

## The Spiritual Dimensions of Vedic Astrology, by Robert A. Koch

(Review by Andrew Foss)

When I heard Robert Koch was publishing a book I knew it would be good but I wasn't prepared for the extraordinary volume that arrived at my door. You can tell Robert's book is substantial before you open it up, it is a big book, the same dimensions as regular paper and thick. Before you think Robert might be verbose, he isn't. Every paragraph in this book contains profound principles and if you aren't a close follower of Pandit Sanjay Rath, many of these will be new. There's more in this book than most correspondence courses. Work through it carefully and it will take quite a time but you will learn a very great deal.

From the title one might also think that it might be only 'spiritual' but there are a lot of important methods here which have a wider application. However, this is a very deep look at the spiritual side. Robert comes from a Vaishnava background. A Vaishnava is a worshipper of Vishnu which can mean the avatars Rama and Krishna. Buddhists are also technically Vaishnava and it could be argued that Christianity has an element of the Vaishnava. That's very controversial but we can certainly see the argument that Vedic Astrology, Jyotish, has Vaishnava roots. In the beginning of the Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra, it explains how the universe emerged from Lord Vishnu and how the ten avatars, Rama, Krishna and others arose from the Navagraha who emanated from the Lord. Robert explains that the dedication to Sri Narayana (Lord Vishnu) 'does not impose a sectarian concept of God upon the reader. Instead the personal form of a Deity ... and His All-pervasiveness by ways of numerous shaktis, or potencies, underlie a truly universal and spiritual rationale for creation.' Robert gives much importance to the Atmakaraka, the graha that marks our soul and helps to indicate our Ishta devata, the chosen deity of the soul. He explains the Vedic cosmology and its relationship with the 12 signs of the zodiac. The great specialty and power of Jyotish is that it can see not only the mundane but the divine and can help us determine our deity, select mantras

and prescribe for us sadhanas or practices. These can be remedial but are also the joy and evolution of the soul.

Robert describes the methods propounded by Parashara but emphasized by Jaimini such as the Arudhas of the houses and the Rashi Drishtis or sign aspects that are very essential to understanding the Rashi Dasha systems. Robert also explains in depth the different systems of significators, or Karakas. Thus the first half of the book develops, explains and illustrates many profound principles that need to be understood to learn the Drig Dasha that is taught in the second half.

Drig Dasha, Robert explains, 'is the most important method of timing the key spiritual events of life'. He uses many charts of saints, healers and mystics like Edgar Cayce to illustrate this Dasha. These are in depth analyses covering many pages. Especially, the author presents the historic charts of Sri Krishna and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who founded the Vaishnava lineage from which the Hare Krishna movement came through their Guru, Srila Prabhupada, whose chart and life events is also analyzed in great detail. For example, Robert shows the death or Punya chart of Srila Prabhupada and makes several very interesting and uplifting observations. He points out, for example, that the presence of Jupiter in the 8th pardons any sins. From the 8th it aspects the 12th which is occupied by it's Lord Venus and the Sun. We know that the 12th is the place of Moksha or liberation and indicates what happens to the soul after death. This is clearly a combination for Moksha. At the same time he explains how the chart indicates the confusion and difficulties that would ensue among the devotees.

Jyotish has a spiritual basis and anyone trying to study must pay serious attention to this. There is no chance of really understanding a chart unless one has done 'the work' and both understood and practiced the higher Vedic teachings. Fortunately, the essence of everything is divine simplicity. That is

what we are and that is what we are here to know. Robert has used this book to teach the spiritual basis of Jyotish with special insight from his tradition and it will be of great help to us all.

Here is a feast! This is not a casual read but a very deep work with encyclopedic depth. Anyone could learn a lot from this book.

— Andrew Foss