

Introducing Pushya-paksha Ayanamsa

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Introduction

The issue of ayanamsa has vexed astrologers following the sidereal system for a long time. There are many popular ayanamsas and yet there is no *conclusive* proof, or evidence otherwise, for any of them.

An ayanamsa deduced based on Surya Siddhanta and some philosophical rationalization enabled the author to discover some *objective* astrological principles. It will be shared with interested scholars and students of astrology in this write-up.

Several other write-ups illustrating astrological principles that work nicely with this ayanamsa will be shared at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/articles> in coming weeks, months and years.

Tropical vs Sidereal Zodiacs

Sun's transit through tropical zodiac brings seasons and is associated with observable phenomena. For example, entry of Sun into tropical Aries is always aligned with spring equinox (when daytime and night time are of equal duration) and Sun's entry to tropical Cancer is always aligned with summer solstice (when daytime duration reaches a maximum). Tropical zodiac is tied to seasons and can be reliably fixed based on observable phenomena. Thus, some cultures started using it in astrology.

However, zodiacal signs are supposed to be aligned to nakshatras, which correspond to constellations of stars in the sky. For example, the sign of Aries should contain Aswini nakshatra, Bharani nakshatra and a part of Kritika nakshatra. If we use the tropical zodiac, signs will slowly shift with time and point to different nakshatras in different eras. This is totally inconsistent with the teachings of rishis.

Unfortunately, we have no observable phenomena based on which we can conclude that so and so point in the zodiac is the start of sidereal Aries. All we know is that sidereal Aries should contain certain constellations, sidereal Taurus should contain certain constellations and so on. So we know approximately where in the sky sidereal Aries falls. But the precise point where Aries starts is not known!

Ayanamsa

Ayanamsa is the angle between the start of Aries in tropical zodiac and the start of Aries in sidereal zodiac. Different parts of India got used to different ayanamsas over centuries, differing by upto 5-6 degrees! Standardization of Lahiri ayanamsa by Lahiri commission formed by Indian government led to some uniformity over the last few decades, but still Vedic astrologers use many ayanamsas differing by a few degrees.

Yogataras & Anchor Star

In each constellation (nakshatra), Surya Siddhanta identified one specific star as the “yogatara” and gave its exact sidereal longitude and latitude (latitude is the angle from the zodiacal plane or the plane of ecliptic, *i.e.* the plane in which earth rotates around Sun). As stars themselves are not completely fixed, these longitudes and latitudes of stars do change with time. So we cannot take the longitudes and latitudes given by Surya Siddhanta as absolute.

However, if one particular star is the *anchor* for the zodiac and remains fixed, then the co-ordinates given for *that* star by Surya Siddhanta must be valid *always*. Longitudes and latitudes of other stars may change slightly, but that star will remain fixed.

Chitrapaksha Ayanamsa

Chitrapaksha ayanamsa, popularly known as Lahiri ayanamsa, takes Chitra nakshatra as the anchor of the zodiac. As per Surya Siddhanta, the yogatara of Chitra nakshatra is the brightest star in the constellation and its longitude is 180° from the start of Aries and its latitude is 2° south of the ecliptic plane. Spica (Alpha Virginis) is the brightest star in the constellation corresponding to Chitra nakshatra. Thus Chitrapaksha ayanamsa fixes the start of Aries such that Spica is always at 0Li0.

Traditional Lahiri ayanamsa is based on an approximate linear formula, but modern software programs (such as “Jagannatha Hora”, freely downloadable from <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org>) compute the tropical position of Spica accurately at any given time and fix the start of sidereal Aries exactly 180° behind it, so that the sidereal longitude of Spica is always exactly 0Li0.

Drawbacks of Chitrapaksha Ayanamsa

As per Surya Siddhanta, latitude of the yogatara of Chitra nakshatra is 2° south of the ecliptic plane. However, Spica is 1° south of the ecliptic plane right now. So it does not anyway satisfy the specifications of Surya Siddhanta.

