

## Matsya in Sanskrit Literature

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### **Abstract:**

In the Puranic literature, Matsya Purana occupied important place because of Matsya incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Recitation of MP in this Matsya avatara by Lord Vishnu made Matsya image great and distinct in the mind of people. The importance of Matsya is not limited only up to Puranic literature but it found in various types of Sanskrit literature such as Jyotisa shastra, Ayurveda, Mahabharata etc. In this article Matsya found in other than Puranic literature is discussed.

### **Introduction of Jyotisha Sastra**

Jyotisha Shastra is the oldest of sciences, now day's known as Astronomy and Astrology<sup>1</sup>. Jyotisha Shashtra is the science about the stars and heavenly bodies such as the Sun, the Moon, the other planets, and the stars etc. From very ancient days, people believed that these planets and stars in the sky played an important role in controlling the growth and activities of all the living and non-living beings in the world<sup>2</sup>. Richard Thompson states that Jyotisha Shastra presents the parameters and computational rules for predicting planetary positions and other astronomical phenomenon<sup>3</sup>. The Vedas are supposed to have six angas Shiksha (Phonetics), Kalpa (Ritual Canon), Vyakaran (Grammar), Nirukta (explanation), Chhanda

(Vedic meter) and Jyotisha (Astrology)<sup>4</sup>. From this it can be said that the Indians had acknowledged Astronomy as an ancillary (anga) of the Vedas. Jyotisha Sastra is very useful to decide correct date and time of sacrifices and sacrifices are the main theme of Vedas.

The expounders of Vedas say that Astronomy<sup>5</sup> is the eye of the Vedas Indian astrology has three branches –

- Siddhanta: which is traditional Indian astronomy.
- Samhita: also known as Medini Jyoti (mundane astrology), predicting important events based on analysis of astrological dynamics in a country's horoscope or general transit events such as war, (vastu Sastra,) animals, p o r t e n t s , o m e n s e t c .

- Hora: Predictive astrology based on analysis of natal horoscopes and the moment a query is made<sup>6</sup>.

The latter two are part of predictive astrology (Phalita). Therefore, Indian astrology has two branches, Geeta (Siddhanta) and Phalita (Samhita plus Hora). Historically, the study of astrology in India was an important factor in the development of astronomy in the early middle ages. Jyotish Shastra (Astronomy) has two sides, the one is Pramaanbhaga [doctrinal side] and the other is Phalabhaga [result side]. According to Pramaanbhaga a calendar is designed and Phalabhaga is the prediction and casting of the horoscopes of living beings. In Hindu culture, newborns are traditionally named based on their Jyotisha charts, and Jyotisha concepts are pervasive in the organization of the calendar and holidays as well as in many areas of life, such as in making decisions made about marriage, opening a new business, and moving into a new home.

Chaphekar Avinash says that Astrology [phala Jyoti] is based on the Astronomy [Jyotish sastra]. According to Astrology, the places of stars and planets in the sky, their motions and life of all living things on the earth, these are interrelated to each other<sup>7</sup>.

### **History of Jyotisha Sastra**

Ancient Indian astrology is based upon sidereal calculations. It can be traced to the final centuries BC with the Vedanga Jyotisha attributed to Lagadha one of the

circum-Vedic texts, which describes rules for tracking the motions of the Sun and the Moon for the purposes of ritual. After formation of Indo-Greek kingdoms, Indian astronomy was influenced by Hellenistic astronomy (adopting the zodiacal signs or rashis). Identical numerical computations for lunar cycles have been found to be used in India and in early Babylonian texts<sup>8</sup>. In Indian astrology, some great scholars stated the main basic theories. Around 500 AD, Aryabhata presented a mathematical system. He also made an accurate approximation of the Earth's circumference and diameter, and also discovered how the lunar eclipse and solar eclipse happen. Brahmagupta (598-668) was the head of the astronomical observatory at Ujjain and during his tenure there wrote a text on astronomy, the Brahmasphutasiddhanta in 628. He was the earliest to use algebra to solve astronomical problems. Bhaskara (629) was the head of the astronomical observatory at Ujjain, continuing the mathematical tradition of Brahmagupta. He wrote the Siddhanta siromani which consists of two parts: Gol-adhyaya (sphere) and Graha-ganita (mathematics of the planets). Astronomy was advanced during the Shunga Empire and many star catalogues were produced during this time. The Shunga period is known as the "**Golden age of astronomy in India**".

