

Graha Avasthas: Its derivation and implications

Grahas are described as conscious entities having innate qualities in the ancient texts, and as conscious entities, they are self-aware, and due to this self-awareness, or Ahamkara, they hold peculiar psychodynamics with each other. The relationships of planets with each other based on their innate qualities are called Natural Relationships. The following formula is given below as per Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra to determine the natural relationships of the Grahas.

त्रिकोणात् स्वात्सुखस्वाऽन्त्यधीधर्मायुः स्वतुङ्गपाः ।

सुहृदो रिपवश्चान्ये समाश्चोभयलक्षणाः ॥ ५५ ॥

trikoṇāt svātsukhasvā'ntyadhīdharmāyuh svatuṅgapāh,
suhṛdo ripavaśvānye samāśchobhayalakṣaṇāh.

“From Mulatrikona, the owner of the 4th, 2nd, 12th, 5th, 9th, and 8th as well as the lord of its exaltation Rasi are friendly. Inimical are the others. Neutral are those that indicate both (friendly on one count and inimical on another count, which may happen for those Grabas that rule two Rasis).”

Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra: Nature and Form of the Grahas, 55

The word Mulatrikona translates to Root Trine (“Mula” means Root and “Trikona” means Triangle).

Mulatrikona is where a planet derives its energy from, and according to the formula; it is from the Mulatrikona that if a Rasi is 4th, 2nd, 12th, 5th, 9th, and 8th as well as the lord of its exaltation rasi, it is friendly.

For example, Mulatrikona Rasi of Sun is Leo. If we want to understand the relationship of Sun with Venus, we will look at the Venus ruled Rasis which are Taurus and Libra in relationship to Leo. Taurus is 10th from Leo and Libra is 3rd, none of which fulfill the conditions of the rule for a friendly relationship, therefore, we conclude that Sun is a natural enemy to Venus.

Moon and Sun rule over only one Rasi each, Cancer and Leo, respectively. In case of all the other planets, if one Rasi holds a friendly relationship and the other an inimical relationship with the Mulatrikona Rasi under consideration, then that planet holds a neutral relationship to the lord of that Mulatrikona. For instance, Sun is neutral to Mercury because it rules over Gemini and Virgo which are 2nd and 11th Rasis from the Mulatrikona of Sun. Similarly, if both hold a friendly relationship with the Mulatrikona, then it is considered to be friendly with the lord of the Mulatrikona Rasi. For example, Sun is friendly towards Mars as the two Mars-ruled Rasis, Aries and Scorpio are 5th and 9th from the Mulatrikona rasi of Sun.

From this formula, we get the following table to understand the Natural Relationships of planets:

	Friendly	Neutral	Inimical
Sun:	Moon, Mars, Jupiter	Mercury	Venus, Saturn
Moon:	Sun, Mercury	Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn	None
Mars:	Sun, Moon, Jupiter	Venus, Saturn	Mercury
Mercury:	Sun, Venus	Mars, Jupiter, Saturn	Moon
Jupiter:	Sun, Moon, Mars	Saturn	Mercury, Venus
Venus:	Mercury, Saturn	Mars, Jupiter	Sun, Moon
Saturn:	Mercury, Venus	Jupiter	Sun, Moon, Mars

The second type of planetary relationship that Parashara speaks about is Temporary Relationships. Just like two enemies can become friends in times of crisis, or two friends can turn hostile while falling in love with the same woman, the self-aware planets are also subject to

such erroneous self-projections when subject to the ego-driven human psyche. The formula given by Parashara to understand the temporary relationships between planets is as follows:

दशबन्ध्वायसहजस्वान्त्यस्थास्ते परस्परम् ।

तत्काले मित्रतां यान्ति रिपवोऽन्यत्र संस्थिताः ॥ ५६ ॥

daśabandhvāyasahajastvāntyasthāste parasparam,
tatkāle mitratāṁ yānti ripavo'nyatra saṁsthitāḥ.

“Those standing in the 10th, 4th, 11th, 3rd, 2nd and 12th from each other are at that time friendly, those standing elsewhere are enemies.”

Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra: Nature and Form of the Grahas, 56

While Natural Relationships are derived by understanding the relationship of Mulatrikona Rasi with respect to other Rasis, Temporary Relationships are derived by understanding the position of a Graha with respect to other Grahas.

The simple way to understand this formula is “Planets in three rasis ahead of a planet and three rasis behind are friendly, rest are inimical”. For example, If Jupiter is in Leo and Mars is in Aries, then even though Mars is a Natural Friend to Jupiter but as it is 9th spaces (Rasis) away from Jupiter, it is a temporary enemy.

From the Natural Relationships, we get, the Jagradaadi Avathas, which translates to “Awake etc. states”.

