

Interview with K.N. Rao:
Conversations with one of the
Eminent Vedic Astrologers of our Time

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Sri K.N. Rao

***Sri K.N. Rao** is the founder of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan School of Astrology, New Delhi, India, the largest astrology school in the world with over 800 students and 26 teachers. He is also the editor of the quarterly magazine, Journal of Astrology, and author/editor of more than twenty books on Vedic astrology. His academic and research-based approach combines both classical and innovative methods like his PAC-DARES and Composite Approach which are used by students worldwide. Over the past forty years his record of accurate predictions has earned him wide spread recognition.*

Question: Thank you so much for agreeing to do this interview. From your biography we know that your father Sri K. Rama Rao was an illustrious journalist and a freedom fighter. Your mother, Smt. K. Sarasvani Devi initiated you into astrology at the age of 12. Could you please give us some feel of your experience of being brought up in such an atmosphere? Could you share any notable anecdotes from your childhood or formative years?

K.N. Rao (KNR): To help answer this question, let me recount to you an incident from my life. At the age of 23, when I was interviewed for the All-India Services, the first question put to me was - "What has been your reaction as a south Indian brought up in northern India?[1]" I replied - "I recently read a novel of a Polish pianist who was brought up in Russia. In Poland he was called a Russian and in Russia a Pole!"

Humor aside, I was very fortunate to be away from the extreme "Brahminical" orthodoxy of south Indian society of those days. If I were a Brahmin living in South India, I might have found it very difficult to mix freely with people from different communities. On the other hand, living in Lucknow, I had the unique enriching opportunity of bringing home my Muslim friends for dinner.[2]

Furthermore, my father, with his Brahma Samaj[3] background, never allowed any male member ever to take any dowry in marriage. For four generations no male in our family has taken any dowry. My father was a very courageous and patriotic person. He was jailed while working for India's freedom movement, leaving the eight of us - his wife and children - without a breadwinner in the family. How we survived those days is still a miracle! Since we survived, I experientially know, without any doubt, that there is a great God, with his scheme for all of us puny mortals. We cry and cringe - but for what? I am a very firm believer in karma and its results. I am more convinced in it because of my experiences with astrology, with my astrology Guru, late Yogi Bhaskaranandji, and my mantra Guru, Swami Paramanand Saraswati.

Question: Given your father's association with India's freedom movement, did you have an opportunity to meet some of the leading political figures of that time? If so, how was that experience?

KNR: I traveled quite a lot with my father, who was moving from one place to another due to his job. I was the personal volunteer of Mahatma Gandhi during my vacations in Wardha. I saw, from closest quarters, the future famous men of India. Fellow volunteers and I, who had come from different parts of India, got disenchanted with almost all of them, except Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan.[4]

In working for these famous leaders of India, we young volunteers had to be extra cautious. Many of these leaders were short tempered and it was not unusual for them to slap us! In this matter, Jawaharlal Nehru was the harshest, and due to this, all of us disliked him thoroughly. Fortunately, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was different from most other leaders. He always came to our defense and even said something pleasant and sweet to help offset the unpleasant work/living environment.

We all knew him as a genuinely guileless man and revered him second only to Mahatma Gandhi. As regards Gandhiji - he had his own way of noticing things and giving instructions. For example, among all the young volunteers, two of us were recognized to be the brightest. Both of us meticulously remembered all the work instructions given to us, and carried these out diligently, and in a timely fashion. The result of this was that the two of us were always overburdened with work. Once Gandhiji looked at one of the leaders and said, "Will you not give opportunity to the other boys to be efficient also?" It was his diplomatic way of making sure that the workload was shared equitably and ensuring that all of us had an opportunity to

improve ourselves.

But the favorite person I worked for during this period was Acharya Bhansali who was a professor of mathematics at the Bombay University. He jumped into the freedom movement and remained a Brahmachari throughout his life, serving in Sevagram Ashram until his death. Even after India's freedom from the British, power politics never attracted him. I distinctly recall one encounter with him. He called the entire group of boy volunteers and gave us some neem leaves[5] to eat. Most of the boys in our group ate a leaf or two and slowly slipped away. I stood there and ate all the leaves he had given me. After that incident I became his favorite! To eat neem leaves and become someone's favorite is quite a hilarious memory for me. Prof. Bhansali was also adept at catching snakes with his bare hands. Even if the snake bit him, somehow, the poison never affected him – something that still remains a mystery to me.

We also came in touch with other famous leaders– such as Dr. Zakir Hussain, Prof. Aryanagam[6], Sri J.C.Kumarappa[7], and Acharya Vinoba Bhave[8].

While these experiences with these leaders were enriching and educational, even at that point, I knew inside of me that the real seat of greatness lay elsewhere. As I struggled to find the truth, I got my answers from the sacred Hindu scriptures – the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, and later, more directly, from spiritual masters. I have written about these spiritual masters in my book, *“Yogis, Destiny and the Wheel of Time.”*

Question: Did the journalistic background of your father have any impact on your thinking and training?

KNR: My father, as a journalist, subscribed to eighteen newspapers every day. I used to be his assistant and my job was to organize, by subject, the newspaper clippings into different envelopes. Looking back, I feel that this experience taught me a mental discipline and the ability to catalog material on a particular subject in an index-like fashion for any future reference.

My father also had a rich collection of books, particularly biographies written by Englishmen. He asked me to read these along with the New Testament for their beautiful English style and writing.[9]

From that age, until the age of almost forty, I was a voracious reader of books. This changed when I met the great Urdu poet, Firaq Gorakhpuri, during my work tenure in the city of Allahabad in North India. He advised me to read less, and think and analyze more.

Question: Can you provide some details on the initiation by your mother into astrology? Also, can you please share some more details about your mother and her astrological abilities?

KNR: At the age of eleven I had a terrible attack of typhoid, which was considered a deadly killer in those days. Convalescing and weak when I lay on my bed, my mother put a painting of Goddess Saraswati in front of me and initiated me into numerology, palmistry, graphology and astrology.

I grew up seeing my mother make remarkable predictions to people when they came to her. In one case, a young boy had run away from his family. Everyone thought that since the boy wanted to become a film actor, he had, in all likelihood, run away to the city of Bombay[10]. Looking at the boy's horoscope, my mother predicted that the boy would be found in a place of pilgrimage in northern India. Later, the boy was seen and brought home from Haridwar. Having been a witness to many such accurate predictions, I was convinced, beyond doubt, of the greatness of astrology as a predictive science.

Many may say that astrologers' predictions are often "wishy-washy" and imprecise with only anecdotal accuracy – so how can a skeptic be assured beyond doubt on the validity of astrology? My answer would be that each one of us has to come to one's own conclusion. While I cannot convince anybody on the validity of the science of Jyotish, my own conviction remains firm. I also know that when my predictions fail that it is due to my own faults and limitations, and does not, in any way, take away the greatness of the science of *Jyotish* itself.

Question: Overall as a child and young adult, did you have some inkling that you had some specific purpose in life? Have you been an ambitious person?

KNR: I had always found astrology immensely fascinating and spiritually enlightening, but had never ventured out in the open. Most people knew me as a high-ranking officer in the government of India and only a very few close friends knew that I practiced astrology.

Coming to your question - No, I never felt that I had any specific purpose or mission in my life until a great Mahatma, late Moorkhanandji (whose actual name was Sri Vidyananya) told me in 1980 that astrology was getting "eclipsed" but luckily had not totally vanished from our world. He said that the world would witness a revival of Jyotish through my instrumentality.

Now, twenty-four years later, I am realizing the truth of that great prophecy.