General astrology studies the relationship of the significant celestial

moments (e.g., the times of vernal equinoxes, eclipses, or planetary conjunctions) to social groups, nations, or all of humanity. Astrology has been a recognized science in Egypt, China, and India from very ancient days. Drawings of the faces of the moon have been found in Spain. These drawings are about 10,000 years old. In Europe, 6,000 years ago, set up of huge stones used for the marking of places of the rising and setting of sun and moon. One well known group of these stones is at Stonehenge, in Southern England<sup>10</sup>. A view from above the ruins of Stonehenge shows the arrangement of its ancient stones. In many ways, Stonehenge<sup>11</sup> is still a mystery to modern scientists and historians.

The spread of astrology beyond Babylonia is thus concomitant with the rise of a truly scientific astronomy in Babylonia itself, which in turn is due to the intellectual impulse afforded by the contact with new forms of culture from both the East and the West. In the hands of the Greeks and of the Egyptians both

The 12 zodiacs in the sky show their Sanskrit names, Western names, signs and their corresponding dates. Twelve Zodiacs with their signs.

astrology and astronomy were carried far beyond the limits attained by the Babylonians.

### **Rashis — the signs [zodiacs]**

A zodiac divides the 360 degrees of the ecliptic into 12 equal parts, which have divided the sky are called 12 Rashis or Zodiacs. Each twelve part i.e. a zodiac occupies 30 degree. The name of the zodiac is according to the sign of the zodiac<sup>12</sup>. The term zodiac derives from Latin zodiacus, in turn from the Greek (zodiakos kuklos), meaning "circle of animals", derived from (zodion), the diminutive of (zoon) "animal". The name is motivated by the many of the signs of the classical Greek zodiac being represented as animals (six out of twelve, plus two mythological hybrids). Although the zodiac remains the basis of the ecliptic coordinate system in use in astronomy besides the equatorial one, the term and the names of the twelve signs are today mostly associated with horoscopic astrology.

No.	Sanskrit Names	Sign	Western Names
1	Mesha	Ram	Aries
2	Vrishabh	Bull	Taurus
3	Mithuna	Twins	Gemini
4	Karka	Crab	Cancer
5	Simha	Lion	Leo
6	Kanya	Girl	Virgo
7	Tula	Balance	Libra
8	Vrschika	Scorpion	Scorpio

9	Dhanus	Bow	Sagittarius
10	Makara	Sea-monster	Capricorn
11	Kumbh	Water Bearer	Aquarius
12	Meen	Fish	Pisces

The Greeks adopted the symbols from the Babylonians and passed them on to the other ancient civilizations. The Egyptians assigned other names and symbols to the zodiacal divisions. The Chinese also adopted the 12-fold division, but called the signs rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon etc<sup>13</sup>.

### **Pisces – Meen**

Pisces means fish. Sanskrit name is 'Meena' and Matsya, Pruthu roma, Jhasa<sup>14</sup> are the other names. Pisces is the 12<sup>th</sup> sign of zodiac, symbolized by two fishes which are bound together by a wavy band that swim in opposite directions. Pisces is a zodiacal constellation located along the ecliptic, the apparent annual path of the sun across the sky. According to astrologers, people whose birthdays occur between February 19 and March 20 are born under the sun sign of Pisces<sup>15</sup>. Its representation as two fish tied together is usually related to the Greek myth of Aphrodite and Eros, who jumped into the river to escape the monster Typhon and changed into fish, or, alternatively, the two fish that carried them to safety<sup>16</sup>. Astrologers consider Pisceans to be sensitive, emotional, sunny, impressionable, dreamy, creative, psychic, and mystical. Typical Pisceans do not have great stamina. Pisceans can be delicate and vulnerable, especially when

under emotional stress. Pisceans often lack the self-confidence necessary to reach their substantial potential. Generally the men are stubborn, social, kind hearted. But women are stronger than the men. They are involved in society, less angry than men<sup>17</sup>.