A planet in its Exaltation, Mulatrikona, or Own Rasi is considered to be in Jagrat Avastha, which means, it is fully awake and will play a significant role in the growth of the consciousness.

A planet in its Neutral or Friendly Rasi is said to be in Svapna Avastha, which means, it is in a dreamy state and this will cause planets to slip in and out of awareness, such a planet perceives reality for what it wants it to be and not for what it is.

A planet in its Enemy or Debilitation Rasi is said to be in Sushupti Avastha, which means, it is in a sleep state and shall work unconsciously, such a planet cannot see clearly, and causes disruptions and disillusionments.

We will now consider Temporary Relationships.

Temporary Relationships are essentially used for the purpose of derivation of Combined Relationships. It is from the understanding and contemplation of Natural, Temporary, and therefore, the Combined Relationships that we get the Nine Dignities, and henceforth, the Jagradaadi Avastha.

Let's first understand the derivation of Combined Relationships before we get into the Dignities of Grahas.

तत्काले च निसर्गे च मित्रं चेदधिमित्रकम् ।

मित्रं मित्रसमत्वे तु शत्रुः शत्रुसमत्वके ॥ ५७ ॥

tatkāle ca nisarge ca mitraṁ cedadhimitrakam,
mitraṁ mitrasamatve tu śatruḥ śatrusamatvake.

समो मित्ररिपुत्वे तु शत्रुत्वे त्वधिशत्रुता ।

एवं विविच्य दैवज्ञो जातकस्य फलं वदेत् ॥ ५८ ॥

sāme mitrariputve tu śatrutve tvadhiśatrutā,
evaṁ vivicya daivajño jātakasya phalaṁ vadet.

*“Friendly at the time as well as naturally so – great friendship.
Friendship if friendly and neutral. Enemies if inimical and
neutral. Neutral if friendly and inimical. Both inimical – great
enmity. Thus should the astrologer examine the nativity when
pronouncing effects.”*

Bṛihat Parashara Hora Shastra: Nature and Form of the Grahas, 57-58

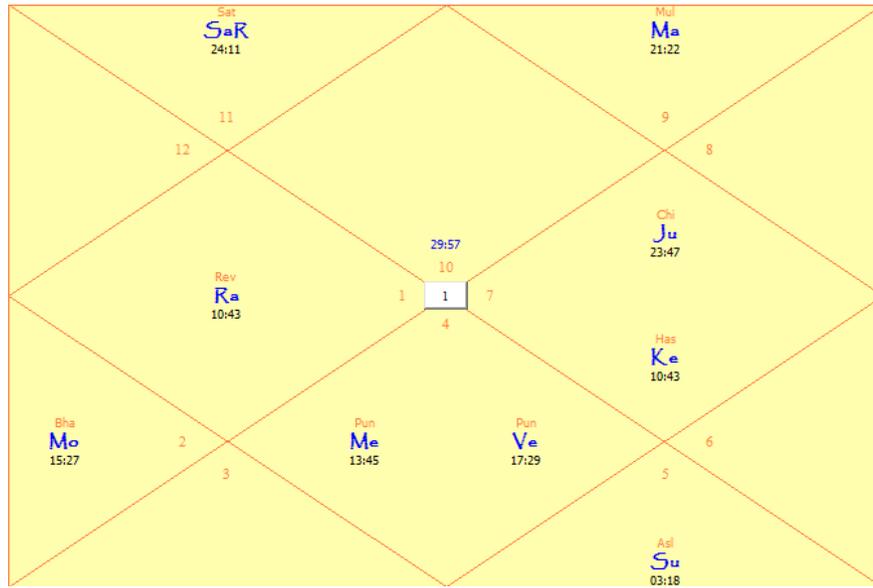
From the formula given in the Sutras the following Combined Relationships can be ascertained:
(Natural Relationship + Temporary Relationship = Combined Relationship)

Natural Friend + Temporary Friend = Great Friend
Natural Friend + Temporary Neutral = Friend
Natural Friend + Temporary Enemy = Neutral
Natural Enemy + Temporary Enemy = Great Enemy
Natural Enemy + Temporary Friend = Neutral
Natural Enemy + Temporary Neutral = Enemy
Natural Neutral + Temporary Friend = Friend
Natural Neutral + Temporary Enemy = Enemy