Through the teamwork of many of us, and the blessings of my gurus and teachers, we have now produced thirty-six books offering insightful research in the field of Indian Astrology. We have also been running the largest school of astrology in the world at the Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, New Delhi, where nine hundred students attend our weekend courses on a regular basis. All this happened not because of my individuality or ambition. I was simply a conduit to the divine plan as blessed by Moorkhanandji.

Yogi Moorkhanandji and Sri K.N. Rao in 1981

Question: Moorkhanandji's prediction was quite remarkable! Did he make any other predictions about you?

KNR: Yes, in fact, Moorkhanandji did make another prophecy in 1980. He said that I would have to fight a big battle in my life for furthering the cause of astrology. As it turned out, in the year 2000, the Human Resources Ministry and the University Grants Commission in India introduced astrology as a subject in the universities. The scientist and left-wing communities in India vigorously challenged this proposed introduction of astrology into the curriculum. There were legal cases filled in various court systems in India. Of these, the legal cases in Andhra Pradesh and Madras got most attention. Both of these cases were however subsequently dismissed at the state level. But the Andhra Pradesh case made its way to the Supreme Court of India in the year 2001 where it was admitted for a hearing.

I intervened^[11] in this case as a "Petitioner-In-Person", which is permissible under the Indian law. At that time, I was in the midst of a severe health crisis and could barely walk using a walker-support. Given my health condition, I asked the astrologers' community in India to help but unfortunately did not get any aid whatsoever. Anyway, despite being pitted against one of the most famous lawyers of India – Mr. Shanti Bhushan - I was quite successful in countering all the arguments he presented. Hearing my arguments, the Additional Solicitor General, Mr. Rawal, told me that I was very effective and thought that we would win the case. On May 5th 2004, the judgement came out and we did indeed win the case. That is what Moorkhanandji foresaw in the year 1980!

Question: Going back to your education – where did you do your high school, undergraduate and graduate studies? What was your field of specialization? How was your academic performance? What about extra-curricular activities – did you have any talents in sports, writing, speaking, acting/drama?

KNR: My father had a job that moved our family from one place to another. Due to this my education, too, was in different places, giving me a wide exposure to the diversity of India. My education started in Delhi, continued in Lucknow, and then to Nagpur where I did my matriculation. This was when I found myself in geographical proximity to Mahatma Gandhi. In Vijaywada I did my intermediate. Finally, my academic life completed a full circle, bringing me back to Lucknow, where I did my B.A. and M.A. in English.

I was a good student throughout – never failing but at the same time rarely being at the top of the class. I did win essay-writing competitions and was successful in securing a few scholarships. I was also selected to participate in debating forums at an All-India level. That reminds me – in school days I almost always won the top-prize in the Hindi poetry recitation competition. The famous Hindi poet Jaya Shankar Prasad, whose work I used to recite, was unquestionably my hot favorite.

I was very good at languages – Hindi, English and Sanskrit. Even in those days when grading was extremely stringent, and despite doing very poorly in science and mathematics, I used to get an aggregate score of around 75%. These high grades were primarily due to my excellence in the language subjects. Urdu was a required third language for us at middle level of schooling. The Maulvi Saheb, who taught us Urdu, was more interested in getting married for a fourth time than in teaching us! Consequently, Urdu became a hellish experience for my fellow students and me. Since Urdu and Hindi were aggregated together, I was lucky that my near “zero” grade in Urdu got compensated by my securing a high score of 80% in Hindi. I would be remiss if I did not bring up one more interesting point. All through my life, I suffered badly because of my bad handwriting. Perhaps hard to believe, but true nevertheless – in the nationwide competitive examination, twenty marks were deducted from my aggregate just for my bad handwriting!

I never had any histrionic talent. Once during my service career I acted in a Sanskrit play as the famous character Ashwathama of Mahabharata. A drama critic, who must have been clearly irritated by my performance, wrote in his review that one had to learn from K.N. Rao how not to act!

In sports, I somehow never got myself to focus enough. Even so, I played football, hockey, cricket, badminton, tennis, billiards, snooker and bridge. From my student days, I served as a sports reporter for newspapers, both in English and Hindi. Twice I won brilliancy prizes in Chess when, in different

tournaments, I defeated India's fourth and fifth ranked players. In bridge, my teammates and I won the Uttar Pradesh and Delhi State Championships.

But I lost all my interest in games (including bridge) when I had a paranormal experience in 1961. I had a forewarning about my father's death two days before he actually died. I clearly remember having the premonition on 7th March 1961, and subsequently my father died two days later on March 9th. This served as a turning point in my life and I decided that life was meant only for searching higher spiritual aims, and should not be wasted in frivolous activities.

Question: How about your spiritual instruction and initiation – can you please provide some details on that? Have you interacted with any other mystics or spiritual gurus?

KNR: I got initiated into my spiritual path in April 1962. In 1966 I wanted to leave my service and become a Sanyasi. But my Guruji advised me otherwise. He said that I still had unfulfilled karmas (or actions) to be exhausted. He suggested that I fulfill my duties and by doing so I would better my spiritual life as well. He warned that Sanyasa could become an escape, in fact ruining my spiritual life instead of bettering it. I also interacted with a fakir who had supernatural powers. In 1963 he told me that I would have to move to Delhi and also would travel abroad several times, which as we now know, all came true.

In summary, I have benefited immensely from the instructions of my Guruji – in particular the one where he advised me not to become a renunciate.

Even though I saw some genuine saints or Mahatmas, my lifetime experience has been that the world is overflowing with fake spiritual leaders who pretend to be Sanyasis. Having seen this rampant fraudulence first hand, I am saddened to say that, nowadays, Ashrams are hotbeds of intrigues and corruption which remains hidden from the public eye due to the glamour of the Guru who heads the organization. One consequence is that after the death of the founding Gurus, the disciples are involved in legal proceedings in courts of law for successor rights etc. In short there is no silver bullet that brings spiritual wisdom - my own spiritual learning has come from my own personal experiences and through the grace of my Guruji. It takes time, faith, perseverance and lots of grace.

Question: Can you provide us some overview of your professional career?

Were there any problems or crisis that you faced in the course of your career? Were you practicing astrology while you worked at your regular job?

KNR: I started my career as a lecturer of English in a college at Lucknow. Subsequently, I was selected for the Indian Audit and Accounts Services

through a competitive exam and interview. In this job I rose in rank and retired at the high level of Director General. Twice during my service career I was also sent on deputation to the division of Commercial Taxes in Patna, Bihar and the Delhi Municipal Corporation, Delhi. As destiny would have it, in these roles as the Chief Accountant, I was able to create surplus budgets four times – a feat that had never been achieved before. This became a famous case study leading me to lecture on financial controls of a civic body for the next six years at the Indian Institute of Public Administration.

Despite these successes, I was not a distinguished bureaucrat. The life of a bureaucrat never suited my personality – I have strong, independent views on so many subjects that, more often than not, conflicted with the “straitjacket” approach of “going-with-the-grain” expected of me. While a bureaucrat, I did however make many notable/successful astrological predictions to famous politicians of India, and also failed miserably sometimes! During my service career I was better known as a journalist, a public speaker (both in Hindi and English), a top-class bridge player, and of course, as an astrologer who provided free consultation to a wide array of people – from the lower-middle class to top politicians of India.

However, these astrological predictions got me into trouble on some occasions. For example, in December of 1988, in an interview I gave to a magazine, I stated that in the following year (1989) the central government of India (federal government) would undergo a big change. This statement got me into a really sticky situation with the ruling party. Luckily, I wriggled out of this mess by saying I was merely espousing untested academic research and that I had no political motivation whatsoever for making this statement. As events showed later, in 1989 the Congress government of Rajiv Gandhi lost the general elections and the central government did indeed change, proving my prediction accurate.