Secondly, some other respected siddhantas give different longitude for the yogatara of Chitra nakshatra. For example, Pitamaha Siddhanta, Brahmagupta Siddhanta, Siddhanta Sekhara, Siddhanta Siromani and Graha Laghava mention it at 3Li0 and Maha Siddhanta at 2Li50.

Different siddhantas may approximate planetary motion differently and their calculations may differ; but, the zodiac should be the same. Unless a siddhanta is grossly incorrect or too approximate, it should at least get the longitude of the anchor star of the zodiac correct (longitudes of other stars are variable and may have different values depending on the era when a siddhanta was written).

Thirdly, there is no philosophical or esoteric justification for why Chitra nakshatra, whose deity is Tvashta, should be the anchor of the zodiac. Possibly, Lahiri commission searched for a bright star near the start of Aries and went for the start of Libra when they found none near the start of Aries.

One more point is worth noting. Though people speak of “fixing” Spica at 0Li0, we actually can *not* fix Spica there, for it does not even lie on the ecliptic plane or the zodiacal plane! We can merely fix the **projection** of Spica onto the zodiacal plane, at 0Li0!

A star that lies **right on** the zodiacal plane is a better candidate for being the “anchor” of the zodiac, than a star that needs to be projected onto the plane. After all, you want a ship's anchor to be on the ship itself and don't take an object in a helicopter overhead and use its projection on the ship as the ship's anchor! ☺

Other Attempts

There have been attempts by some scholars in recent years to take some other nakshatras as the anchor of the zodiac.

For example, some speculated that Moola nakshatra is the Mooladhara chakra of Kala Purusha and fixed the yogatara of Moola at 0Sg0. There are 3 problems with this:

- (1) The longitude of the yogatara of Moola is not 0Sg0 as per Surya Siddhanta. It is 1Sg0.
- (2) As per Surya Siddhanta, latitude of the yogatara of Moola is 9° south of the ecliptic plane. However, Shaula (Lambda Scorpii) taken by them as the yogatara of Moola nakshatra is 12° south of the ecliptic plane.
- (3) Sc is the guhya of Kala Purusha and Sg is his thighs, as per Pararsara. Thus, 0Sg0 is the groin area where thighs start. That is not the location of Mooladhara chakra.
- (4) Again, Shaula is also not on the zodiacal plane. It is 12° south of it. It is not ideal to consider an anchor that is not even on the plane.

This author attempted to use the yogataras of several nakshatras, *e.g.* Jyeshtha nakshatra owned by Indra, Rohini nakshatra owned by Parajapati *etc.* However, these experiments did not give rise to any consistent objective principles. Moreover, none of them had anchor stars right on the zodiacal plane.

Cancer and Pushya

Philosophically speaking, the anchor to one's existence is not in one's Mooladhara chakra at the base of the spine; it is not in one's Ajna chakra in the forehead; and, it is not even in one's Sahasrara chakra at the top of head. As per scriptures, the anchor to one's existence is in the spark of divinity that lies within the **cave of one's heart!**

The zodiacal sign of Cancer is the heart of Kala Purusha according to Parasara. So the anchor of the zodiac must be associated with Cancer, which contains the stars of Pushya, Aslesha and a quarter of Punarvasu.

Cancer is also known as the sign of Creation. Lord Krishna taught in Srimad Bhagavatam that the next Satya yuga will commence when Sun, Moon and Jupiter **precisely conjoin with Pushya nakshatra** (presumably with the yogatara of Pushya nakshatra). Thus, there is something special about Pushya, which makes it the **anchor for yuga cycle** itself!

As per Surya Siddhanta, the yogatara of Pushya is supposed to be at a latitude of 0°, *i.e.* **right on the zodiacal plane**. That makes it a good candidate for being the anchor. Though there are a few stars *close to* the zodiacal plane, there are very few stars right on it! One of them is the yogatara of Pushya.