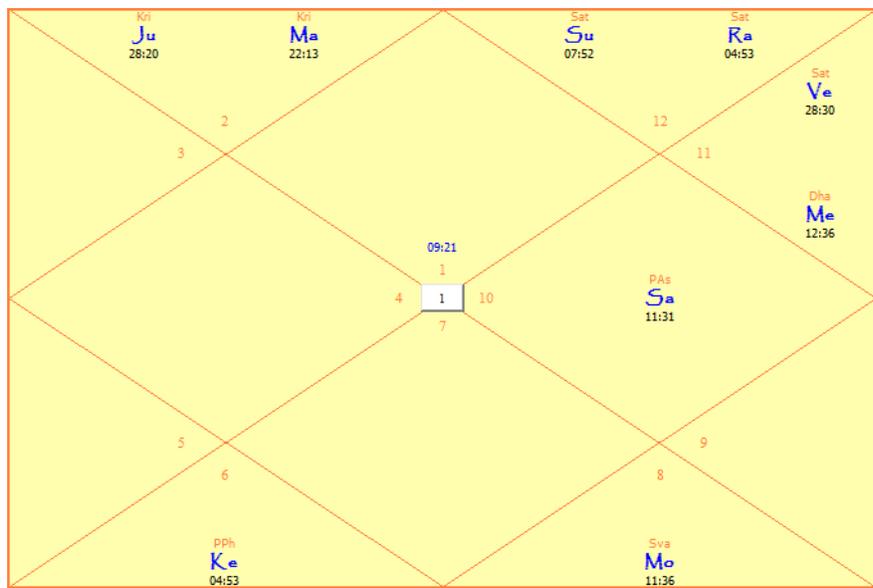
For instance, in Example Chart 1, if we derive the Combined Relationship of Sun with Moon, we can ascertain that Sun is a Great Friend to Moon, this is because they are Natural Friends as well as Temporary Friends (Moon is 10th from Sun).

(Natural Friend + Temporary Friend = Great Friend)

Example chart 1



Example chart 2



In Example chart 2, if we derive the Combined Relationship of Saturn towards Sun, we can say that they are in a Neutral Relationship; this is because they are Naturally Inimical to each other but in a Temporary Friendly relationship (As Sun is 3rd from Saturn)

(Natural Enemy + Temporary Friend = Neutral).

Now, that we understand the Combined Relationship, we can get to one of the most important criteria to judge the auspicious or inauspicious effects of the Grahas in a birth chart, called Dignity.

The dictionary meaning of the word Dignity is “the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect”. To go by this definition, we shall perceive the Rasis as a territory/area “run” by a Graha. A Graha visiting a friend’s territory will have a “Dignified” stay as it will act in a manner worthy of honor or respect whereas a Graha visiting an enemy’s territory will feel uncomfortable and will not be able to function and express itself with ease. For example, a King (Sun) will not do so well in the marketplace (Libra), while Labour (Saturn) would do really well there. Isn’t it interesting that Google’s Dictionary gives “Dignity of Labour” as an example for the usage of the word?

We can now begin to understand the 9 Dignities of the Grahas, as given below:

1)Exaltation

Exaltation is the highest dignity in which a planet can be placed. A planet in its exaltation degrees gains power to fulfill its responsibilities and karmic agendas. The Sanskrit word used by Rishi Parashara is “Uchha” which means “High”, this implies that a planet in its exaltation

degree fulfills itself in the highest possible manner.

2) Mulatrikona

Mulatrikona is almost as powerful as the Exaltation Dignity. As discussed previously,

Mulatrikona is the specific range of degrees of a Rasi from where the planet derives its energy. A planet in its Mulatrikona means that it is at its source of energy, this implies that the planet expresses its innate qualities to the fullest.

3) Own Rasi

A planet in its own rasi is at ease with itself. It can express its innate qualities with ease and grace.

4) Great Friend's Dignity

5) Friendly Rasi

6) Neutral Rasi

7) Enemy Rasi

8) Great Enemy's Rasi

From point number 4th to 8th, the Dignity of a graha is dependent upon the lord of its Rasi.

(Please check the explanation under example chart 3)*

9) Debilitation

Debilitation is the literally the polar opposite of Exaltation (180 degrees from the exaltation degree). A planet in its debilitation degree loses all its power to fulfill its responsibilities and is solely dependent on the rest of the planetary spread. The Sanskrit word used by Rishi parashara is "Nicha" which means "Low", this implies that a planet in debilitation expresses itself in the

lowest possible manner.