Question: What about your personal life? Have you ever been married or come close to getting married? If not, were you not pressured by your parents to get married?

KNR: I have never been married. In 1960 I did come close to getting married but it never materialized. Given my prestigious high-ranking position in the government, a stable job/salary, and the fact that I came from an Andhra Niyogi Brahmin[12] family, marriage proposals used to come in plenty especially from prosperous families. Among these were marriage proposals from the families of two former presidents of India, Sri S.Radhakrishnan and Sri V.V.Giri.

However, I was quite clear that I did not want to get married. I told my father that since I was very sure of not getting married, it was pointless for me to go to "see" prospective brides. My argument was that if I were forced to go to see the prospective brides, I would reject them anyway (as I was not interested in marrying) causing a feeling of hurt to the girls. Thankfully, my father understood the validity of my argument and did not pressurize me any further for getting married. As for my mother, she did say that as a mother she wanted me to get married but as an astrologer she saw it would be disastrous.

When I started my spiritual life, I decided that marriage would be a big burden. I felt that I would be deceiving the girl I would marry, since I knew in my heart that I would not be able to devote attention to the demands of a conventional married life. So I felt quite certain of my decision.

That reminds me of a strange incident. In 1993, when I visited USA for the first time in my life, a sixty-year old American woman (I may add that she was good looking and well-to-do) approached me to marry her. Amused, I explained to her that at this age we should be concentrating on a spiritual life rather than get distracted by marriage and worldly matters!

Question: Did you feel lonely or lacked companionship at some times in your life? Saying this in another way, did you delve deeper into writing and astrology partly because you found these activities to be your companions?

KNR: I never felt lonely and in fact relished the time to myself – exploring and writing about interests that captured me from within. All through my life, I have lived simply without too much attraction for material things. For thirty years I ate only once a day, eating three chappatis at night. However, I did indulge in one vice; I drank lots of tea. All this continued until, due to diabetes, I was forced to change my old habits and I switched to a two-light-meals routine. Fundamentally, however, my attitude and living hasn't changed much at all. I have always enjoyed and relished the joy of living life simply and by myself.

[K.N. Rao teaching at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan](#)

Question: Coming back to your spiritual guru – Swami Parmananda Saraswati – Can you please tell more details on who he was and what he taught you? What is the spiritual path you practice?

KNR: He was a Vaishnava guru and initiated me into Krishna mantra. On receiving the Shakti Paath (transmission of spiritual energy) and within six

months of my initiation, I was blessed with numerous extraordinary experiences. For example, I got many clairvoyant dreams from April to September of 1962.

One such dream in April of 1962 showed me of a Chinese attack on the northeastern state of Assam where I was then posted. As we all now know, subsequently a war broke out between India and China on 20th October 1962. My guru started his spiritual journey initially on the path of Tantra[13] under the tutelage of an extraordinary Tantric guru. As you may know, Tantriks outnumber Vaishnavas in the states of Bengal and Assam. But during the course of his sadhana when he was in a very advanced state, he had to switch over to Vaishnavism. How this happened is an interesting story by itself. A famous Vaishnava saint, Prabhu Bejoy Krishna Goswami[14] was initiated in Gaya by a Nanak panthi[15] guru, Swami Brahmananda. This initiation took place by an astral vision of Swami Brahmananda to Prabhu Goswami. Similarly, Prabhu Bejoy Goswami appeared astrally to my Guruji, Swami Parmananda, and asked him to spread Krishna Bhakti (or devotion). Thereafter, my Guruji became a Vaishnava and always kept a photograph of Guru Nanak in his place of worship. Also, in our sadhana or practice, Sri Guru Nanak and Guru Grantha Saheb, Sikhism's sacred religious text, have a very high place of respect and veneration.

Our spiritual tradition also traces our lineage to the Vaishnava tradition of Madhvacharya[16] of Karnataka. However, at the core, we strictly follow the Bhakti Marg (path of devotion) as taught by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – the famous Bengali saint whose love and surrender to Lord Krishna is still considered as one of the most exemplary cases of liberation through the path of devotion.

My Guruji had very extraordinary supernormal powers and I was a first-hand witness to many of his prophecies. He was known to say things that often startled all of us. Let me give you an example. Once, while coming down from the sacred Kamakhya[17] hill, he saw Sanjay Gandhi lead his Youth Congress Brigade. Guruji suddenly remarked - "This fellow does not have raja-lakshana (the signs of kingship) at all". This statement came true, when five years after this prediction Sanjay Gandhi died in an unfortunate plane crash, without ever becoming even a minister in the government of India.

Question: Your mother and Yogi Bhaskarandji were your astrological Gurus. Can you give us a glimpse into your interaction with them and the learning you derived? Also, can you share some details of their lives?

KNR: Their method of teaching astrology was the classical ancient Hindu method. As they analyzed a horoscope, I was never allowed to keep the

horoscope in front of me. I had to see it once and have a clear visual memory of it. Further when the analysis proceeded, I was trained to dynamically visualize the various planets, their aspects, positions etc. In fact as the training progressed, the verbal analysis would unfold itself as a visual dance-drama inside of me. Further I was required to do many of the intricate calculations mentally. I can unequivocally say that this method of training, more than any skill per se, has helped me immensely in practicing astrology.

Based on this method of instruction, I later wrote the book, "Learn Hindu Astrology Easily", in which I evolved a mnemonic memory tablet PACDARES. This is an eight-step analysis scheme that I recommend for every astrologer to follow before they get into the arena of making predictions.

My mother, perhaps because of her feminine instincts, was simply superb in predicting about marriage and children. In these areas of marriage and progeny, even until today, I have not seen anyone make such remarkably accurate predictions as she did. Despite her success in working with these areas, she discouraged me from getting too involved in these two domains of astrology. She felt that if I got caught in the sphere of marriage and children, people would not leave me alone and I would have no time whatsoever to do original research in other areas of astrology. I found this advice very valuable. However, using her old papers and working notes on these topics, I did write the book "Planets and Children"[18]. In this book I provide unique techniques for analysis and prediction that are tested with thousands of horoscopes from all over the world.

My mother developed some supernormal powers in the last twelve years of her life from 1972 to 1984. Let me give you some examples. In 1972 my youngest brother and his wife were expecting a child. They were living in Baroda, a town in the western state of Gujarat. At that time, I was with my mother and my (late) eldest sister in Patna, Bihar. Due to an age-old Hindu household custom, my sister wanted to go to Baroda to be with the pregnant wife of our brother. Unfortunately her vacation from work was granted 2-3 days late. As soon as her vacation was sanctioned she showed up home with a railway ticket for her journey to Baroda. Seeing my sister's imminent travel plans, my mother announced that it was already too late. As we looked quizzically at her, she explained that a girl child had already been born. Being physically present with my mother all the time, I can personally testify that we had no communication with my brother via phone or telegram. Astonished at her statement, I asked her how she made this statement. She did not answer my question in the presence of my sister. But later when I was alone, she told me that she had a vision of her mother (my maternal grandmother) informing her that she was re-born as a daughter to my brother. My mother further predicted that this newborn girl would make a

successful career with the government of India. Two days later, we got formal intimation that a daughter was indeed born to my brother and his wife. That daughter, who was later named as Vineeta, is now an engineer in the Indian Railways.