### **Ayurveda**

Ayurveda — A science of life, form of alternative medicine based on the principle that disease is occurred by imbalance of life forces. Since 5000 years, Ayurveda is the oldest existing system of medical practice and is regarded by proponents as a complete way of life aimed at spiritual, mental and social well beings as well as physical health<sup>18</sup>. In (Sanskrit) Indian literature, Ayurveda is also known as fifth Veda as it is knowledge of life because of which people can live hundreds of years. According to Dalhan, 'Ayurveda is the science in which useful and unuseful things of our life mentioned and diagnosis and medicines of diseases are explained very well'<sup>19</sup>.

Ayurveda is the science, with the help of which people protect their life, the sages called that science as Ayurveda - Philosophy as a science and its aim reaches deeper and covers a more extensive field than more presentation of health and cure of illness.

The aim of Ayurveda includes maintenance of this healthy state of balanced equilibrium restoration of same in case of any imbalance and derangement<sup>20</sup>. Ayurveda attempts to correct this imbalances of derangement by the application of spiritual and resources available to man. From ancient Vedic age, the great sages created the Ayurvedic books in eight parts<sup>21</sup> such as surgery, treatment of diseases, medicines, toxicology etc. The purpose of Ayurveda is not only to cure illness but to preserve health and ensure a long, happy and useful life.

### **Dhanvantari**

The name of Dhanvantari is known as doctor (Vaidhya) of Indra or Vaidhya in heaven. Dhanvantari is the creator of the science of surgery and medicine<sup>22</sup>, appears in many passages in the Vedas, the Puraas and the classical Sanskrit literature where he is regards as a sage of divine origin<sup>23</sup>.

Atreyi, Bharadwaja, Kasyapa, are the main sages who created Ayurveda to protect the people from serious diseases. Afterwards, Susruta [4th AD] Caraka , Vagbhata these are the famous freer their Shirts and their specialty of Ayurvedic branches. The therapies of these scholars focus on lifestyle changes, herbal medicines, concentrating on diet, exercise, yoga, meditation, messages, herbal tonics, steam baths, and alternating medical practices.

### **References of Matsya**

References of Matsya from the different Ayurvedic Samhitas summarized here. Types of fishes according to their habitat, various names of fishes, different species of fishes which are useful for many diseases as treatments, they are described in detail in Ayurveda. As the medical science prefers fish as a balanced diet today it was already to our ancestors and they preserve this knowledge in the form of Samhita.

### **Types of Matsya — Matsyabheda**

ayurveda describes the fishes on the basis of their colour, shape, size, their habitat and their characteristic features of medicinal qualities. These fishes are divided mainly as Nadeya Matsya, (fresh water), Samudra Matsya (marine fish). Wherever there is distribution about the diet, the non-vegetarian diet separately discussed as Mansaprakaram or Mansavarga. Saphari , Raj ira, Sakulim, Srngi, Vagusa, Salya, Cullaka, Pahina, Culisa, Nandeyavarta, Mudfgara, Timi these are the fish species described in the Dhanvantari Nighau.<sup>24</sup>

- 1] **Nadeya deya Matsyas** - [fresh water fishes]
- 2] **Kaupa** - [fishes in the well]
- 3] **Tadaya** - [fishes from the lakes]
- 4] **Saroja** - [fishes in deep lakes]
- 5] **Samudra** - [marine fish]
- 6] **Hrdodbhava** - [fish in big lakes]

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