

President's letter – Solstice Edition

Hello dear ACVA friends and alumni. Greetings of every sort, from all traditions! Happy Solstice, Saturnalia, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year, Makar Sankranti, and every other celestial event to be celebrated.

This is quite a special and wonderful time, with Jupiter and Saturn conjunct in Capricorn for the first time since 1961. It's been an amazing sight – to actually be able to see, in real time, this worldview changing combination in the sky. I do hope that you will take the time to look up and be awe-struck. As eternal students of the grahas, we should be observers of the night sky, too.

The results of this significant conjunction remain to be seen. On a personal note, I believe that we now live in an era of a much more sophisticated understanding of how the planets actually “work” than we collectively did almost 60 years ago. By that I mean that it appears that our individual consciousness affects the collective outcome. Will this conjunction contribute to more equity and security for the disadvantaged (Saturn)? I hope so. Will this conjunction coincide with the practical matter of revising our moral and ethical standards and general belief systems (Jupiter), and quell the cultural divisions? I hope so, too.

As an American, I believe that the new U.S. administration may be able to repair some of the cultural inequities which we have endured in the recent past. I choose to look at this Jupiter/Saturn meeting as a major evolutionary step forward. After all, transits are what we make of them, to a large extent. Of course, we still have to see how the economic markets react to Pluto re-entering Capricorn, as it did when the pandemic was first identified in early 2020!

2020 has been quite unusual for its dramatic mixed effects, hasn't it? For those of you who have experienced fear, and pain, and loss – we send you our sincere sympathy. However, the planets which were in such perilous positions at the beginning of 2020 have already run through their worst placements by now, I believe. There is reason to cautiously (socially distantly) celebrate the end of the siege.

For those of you who experienced the beneficial effects of many planets in dignity in 2020, I hope that you were able to share your blessings with the less fortunate. Speaking of which – many of you readers have taken advantage of ACVA's scholarship program, instituted in mid-year. ACVA continues to financially sponsor new and continuing learners due to the careful handling of our college scholarship fund.

ACVA is a 501 C-3 registered non-profit corporation. We gratefully accept donations of any size to continue to our mission of teaching the divine science of Jyotisha. Thank you!

ACVA enjoyed participating in the successful virtual SVAC, in November. Thank you, Dr. Dennis Harness. “An Introduction to Vedic Astrology” was presented by ACVA's Ramdas Bill Sinclair, Dr. Cathy Coleman, Shoba Mohan and mef.

This intensive introductory four-hours of essential Jyotisha will be available at www.acvaonline.org. We look forward to meeting you in person, next time, in Sedona, in November 2021.

The Leadership Team of ACVA have continued to perform their usual heroic work in maintaining our beautiful and vast online college. Shoba Mohan has taken on an additional role as ACVA's CEO – for

which I am extremely grateful! Thank you, Shoba . To quote Shoba, “ACVA’s success is due solely to the dedication of our Volunteer Leadership Team and You, our supporters.” We are also blessed with the recent addition of Ms. Bhagya Wijewardane to our ACVA staff. Running the intricacies of ACVA is a serious labor of love, and the ACVA team is working together so gracefully. Dr. Sisira Amarasinghe (LT member) and his colleagues Sudath, and Dr. Arjuna DeSilva brilliantly manage the technology for our students and Instructors. I thank Heaven every day for their dedicated seva to ACVA. Julene Louis has added her talents and energy to ACVA in a special way recently – more about this later. Special thanks to the generosity and genius of Ernst Wilhelm.

And our especially heartfelt thanks to Swati Tipnis and Tara Sitaram for their brilliant work dedicated towards the enhancement of the Examination capabilities of our ACVA LMS.

As ever the efforts of our LT members, Ramdas Bill Sinclair, Cathy Coleman, Lynn Bootes, Shoba Mohan and me, and Faculty members Dr. Karina Weil, Dr. Gary Gomes, and Juliana Swanson continue to maintain ACVA’s highest standards of education. Also, Dr. Lynne Bootes, Ramdas Bill Sinclair, Shoba Mohan are part of the ACVA faculty!

Because of the recent increased student enrollment at ACVA, we are also looking for additional qualified guides for our learners. Please write if you are interested in teaching the online ACVA material for an honorarium. Additionally, privately instructed students are welcomed to sit for the ACVA professional designations examinations for “Jyotisha Ratna” or “Jyotisha Prabhakara”.

We are all looking forward to much better times (or even better times) in 2021! In the meanwhile, please remember to devote part of your time to your own intentional spiritual practice – whatever that may look like. These current intense planetary positions require that type of inner effort, in my humble opinion. I’ll join you!

All of us at ACVA are here for your benefit. Please stay tuned for more Jyotish Masters offerings and ACVA’s other videos, in 2021, to assist you in being part of the emerging profession of the practice of Jyotisha, or simply for your own Self understanding.

With every best wish to all,

Charlotte Benson/Jyoti Devi

President, ACVA, Inc.