Let me narrate another episode of my mother's paranormal powers. I, along with two of my friends, had gone to Vrindavan for our usual weekend visit to see the famous saint, Nagaridas Baba. We were late in returning from our trip. Given the late hour of our return, I thought that my mother would be already asleep. I expected the door to be opened by my youngest brother Subhas. But reaching home I found both my brother and mother standing outside the house waiting for me with obvious anxiety. On inquiring, Subhas told that mother had woken up suddenly and told him that my friends and I had met with an accident on the way. Her statement was absolutely correct! The three of us were indeed involved in a car accident but fortunately no one was hurt.

My mother had also told me ten days before her death that she would go into samadhi or deep trance (which doctors called coma) and leave her body soon thereafter. She also said that she would die in the presence of my brother and that I would not be with her at the moment of her death. As it turned out, when she did go into the state of coma, my brother took her to a nursing home in an ambulance and I was following them in a car. By the time I reached, she was already pronounced dead and in the presence of her youngest son, as she had predicted.

My jyotish guru, Yogi Bhaskarananda, who had a B.A. in English from Bombay University, had spent forty years in the Himalayas. A dedicated Brahmachari who devoted his life for service of others, Bhaskaranandaji developed supernormal powers towards the end of his life and did not need any horoscope to foretell people's future. In my opinion his discussion on the philosophy of Karma and Rebirth was par excellence in its intricacies, lucidity and rigor. The learning I derived from him on this topic inspired me to write the book, "*Karma and Rebirth in Hindu Astrology.*"

Question: Just for the record I want to get a small but perhaps important clarification. The term Vedic Astrology is often used to refer to Jyotish. This term is more in usage now than ever before as far as I can recall. Are we correct in calling Indian Astrology as Vedic Astrology – in other words is Jyotish quoted in the Vedas directly?

KNR: That is a good question. Technically, Jyotish should not be called Vedic Astrology. For *Yagnas*[19] and *Karmakanda*[20] the Vedas are the authentic

source. For the householders it is the *Smritis*[21]. But both the Vedas and *Smritis* are in the *Puranas*[22]. Just as the entire Creation has emerged from Him, so too the entire literature of the world is an offshoot of the *Puranas*. There is no iota of doubt about it. In the Vedas, there is no methodology provided to determine *Tithi*[23], *Vaar*[24], *Nakshatra*[25], or planetary *Sanchara* (transits). Even the methodology for determining timing of *Parvas* (festivals), or Eclipses is not mentioned in the Vedas. What is not in the Vedas is in the *Smritis*. And whatever is not found in these two is to be known from the *Puranas*.

Through someone's fertile imagination it was decided to call Hindu astrology as Vedic astrology. I too fell into this trap and I never verified or clarified this with a competent Vedic scholar. But now I stand corrected. It is either Indian astrology or Hindu astrology. Vedic astrology does not exist at all. Having said that, the term "Vedic" is a great marketing tool especially in the new age movement. So whether it is true or not, I suspect Vedic astrology will continue to be the preferred name for Indian Astrology especially in the west. (*Note - I asked K.N. Rao if I should stop using the term "Vedic astrology." He said, "It is all right in USA. Do as you have been doing." - - Vaughn Paul Manley 7/5/05*)

Question: Having practiced astrology for so many years and now teaching this subject successfully, in your opinion, how much of mathematical skills does one require to learn/practice astrology? In this context, what has been the impact of computers on the practice of astrology?

KNR: Fundamentally, the calculations required to do most of the basic astrological predictions are of simple arithmetic nature. Most people in India are very good at simple arithmetic regardless of their level of education. This is generally enough to learn some of the basic calculations for casting a horoscope etc. In fact most students of astrology here in India can do these calculations mentally. A little bit of knowledge of basic astronomy is also helpful in practicing astrology, and more so if one wants to pursue advanced research in the subject.

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan[26], we insist that every student should have hands-on experience of doing astrological calculations. I am a strong believer in the fact that manual/mental calculations help you better visualize and develop instincts for practicing astrology. I am generally wary of depending exclusively on Jyotish software programs in the market. A faulty component for an intricate calculation in a software program can have disastrous consequences on the correctness and quality of the prediction. These faults in the software are a common occurrence even to this date. The bottom line is that the responsibility for the prediction lies squarely on the shoulders of the astrologer and I feel every astrologer should take that duty very seriously. Further, a total dependency on computers is never advisable. Unfortunately, astrology software programs have helped mushroom a new breed of "half-baked" astrologers.

Despite my reservations regarding use of astrology software programs, the availability of

computers is very helpful and a great time-saver for a serious astrologer. If I have access to a Jyotish program that I have verified as dependable, I use it right away. If not, I do some manual calculations to check its accuracy repeatedly and on an ongoing basis. Mostly the basic horoscopes generated by these software programs are accurate, but the supplementary features, such as less-used *Dasha*[27] systems or Ashtakavargas etc., are often faulty or simply wrong. So we should keep these limitations always at the back of our mind when using Jyotish software programs. That is one of the reasons, as I said earlier, complete dependence on computers is very dangerous!

Question: Could you please give us some brief idea on how you go about making predictions from a horoscope? Also, there are two contrary viewpoints that you have presented in this interview – on the one hand you have said that Jyotish is a science, and on the other you have cited numerous examples of astrologers who made predictions intuitively without using a scientific/analytical approach. Could you also please provide some clarity on this conundrum?

KNR: A horoscope analysis can be split into two types – (a) intra-horoscope, (b) inter-horoscope.

The first one involves looking at various dimensions within a particular horoscope such as Rasi, divisional charts, Ashtavarga etc. to synthesize a holistic view of the individual. Here we have to contend with opposing and supporting factors that need to be considered simultaneously. This requires experience and practice, obtained by looking at lots of horoscopes. Most importantly it needs constant learning from your own mistakes.

Inter-horoscopes become necessary when for example a pregnant woman or parents of a newly born child come to you (as is very common in India), asking about the health, abnormalities or future of the child. In such a case looking at the horoscope of the father, mother and child simultaneously makes the picture much clearer. This type of analysis, as you would understand, requires a lot of work and takes time/patience.

Well-prepared data is the womb from which prediction is born. One has to balance analysis with synthesis. Some charts are simpler than others; the difficulty comes when multi-dimensional analysis has to be followed by synthesis. The synthesis leads to inference from which emerges a conclusion. Science of astrology is, in many ways, similar to medical diagnosis where blood tests, urine test, x-rays, cardiograms etc. are all used to arrive at a proper diagnosis. In this part of astrology where multi-dimensional analysis is involved, deep familiarity and experience with vast array of predictive techniques is the key to success.

As an astrologer advances, almost magically, more of intuition starts coming into play. Let me give you some examples. In 1973, a mother came to me to ask about her missing son. I looked at her face and something within told me that her son was coming home. I still made calculations and found that her son was safe and on his way back home, which is what happened. In another case, someone asked about his missing son. Before I even calculated, I got a strong intuition from within that the boy was killed. I made calculations and found some details that, later, turned out to be useful for police investigations. Through calculations, I also found that the dead body of the boy was in a water body and the killer was wearing red clothes. Later police investigations

caught the criminal in red clothes and the dead body was recovered from under a stone in the Ganges River.

Therefore, sometimes the prediction comes in a flash of intuition. A formal analysis-synthesis exercise is done later only to confirm the intuitive prediction. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*[28] tell us that there exists a *Jyotishmati Nadi* (or a predictive intuitive channel) within us, which when activated one can see past, present and future. Here one needs no horoscope or knowledge of astrology. I know of a person – Sivananda Murthy in Hyderabad. He did a lot of astrology in his youth. At present, he can tell you something about your future without a horoscope. Among the persons known to me, he is the only one alive with a fully activated *Nadi* (or channel) of this type.