If one considers **Surya Siddhanta, Brahma Siddhanta, Soma Siddhanta, Vriddha Vasishtha Siddhanta, Pitamaha Siddhanta, Maha Siddhanta, Brahmagupta Siddhanta, Siddhanta Sekhara, Siddhanta Siromani and Graha Laghava**, they give different values for the longitudes of the yogataras of several nakshatras. For example, Pitamaha Siddhanta, Brahmagupta Siddhanta, Siddhanta Sekhara, Siddhanta Siromani and Graha Laghava give the yogatara of Chitra nakshatra at 3Li0 and Maha Siddhanta at 2Li50, while others give it at 0Li0 (which is what Lahiri ayanamsa uses).

But all of the above siddhantas agree on 16Cn0 as the longitude of the yogatara of Pushya nakshatra!

Different siddhantas may approximate planetary motion differently and their calculations may differ; but, the zodiac should be the same. Unless a siddhanta is grossly incorrect or too approximate, it should atleast get the longitude of the **anchor star** of the zodiac correct. Though the above siddhantas give different values for the longitude of the yogatara of Chitra and other nakshatras, they all agree on the longitude of the yogatara of Pushya nakshatra!

The deity of Pushya is Brihaspati (Jupiter), who is the greatest giver of stability. Pushya can fix/stabilize the zodiacal plane in the skies, just as Brihaspati stabilizes the throne of Indra in heavens and prevents it from shaking. Just as Jupiter (standing for dheeshakti *i.e.* 1st house) stabilizes Indra's throne (10th house), Pushya in Cancer stabilizes the starting point of Aries in the 10th house from it.¹

Pushya means “the best or topmost one”. In ancient Zoroastrian scripture “Avesta”, Tishtrya (which sounds like Tishya, the Vedic name of Pushya) is the chief star in the heavens. In addition, when 27 Sun-Moon yogas are defined in panchanga, Pushya is used as the seed star.

Considering all these factors, it makes great logical and philosophical sense to take Pushya (*i.e.* its yogatara) as the anchor of the zodiac, rather than Chitra nakshatra.

Pushya-paksha Ayanamsa

As per Surya Siddhanta, yogatara of Pushya is the star at the centre of the constellation and it is at a longitude of 16Cn0 and a latitude of 0°.

In Cancer constellation, Delta Cancri (Asellus Australis) is at the centre and it is indeed right on the ecliptic plane, *i.e.* at a latitude of 0°!

So we define Pushya-paksha ayanamsa by fixing the sidereal longitude of Delta Cancri at 16Cn0. It is derived at any date/time as follows:

- (1) Take the tropical longitude of Delta Cancri star at the desired date/time.
- (2) Subtract 106° (16Cn0) from it.
- (3) The result is the ayanamsa of the date/time. If we subtract this value from the tropical longitudes of planets (or other bodies/points), we will get their sidereal longitudes at that date/time.

Reference Values

For reference, here are its values on some dates:

500 January 1 (6 am IST):	1° 49' 9.20'' (using extrapolated Julian calendar)
1700 January 1 (6 am IST):	18° 31' 49.71''
1800 January 1 (6 am IST):	19° 55' 37.30''
1900 January 1 (6 am IST):	21° 19' 27.11''
2000 January 1 (6 am IST):	22° 43' 19.12''
2014 January 1 (6 am IST):	22° 55' 3.87''
2100 January 1 (6 am IST):	24° 7' 13.48''
2200 January 1 (6 am IST):	25° 31' 9.91''
2300 January 1 (6 am IST):	26° 55' 8.55''
3000 January 1 (6 am IST):	36° 44' 0.98''

¹I would like to thank Pt Sanjay Rath for suggesting this philosophical justification.

“Jagannatha Hora” software available for a free download at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/jh> supports Pushya-paksha ayanamsa in versions 7.65 and higher. It finds ayanamsa at any given time by finding the exact tropical longitude of Delta Cancr star and does not approximate with any linear formula.