Example chart 3

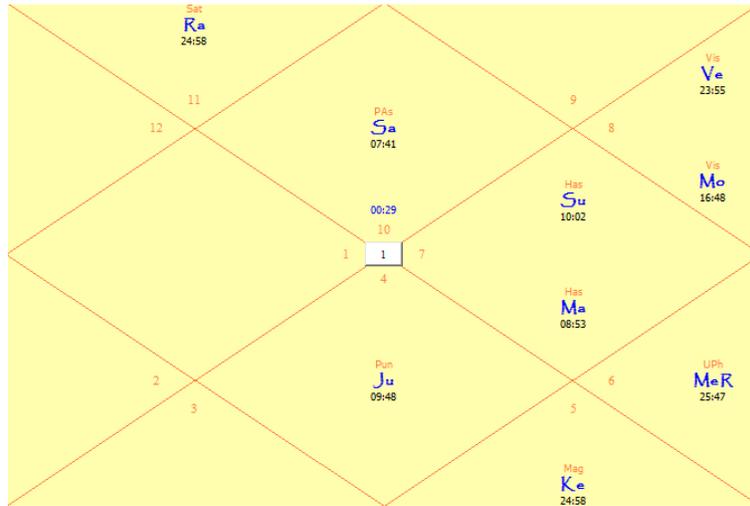


Table 1

The following table provides the exaltation, debilitation, exaltation and debilitation degree, Mulatrikona and own Rasi for each of the Grahas.

	Exaltation	Deep Deg.	Debilitation	Mulatrikona	Own Rasi
Sun	Aries	10°	Libra	0 – 20° Leo	20 – 30° Leo
Moon	0 – 3° Taurus	3°	0 – 3° Scorpio	3 – 30° Taurus	Cancer
Mars	Capricorn	28°	Cancer	0 – 12° Aries	12 – 30° Aries & Scorpio
Mercury	0 – 15° Virgo	15°	0 – 15° Pisces	15 – 20° Virgo	20 – 30° Virgo & Gemini
Jupiter	Cancer	5°	Capricorn	0 – 10° Sagittarius	10 – 30° Sagittarius & Pisces
Venus	Pisces	27°	Virgo	0 – 15° Libra	15 – 30° Libra & Taurus
Saturn	Libra	20°	Aries	0 – 20° Aquarius	20 – 30° Aquarius & Capricorn

In example chart 3, we can see that Sun is in Debilitation, Jupiter is in Exaltation, Saturn and Mercury is in Own Rasi. Now, let's consider Venus which is in Scorpio. Ruler of Scorpio is

Mars, who is a Natural Neutral to Venus and since it is 12th from Venus, it is also a Temporary Friend to Venus; therefore, Venus is in a Friendly Dignity.

We now understand that the dignities from point number 4 to 8* are derived from the Combined Relationship of the ruler of the sign to the planet that is placed in it. In our example, the Combined Relationship of Mars towards Venus decided the dignity of Venus in the sign of Scorpio, had Mars been in Pisces, it would have become a Temporary Enemy to Venus and then Venus' Dignity would have been "Enemy's Rasi" (The 7th dignity).

Now, we arrive at the Auspicious (Subha) and Inauspicious (Asubha) effects of the planetary dignities.

A Graha in Exaltation, Mulatrikona, Own Rasi, Great Friend's Rasi or Friend's Rasi is auspicious. A Graha in a Neutral's Rasi is neither auspicious nor inauspicious. A Graha in enemy's Rasi, great enemy's Rasi or debilitation is inauspicious. Auspicious Grahas help in fulfilling the agendas and responsibilities of the Bhavas that they rule giving Subha Phala (Auspicious Fruits), Inauspicious Grahas hamper the progress of the Bhavas that they rule giving Asubha Phala (Inauspicious fruits), and Neutral Grahas neither help nor disrupt the functioning of the Bhavas that they rule.

We will now discuss the Baladi Avastha. A planet being a human-like entity also goes through the cycles/stages of physical age. Baladi Avastha translates to "Infant etc. states", which are Infant (Bala), Adolescent (Kumara), Adult (Yuva), Old (Vridha), and Dead (Mrita).

The Subha and Asubha Phala will only be as effectively fructifiable as the Baladi Avastha of a

planet. For instance, a malefic planet in an inimical dignity will not be able to cause harm if it is in Mrita Avastha, while on the other hand, an exalted benefic planet in a Bala Avastha would not be mature enough to become fully beneficial. This is one way of using Baladi Avastha. Some more implications of this avastha would be; to judge how ripe is the Karma surrounding a planet and the Bhavas that it rules, or the level of maturity of the innate qualities of that planet applicable in understanding the psychodynamics of the chart.

In conclusion, conclusive statements made after considering isolated pieces of information does not work, even in astrology. For instance, For a Gemini Lagna, Mars is a functional malefic as it is the lord of two Dusthana's, 6th and 11th Bhava, though an exalted mars (in Capricorn) for a Gemini Lagna, which will be in the 8th house, will be extremely capable of expressing itself with regards to the matters of the Bhavas that it Rules and influences, but this may not necessarily bring good fortune to a person as one would presume while considering exalted planets.

Triangulation of different pieces of information and the overall confluence, in other words, a holistic approach during an analysis is what reveals honest and important information from a birth chart. This essay only deals with some of the layers that astrologers use in order to confidently apply their intuition and psychic abilities. It is of prime importance to remember that astrology is a science only if it is allowed to be an art and vice-versa.