Even if the *Nadi* is not fully active, in the case of every honest astrologer, he experiences this channel of intuition in some spells inspired by divinity. These experiences border on the mystical and lead the astrologer into the higher realms of existence – to find out our real purpose in being here. Such experiences take an astrologer towards God making him stop practicing astrology and devoting his life to spiritual activities only.

Question: Can intuitive wisdom help further the field of astrology?

KNR: Yes, that is exactly how most good research is done in any field. Research ideas are born in the stillness of intuition. Once the intuitive idea is born, you have to work extremely diligently with technical competence to show its validity and then present it in a systematic fashion for others to understand. This requires discipline, hard work and perseverance. My research in Jaimini Astrology, a field that remained dormant for almost 3000 years, is an example of that.

Question: You have mentioned that astrology is very useful in facilitating our spiritual journey. Could you please elaborate on this more clearly? Can you please provide some examples of how astrology has helped people in their spiritual progress?

KNR: An astrologer (and their clients) can be categorized via the four-tier system described in the *Bhagavad Gita* – (a) *Arta*, one in agony, has a disturbed mind and such an astrologer cannot predict properly; (b) *Artharthi* - greedy and he will dupe his clients and make money; this is generally what you see quite commonly among astrologers everywhere; (c) *Jignasu* - who has a scientific curiosity and wants to know more deeply on how planets affect the universe and its life. This is what took me into astro-meteorology and occasional predictions about earthquakes – an area that still continues to be enigma for me; (d) *Gyani* - At one stage the astrologer feels that he has been wasting his time predicting for others. When there is a God controlling everything why not devote time only to realize HIM. If circumstances help him, he gives up astrology (or at least reduces it substantially) and contemplates on the higher Self alone.

Let me now come back to your question on astrological advice for spiritual improvement. In my experience, mostly people from the west who are into the New Age Movement or those initiated by Indian, Sufi or Buddhist gurus, seek astrological advice on their spiritual life. Indians typically don't do that – they go to their spiritual gurus for spiritual guidance and come to the astrologer for guidance in their worldly matters. So the sample of people seeking astrological

advice on spiritual matters is definitely biased towards westerners.

Generally speaking, most people we come across in today's world, almost always, have their share of worldly distractions. These distractions can be discerned very clearly from their horoscope charts. This is known as *Yoga Vighna* or *Antaraya*[29] or you can also call it *Maya* [30]. We have to give advice based on these factors. But in the case of a person who is a full time devotee – with no job or worldly worries – you have to merely tell them not to worry when good periods are seen and caution when the *Dasha* (time) is not favorable.

In the context of spirituality, the type of advice given depends on the question asked and the horoscope of the individual. Let me illustrate this via some examples of how I was able to help people in their spiritual path using astrology (in all these cases the advice was given after looking at the astrological charts of the people):

Twenty years back, a German woman asked me about her meditation. I told her that there was a disturbance caused by some matter related to property/land, which was affecting her. As it turned out, she did indeed have a lot of trouble with her neighbor who was objecting to her building a temple somewhere in Germany. This bothered her repeatedly while she tried to meditate. I asked her to solve this land problem first and then concentrate on her meditative practice;

A man from Australia asked me and I told him about his sexual torments and how to manage them so as to not have an effect on his meditation;

Another man asked me on how to get deeper into meditation. Looking at his horoscope, I could see that he had the inherent ability to sit long in Asanas (or Yogic postures). I told him that he should practice Yogic Asanas and it would accelerate his spiritual progress. He followed up on my advice and it did indeed helped him;

In one case, I had to tell a man that he was faking and being untruthful which was a gross violation of the basic tenets of being a sadhaka or spiritual seeker. His question about spiritual life was simply fanciful and not sincere;Based on some extraordinary indicators I saw in a girl's chart, I told her that she would progress rapidly in her spiritual life. It was one of the most joyful experiences for me to see her fulfill the spiritual promise that was vividly “inscribed” in her horoscope;

Question: Do you believe in Free Will for us “puny mortals” (as you describe all of us in an earlier part of the interview)? To what degree is everything pre-destined and what, if at all, is our own choice/free-will?

KNR: Actually, my honest answer to this question is that God alone can answer this question fully and satisfactorily. When I see my prediction coming out correct, I clearly see the role of pre-determination. For example, in 1995, while teaching a course in the U.S., I predicted that Clinton would win a second term, but would get involved in land and sex scandals. That prediction came out to be true. However, I also predicted that Clinton would not be able to complete his second term – that prediction did not come true. This is how sometimes pre-determination and free-will interplay with each other to determine the final outcome.

We all enjoy some amount of free will within the orbit of predetermination; not outside it. If free-will was non-existent, the great sage Parashara whose *magnum opus* on astrology, *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra*, we depend on, would not have prescribed remedial measures like doing *Vishnu Sahasranamam* or doing charities etc. You have seen my own example. I could not walk in the years 2000-2001 without a support walker. No doctor could diagnose my disease and therefore no treatment was possible. I did *Vishnu Sahasranamam* regularly and with God's grace, I can now walk without the walker (even though I still use a walking stick for safety).

There are three words in Hindi – *Mitana*, *Ghatana* and *Uthana* that provide a comprehensive picture of the fate of *Karma* itself. In very rare cases you will find *Mitana* or complete eradication of *Karmas* – generally speaking destiny does not spare us. *Ghatana* or reduction in intensity is what most of us hope and work for. This category covers most of us. *Uthana* or transcending is again rare. To give an analogy of this - there is blazing heat outside but one is sitting in an air-conditioned room unaffected by what is happening outside. This happens only to true seekers of God. He alone is a true Gyani who knows that *Karmas* need to be “worked-out”.

As the *Gita* says “*Gahano Karmana Gatih*[31]” or as the great saint Surdas[32] says “*Udho Karman Gi Gati Nyari Re*” - *Karma* is itself mysterious.

Astrology is linked to the theory of *karma* and the cycle of rebirths. Therefore an astrologer does see the role of predestination and also of free will. However, as the astrologer goes deeper, he sees a greater role of predetermination and less of free will. But what can an astrologer do? If he tells the truth bluntly, he disappoints his clients. If he does not, he bluffs them!

Question: Besides your astrology Guru and your mother, are there any astrologers from the recent era (living or dead) who have impressed and influenced you? If so, how?

KNR: In my experience, (Late) Hardeo Sharma Trivedi, who was the editor of the *Vishwa Vijay Panchanga*[33] in Hindi was one of the best astrologers in the field of mundane Jyotish. He came from the *Varahamihira*[34] tradition of astrology known for its strength in the area of predictive mundane astrology. He was technically very sound, morally impeccable, and had an impressive prediction success rate of 80% in a career spanning 66 years (from 1933 to 1989). He did not know English so he was not well versed in international affairs. Despite this limitation, he made simply remarkable predictions on international matters. Using the concept of eclipses, Trivedi-ji predicted the impending catastrophe of the Second World War in a Hindi pamphlet in the year 1933 many years before the World War broke out. In 1963, based on the Hindu New Year horoscope, he predicted a “terrible tragedy to the head of state of USA” (which turned out to be the fatal attack on JFK). He also predicted the U.S. stock market crash of 1987 and also the severe communal tension of 1992 in India. You can gauge the consistency of his predictions from the fact that he made these predictions in February-March (before the beginning of the Hindu New Year in April) of every year when the *Panchanga* was released. Despite his obvious brilliant track-record he never attained international fame because (a) he wrote in Hindi, limiting the audience that read his work, and (b) he lived in Solan, Himachal Pradesh away from the power center of Delhi. I respected him so much that I used to visit him at least twice a year.

The second person who impressed me greatly was (Late) Dr. B.V.Raman. As you know, Dr.

Raman popularized Hindu Astrology to an English-speaking audience, like no one else did in twentieth century. It was he who created a platform on which good astrologers could communicate, discuss, share their findings and collaborate. He had his spells of brilliant predictions particularly from 1938 to 1960. His service to the field of Indian astrology has been truly remarkable and precious.

Then there was Vemuri Ram Murthy Shastri in a village in Andhra Pradesh whom I never met personally. I read his predictions along with accompanying calculations and logic, brought to me by some friends. He was a true genius and I was his uninitiated disciple, much like Eklavya[35]. Even though I never met him, I have paid my tributes to him in my book “*Predicting through Jaimini's Chara Dasha.*”

There may be a few others but, unfortunately, most of the so-called “famous” astrologers are people who have made one or two good predictions and then get catapulted to fame via inflated or unverifiable claims through their friends in the press. I don't care for all the hype and media attention. I personally value commitment, consistency, and the test of time. Very very few astrologers pass per this criterion in today's day and age.

Question: That brings us to the question of the quality of today's astrologers. What is your opinion of the new and upcoming astrologers?

KNR: The new young breed of rising astrologers is in a hurry to pluck stars and collect dollars. I had hoped that their work would help us address the deficiencies in many areas of predictive astrology. But, unfortunately, I found most of them greedy and boastful in the infancy of their careers and becoming gurus before even doing any original research of provable value. They are often in the habit of floating some wild theories without any empirical support. For example, one such astrologer claimed that he could trace the past life of a person from their horoscope. Another person claimed to predict the exact date of an event very successfully every single time. In my view these are nothing but fanciful exaggerations to fool the public that is clamoring for miraculous stuff.

The New Age movement in USA has created a demand for such astrology gurus and opened opportunities for earning quick money. In these days of websites and email, it is easy to self-promote. I know I am not being polite but this is the truth in majority of cases. Maybe a few of them have done some good research. *But unless an astrologer has maintained a good record (sixty to eighty percent) of sound, clear, unambiguous and accurate predictions over a period of fifteen years, he cannot be categorized as good.* But in these days of advertising and marketing, who cares for such a rigorous evaluation criterion?

Question: That is a pretty negative “report card” on the upcoming astrologers! Like everybody, they too have to make money and survive. Can you blame them for trying to make a living?

KNR: What you are saying is true. What you are suggesting is that there are reasons for the reality to be as it is. However, I am merely observing the situation as it exists. To understand this better, let me give you a categorization of people who are involved in astrology –

(1) You will be surprised to see that many astrologers were in some petty job and through astrology, they found a way to get some recognition among colleagues and their bosses. Some may have taken astrology as a profession because they had trouble at work and were dismissed or forced to resign from their jobs. Then these people aggressively promote themselves as astrology-gurus capitalizing on the opportunity offered by the New Age movement.

(2) There are many bright and intelligent, professional people who have been attracted to astrology. These people have very good educational career and have the intellect to pick up astrology rapidly. But how long can they continue practicing astrology when they have the twin burdens of a full-time job and families? In today's modern professions of medicine, engineering, chartered accountancy, law etc. equal attention to both profession and astrology is very difficult if not impossible. In their competitive professions these people have to keep updating their knowledge and skills for the sake of bettering their careers. I have seen scores of such people who started well but tapered off achieving nothing due to the demands of their professional and personal lives.

(3) In the case of bureaucrats (like myself) who hold secure (but dull and routine) jobs, both the job and astrology can flourish without one affecting the other. I fall into this category.

Therefore, the *intention* with which people get into and practice astrology is very important. Further, in learning any Vidya or knowledge, it is the *attitude* that matters. My observation is that after learning for some months or years, these young upcoming astrologers become argumentative, arrogant and conceited. As I said before, they would be well advised to concentrate on their predictions for a period of at least fifteen years to see their real grasp of knowledge.

I have always felt that the best way to conduct astrology is via established research centers with regular/well-paying jobs for trained astrologers. If that happens there will be sound and dependable astrologers who have the environment to get engrossed in uncovering the deeper secrets of life. Another hope is that family traditions of astrology can be revived so that the young and bright in the family can preserve the oral/written traditions of ages without having to worry about earning wages.

But remember one axiom of life – “Nature will never reveal its full secrets”. At any stage of the human race there will be some good astrologers and very very few excellent astrologers. Only one or two Tapasvi astrologer among them would reach levels of greatness. Fundamentally, true astrology begins only when one feels reasonably secure both inside and outside. Then only is one able to imbibe an attitude of service – which is the crucial key to unlocking the treasure of any Vidya such as astrology.

Question: Your practice involves Parashara's[36] system of astrology and also the Jaimini[37] system. Could you tell us a bit about these systems and the research work you have done?

KNR: There can be four or more routes to reach a place in a city. So it is with the field of astrology. The Parashari system is the most popular, the best understood, and most widely practiced system. When I write books or discuss case studies, I invariably first explain a

prediction or a technique through the Parashari system because of its wider acceptance and understanding. Parashara uses *Nakshatra Dashas*[38] for timing events and among them the *Vimshottari Dasha*[39] is regarded as the king of these *Dasha* systems.

The Jaimini system is totally different; even the method of timing of events is different. In this system there are *Rashi*[40] and *Navamsha*[41] *Dashas*. According to Late Dr. Raman, in the Jaimini system, the *Chara Dasha* is the emperor of *Rashi Dasha* systems. In Parashara's *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra*, three *Dashas* have been discussed elaborately – *Vimshottari*, *Chara and Kalachakra*[42] *Dasha*. This also is indicative of the importance of the *Chara Dasha* for predictive astrology.

Then there is the *Mandook Dasha* in the Jaimini system – commentators of this system explained it only theoretically without giving any illustrative example. I saw in some examples of Vemuri Ramamurthy Shastri (he is discussed earlier in the interview) that he used *Mandook Dasha* differently. Empirical results showed that his understanding was correct. I first tested this method on my own horoscope where it worked well. Thereafter, on testing this method on many more horoscopes I became quite convinced of the validity of this *Dasha* system that even inspired me to write a book on this subject.

I did a fair amount of original research on *Kalachakra Dasha* after getting some hints from a Pandit of Rewari (a town in the North Indian state of Haryana). Using this *Dasha* system, I predicted the death of Rajiv Gandhi in my published research in August 1990. As it turned out, Rajiv Gandhi was subsequently killed on 21st May 1991. However, this *Dasha* system is very sensitive to birth time and unless the moon position is absolutely accurate (to within seconds), the prediction of life event timings become very erratic. Therefore, given that birth times are rarely so accurate, I felt that it was waste of time to work on it any further.

I also did a lot of work on the conditional *Dashas* of Parashara and other *Dasha* systems of Jaimini. I taught some of this work to my students who have written excellent books that are now available in the market. For instance, *Yogini Dasha* system has a short cycle of 36 years. As longevity of humans is increasing, this *Dasha* system needs to be now used in 2 or even 3 cycles of 72 and 108 years respectively. All this requires a new level of understanding that was not necessary in times when people did not live that long. In one of my advanced Astrology classes, I discussed the possibilities of new research areas and methods of investigation. Taking up some of these ideas, Mr. V.P.Goel (who is now a faculty member at the Institute of Astrology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) wrote an excellent book that gives very promising predictive results.

Many of the new faculty members at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan have done pioneering work in furthering the field of Indian Astrology – e.g., Mr Manoj Pathak on *Dwisaptati Sama Dasha*, Mr. Naval Singh on *Chatursheeti Sama Dasha*, Mr. V.P.Goel on *Shodashottari Dasha*, and Mrs. Akhila Kumar on *Jaimini's Sthira Dasha*. It is most gratifying for me to see my former students enhancing the understanding of Indian Astrology through their diligent and insightful research.

K.N. Rao teaching an advanced research class at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Scoffing at my enthusiasm for new research, some people argue against spending effort/time in developing newer or lesser-known systems. But one of my biggest realizations in the field of astrology has been that a *Jyotishi* (astrologer) has to learn to look at many different viewpoints (through the eyes of different systems) and then use them concurrently to reach a conclusion. This “Composite System of Astrological Predictions” is one of the fundamental cornerstones of Indian Astrology. The great *Parashara Rishi* taught us so many Dashas, Divisional Charts, and a myriad of techniques not merely for decorative display but for actually using them!

Question: There are other parallel systems of Indian Astrology – such as the *Nadi Jyotish*. This particular *Nadi* system, as you know, takes a thumbprint and identifies a leaf, written centuries ago, that tells about your life to an amazing level of detail. If the correct leaf is identified, the past is so amazingly accurate including your name, date of birth, place of residence, job, family (including name of family members) etc. These *Nadi* Astrologers also use the leaf to tell about your future. However, many people question the accuracy of these future predictions. What is your opinion on this system of astrology?

KNR: What is called *Nadi* system in south India is known as the *Bhrigu* system in north India. For both these systems, we don't know much about the underlying methods at all.

Most of these readings are done from the books or palm leaves or palmyra leaves. As far as I know, the people doing these readings do not know astrology themselves. They have leaves in their possession and they read out from these after finding the correct leaf that pertains to you. These leaves are generally known to reveal some past facts that are substantially correct. But the future predictions tend to be spurious and far less reliable. People who tested this system have gone to the extent of saying that revealing the names of parents, wife, husband etc. is the result of *Bhoota siddhi*[43] and that nothing is really written on those leaves. It is my experience that a few *Nadi* readers sometimes do come out with startling readings which I have verified myself and I am truly amazed by their accuracy. But more often than not they flounder and come out with preposterous predictions too! It has convinced me that *Nadi* readings, sometimes quite remarkable, are mostly undependable especially for future predictions.

Let me however give you an anecdote of an amazing prediction through *Nadi* reading that I have myself verified. A reading was given to a person (whom I know very well) when he had three children. The prediction said that he would have two more children and that the last one would be a male who would become a doctor. This doctor would marry a woman who would also be a doctor by profession. Then this (doctor) son would be arrested and sent to jail after a terrible quarrel with his wife. The reading further said that all this would happen because this (doctor) son was a medical man in his previous life and was aborting the children of pregnant women. In one case, a girl wanted to be born but she was killed in the womb of the mother. She laid a curse on him and promised to be born as his wife in his present life and take revenge. As events unfolded, all the events predicted happened exactly per the reading. Please remember the reading was given in 1950, the doctor son was born in 1958 and he was arrested in the year 2000. All this is most fantastic and I know every detail of this and I have verified it completely.

We “regular” astrologers can never give such amazing predictions. However, such cases of phenomenal predictions based on *Nadi* are few and there is a lot more fraud in the name of *Nadi*

readings. I therefore prefer to use the more tested and systematic approach of Parashara and Jaimini methods.

Question: What is your opinion of Western astrology especially vis-à-vis the Indian astrological system that you practice? Is a cross-pollination of ideas between the two systems possible?

KNR: Let me begin by saying that I haven't delved into Western Astrology much at all. My knowledge therefore is very limited. Furthermore, I have been very satisfied at the immensity and depth of the Indian Astrological system that has kept me away from exploring other astrological systems. Therefore, it would be really unfair for me to pass any sort of judgement on Western Astrology. Having said that, I did find Western system of astrology limited by a lack of Dasha systems, absence of divisional charts and Yogas.

Using extra-Saturnine planets like Pluto, Uranus and Neptune makes the astrological canvas too crowded without any great research on the effects of these newly discovered planets. If someone could establish and show their predictive uses (not mere post-mortem studies) it will be helpful. It is said that in mundane astrology these planets have great use. As far as I know, there are very few, if any, examples of confirmed predictions of notable events using these planets.

In one's limited lifetime it is difficult to dabble in too many systems of astrology. It causes clutter, confusion and makes your judgement clouded. So I prefer to stick to the system I am familiar with and leave it to others to use the system they prefer. In my biased opinion, the Indian Astrological system is deep, comprehensive and capable of “delivering the goods” to whomsoever who chooses to dive into it. That is the only truth I can attest to without any hesitation.

Question: What is the viewpoint you favor on the following issues – (a) Is there a particular *Ayanamsha*[44] that is the correct one? (b) Do Rahu and Ketu[45] have own sign, exaltation/debilitation signs, strengths, aspects etc.? (c) Do astrological principles apply in full for a planned C-section birth?

KNR: (a) Yes I have delved on the topic of *Ayanamsha* in great detail and I have also shown in my books why *Lahiri Ayanamsha* (actually it should be called *Chitrapaksha Ayanamsha*) alone is the accurate one. To ascertain this fact, one has to look carefully at Vargas or divisional charts. Based on a scientific investigation, I have rejected all other *Ayanamshas*. Unfortunately, my work on *Ayanamsha* annoyed late Dr. B.V.Raman, who used his own *Ayanamsha*. Therefore, this controversy even affected my excellent friendship with Dr.Raman.

As an historical note, readers should know that *Chitrapaksha ayanamsha* got its official seal from the Calendar Reforms Committee in 1956. It also got an official endorsement from the best astronomers of India and also from the notable scientist Meghnad Saha.

(b) This is an old controversy. I do not use the exaltation/debilitation signs for Rahu/Ketu at all. On the other hand the condition of Rahu and Ketu and their dispositors[46] gives us good results. My favorite case is that of John F. Kennedy, the ex-president of USA, who achieved all his political eminence and glories in the *Mahadasha* of Rahu in *Dhanu* (where it is supposed to be

debilitated). In the next *Dasha* of Jupiter, he was killed.

(c) Yes most definitely – 100%. I have given one instance in my book, “*Karma and Rebirth in Hindu Astrology*”, the case of a doctor who wanted me to give a birth time for the C-section delivery for his wife. I provided the time and made several predictions about the child before its birth. Twenty years later these predictions were shown to come true. Upcoming astrologers should do more research on this area by giving a time for C-Section, make predictions, watch the life of the child for fifteen or twenty years, and see whether the predicted events match up with reality or not.

Let me give you another anecdote. More than sixteen years ago I provided a birth time to the wife (who is like my niece) of an army officer. She and her husband wanted me to give a birth time so that the child would be a male scientist. I gave the time per their wishes. But nature had the last say in this matter. She went into labor a little earlier than the chosen date. After the birth of a son, they asked me for prediction and I told them jocularly that the boy would study commerce and classical music. They came to me from Calcutta in 2003 with the grown-up boy. The boy is now doing graduate studies in commerce and has finished the fifth year in Hindustani classical music.

Question: Being a well-known and highly reputed astrologer, does it not put an added burden on you for being scrutinized and repeatedly tested on the accuracy of your predictions? Does protecting your image and stature sometimes stand in the way of you practicing astrology in a free and unfettered fashion?