Subjective Objection

Some astrologers may object saying that so many astrologers use Lahiri ayanamsa and they cannot be wrong. Three points should be noted:

- (1) Not everyone uses Lahiri ayanamsa. Many followers of Krishnamoorthy Paddhati (KP) use Krishnamoorthy ayanamsa. Some use Raman ayanamsa. Some use a linear ayanamsa based on Surya Siddhanta (which is close to Raman ayanamsa). There are several popular ayanamsas other than Lahiri ayanamsa. Followers of various ayanamsas make good predictions and are “convinced” that their ayanamsa is correct.
- (2) Most astrologers use the rasi chart mainly, which is less sensitive to ayanamsa. Even those who started using divisional charts in the last few decades merely pay a *lip service* to divisional charts and rely on rasi chart for most practical purposes.

They see things in rasi chart and then “confirm” them from divisional charts, which they say can *not* “over-rule” the rasi chart. That may be called “lip service”. Their lack of *confidence* in divisional charts could be because their calculations are not reliable enough for divisional charts!

- (3) Ayanamsa becomes relevant if one relies on divisional charts. However, several divisional chart definitions used by astrologers today are suspicious and based on an incorrect interpretation of Parasara.

For example, see the write-up “Correct Siddhamsa Chart of Parasara” on the definition of the D-24 chart used for education, at <http://www.vedicastrologer.org/articles>. Today's astrologers map 24 parts of odd signs to Le→Cn and 24 parts of even signs to Cn→Ge. This is structurally absurd. For even signs, it should go anti-zodiacally, *i.e.* Cn→Le instead of Cn→Ge. Parasara is clear, but translators misinterpreted him and made silly errors.

With such gross errors in definitions and with a wrong ayanamsa, no wonder even people who want to rely on divisional charts end up paying mere lip service to them! Bottomline is that several reforms are needed in Vedic astrology and they are inter-dependent.

In light of the current state of affairs w.r.t. techniques requiring precision of computations, the argument “I am so successful that my ayanamsa must be correct” holds no water. Bottomline is that many people using contradictory calculations are successful using techniques relying more on intuition and less on precise calculations! But that does *not* settle the issue of ayanamsa.

By the way, Pushya-paksha ayanamsa is very close to the linear Surya Siddhanta ayanamsa used by *many* traditional astrologers and also to Raman ayanamsa. In terms of predictive success, Dr BV Raman is perhaps the most successful among the famous astrologers of the last century or two. So predictive success of any astrologers using Lahiri ayanamsa cannot be held against Pushya-paksha ayanamsa.

Does Pushya-paksha Ayanamsa Work

Write-ups illustrating astrological principles found to work well with Pushya-paksha ayanamsa will be shared at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/articles> in coming weeks, months and years. For starters, one may consider reading a write-up titled “**Two Novel Transit Principles: Based on Longitude Correlations**”.

This author's primary interest is in objective techniques and techniques requiring precision of calculations. Thus, most of his findings and sharings will be in that area.

It is hoped that astrology students and researchers will use this ayanamsa to conduct researches and discover missing links in our understanding of predictive astrological principles that require precise calculations.

A few things to keep in mind are:

- (1) If one uses mainly rasi chart, ayanamsa does not matter that much. Though it can change chara karakas, people do not have precise methods of using them anyway. Though it can change the nakshatra dasa dates, those dates are quite sensitive to birthtime and unreliable anyway.
- (2) Divisional charts, especially the higher ones, can be sensitive to ayanamsa changes. But definitions of several divisional charts are suspect. One needs to use the correct definitions. This author's views on the definitions of various divisional charts will be shared in other write-ups.
- (3) Though rishis taught several dasa systems, people always use 1 or 2 dasas. One probably needs to use the correct dasa, correct divisional chart and correct ayanamsa, in order to see some excellent correlations. Perhaps even a single missing link can muddy the results!
- (4) Thumb rules people develop in practice may not be reliable. Learning the correct knowledge may sometimes require un-learning wrong knowledge. One needs to be open-minded and intellectually sharp and alert.

Please feel free to experiment with this ayanamsa and with principles described in other write-ups here and also to share the website link with your friends and colleagues interested in Vedic astrology.

::Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih::