressed and take care of their appearance. A woman is Lakshmi's rupa or incarnation. In such a house where women look after themselves, Lakshmi will walk in herself. Get rid of junk. Throw it away to reduce negative energy. Don't keep torn, threadbare clothes at home or chipped and broken crockery. Change your broom when it is worn out. All this houses negative energy.

You are also a vaastu expert. What do you recommend?

People don't know the meaning of vaastu. Changing a colour or stone slab in the kitchen, changing curtains or light fixtures or the colour of walls is not vaastu. Vaastu is concerned with the bhoomi, prithvi or earth. The prithvi has four directions and each direction has its own deity. You have to work according to the deity for that direction. That is vaastu. There is no need to change or break anything. Suppose you have a problem or a graha in your north-east, the direction of Vishnu and Brahaspati, then you can overcome this with a yantra that relates to them, or do daan in their name.

What is meditation?

Meditation is to take your mind to shunya and then connect with the Supreme Being. I don't do meditation. I merely do mantra japa and dhyan.

Through astrology, what do you hope to achieve?

If there is a graha that is causing an illness, you can interpret it and do the mantra japa for that graha, and find your cure. The graha is what gives you negativity, so just sort that out. Connect with Krishna, and find your cure.

reena.singh1@timesgroup.com



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