KNR: One of the reasons why an astrologer often feels burdened is because of lack of practical understanding of astrology among the clients. That is a real problem. For example, there is no acceptance or understanding of (1) variability brought out by inherent uncontrollable uncertainties such as inaccurate birth times or (2) acceptable error limits. Everybody wants perfect answers *every single time*. That is never going to happen no matter how good the astrologer is! Does the world abandon the science of aeronautics and space exploration if the space shuttle crashes due to errors by the world's best scientists at NASA? The answer is no – they learn from their mistakes and improve. But astrology is thought to be something “out of the world” which is simply not true. Everybody is subject to laws of nature including the astrologer, and each of us works under the gamut of Maya. Why then forget the Will of God? As the great Tulsidas has said, “*Haani-Laabh, Jeevan-Maran, Yash-Apyash, Vidhi Haath*” (Profit and loss, life and death, fame and infamy are in His hands).

My experience is that, often times, it is the unnoticed and unquoted individual predictions which are truly inspired. They give great internal satisfaction to an astrologer. Sometimes such predictions get great publicity through informal channels and grapevine. After hearing about these predictions people come to the astrologer with great expectations. These expectations (or for that matter any expectations) create a preconditioned mind to “hear” a very highly favorable or certain type of predictions that would alter the course of people's lives. For instance, I predicted in one case that the boy would become an engineer, go to a foreign country, marry a foreigner but would remain afflicted with an incurable ailment. Fifteen years later when events took place exactly as I had predicted other people came running to me to hear a similar

prediction. If you do not give them a similar prediction they feel disappointed and sore. Why should I put a strain on myself and try to live up to their expectations? From my personal experience I have learnt that being true and honest to myself is the only way to live one's life harmoniously. This brings you peace and a palpable proximity to God. Isn't that the true purpose of why *Jyotish* was revealed to us in the first place?

Question: On a final note, would you like to give any advice to aspiring astrologers?

KNR: My advice to aspiring astrologers is to do their astrology quietly. They should not seek publicity or promote themselves, and let their good predictions earn them a good name. It is how so many, including me, started. It is only in 1983, after more than forty years of practicing astrology, that I was dragged into the limelight, much against my wishes. And if an astrologer can practice as a service without charging any money - it is the best. Or leave it to the client to donate what they wish. Never demand or put a price on your service. I know I am old-fashioned in this matter - but for a good reason. (*Note - I asked K.N. Rao about charging money in the West for astrology services. He said, "It is all right in USA. Do as you have been doing." - Vaughn Paul Manley 7/5/05*).

Astrology is a revelatory science and it is revealed, not by aggression but by faith and surrender to the divine. Always remember the four “Mahavakyas”[47] of astrology – Have Faith; Be Diligent and Practice Patience; Humbly learn from your mistakes, and Live a Life of Service. Then the divine lotus of astrology will open within you.

Footnotes

- 1 Mr. Rao's family is originally from South India but lived, for the most part, in Northern India
- 2 At that time this would have been, almost certainly, looked down upon in a traditional Brahmin household in south India
- 3 A Renaissance religious movement that, among other things, did not believe in the caste system. Many believe that this movement was one of the foundation stones of modern thinking in India
- 4 A Pashtun or Pathan, he was a participant in the freedom struggle against the British. He was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and came to be known as the “Frontier Gandhi”
- 5 Notorious for its bitter taste but considered a great medicinal herb
- 6 A world famous expert and scholar in the field of rural industries
- 7 Noted for his contributions in the field of Gandhian economics
- 8 A scholar-saint regarded by many as the spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi
- 9 In those times, it was very unusual, if not heretical, for a Brahmin kid to be asked by his father to study texts of other religions
- 10 India's film industry is located here. Also known nowadays as “Bollywood”
- 11 Mr. Rao had prior experience of appearing before the Supreme Court in the famous “Mandal” Case. The Mandal Commission's aim was to come up with criteria for determining social and educational backwardness that became very controversial. Mr. Rao also wrote a book on this entitled “Mandal Report X-Rayed”
- 12 Considered an elite family in South India partly because of their accomplishments. Historically members from this family held high-level positions in the courts of the kings from

- the days of the famous Golconda empire in south India
- 13 A spiritual path that aims to activate one's internal spiritual energy or Kundalini from the base of the spine to the top of the head via the 7 psychic centers
- 14 He is mentioned with reverence in the literature on Ramakrishna Paramhansa (the famous saint and devotee of the mother goddess who lived in the state of Bengal)
- 15 A guru from the lineage of Guru Nanak (the first Guru of the Sikh religion)
- 16 A saint who lived in the 13th century and propounded the Dualistic school of worship
- 17 An extremely sacred hill in the state of Assam. It is revered as one of the most potent and powerful spiritual centers for the procreative goddess, Kamakhya
- 18 This book was translated into the Russian language in 2003
- 19 A Hindu ritual sacrificial external worship often accompanied by a fire ceremony
- 20 Dealing with work and actions
- 21 These are Hindu mythological texts like the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata
- 22 These contain mythological and allegorical stories of Gods and Goddesses. Scholars and mystics believe that these texts impart philosophy and knowledge at multiple levels depending on the stage of development of the reader/student
- 23 Phases or days of a lunar month
- 24 Weekday
- 25 27 constellations which form an important pillar-stone of Jyotish
- 26 As mentioned earlier in the interview, one of the biggest astrology schools is housed at this institution. Mr. Rao is the founder and prime-mover of this astrology school
- 27 Planetary periods. There are 32 such systems expounded in the classical text Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra
- 28 A classic axiomatic text written in Sanskrit on the complete path of Yoga
- 29 Obstructive energies that take you away from finding your spiritual center
- 30 Maya is a Hindu term that is used to represent one's illusory perception to life. It is also the dynamic force or power that manifests physical and relative reality
- 31 It is impossible for one to know or analyze one's karmas (actions) and their impact
- 32 A blind saint known for his supreme devotion to Lord Krishna. He is very well known, especially in Northern India, for his devotional hymns and songs that are still sung commonly in festivals and religious gatherings
- 33 Panchanga is a Hindu/Indian calendar/almanac that provides a plethora of information on astrological factors, auspicious/inauspicious times etc. In other words it is a comprehensive planning information resource for Hindus
- 34 Indian philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician, author of the Pañca-siddhantika ("Five Treatises"), a compendium of Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and Indian astronomy
- 35 From the epic Mahabharata, where a young boy becomes an unrivaled archer by drawing inspiration from the statue of the great Guru, Dronacharya. Eklavya learnt archery by practicing in front of the Guru's statue without ever getting any initiation or direct instruction from the Guru
- 36 A system or tradition enunciated by the Rishi or seer, Parashara, mainly through his famous astrological treatise Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra. This work is one of the main foundations for Jyotish
- 37 Another seer who developed additional tools and techniques to complement the Jyotish knowledge base developed through Parashara
- 38 Timing system that distributes the time (not equally) to 9 Nakshatras within the 120 degree zodiac space

39 Has a cycle time of 120 years. This 120 year period is sub-divided into 9 unequal parts which are ruled by each of the nine planets

40 These are the 12 constellations – Aries etc.

41 Parashara developed 16 sub-charts of the main Rashi chart. Navamsha is the ninth division chart and one of the most important sub-charts to be studied in conjunction with the Rashi chart

42 Means the wheel of time. It is a timing system that, like Chara Dasha, is also a Rashi-based system for timing of events

43 Possessing control of a ghost/spirit and using this spirit to get the requisite information

44 The distance between the starting points of the sidereal and tropical zodiacs at any given time

45 The two nodal planets. Also called as “Chaya Grahas” or shadowy planets

46 The lord of the Rashi in which these planets are placed

47 Great Sentences or axioms

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