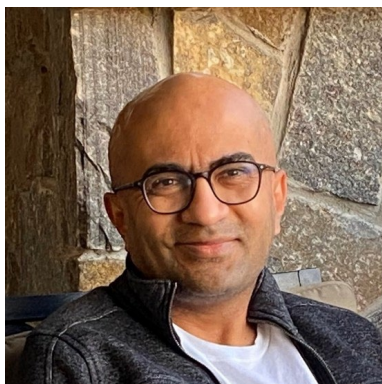


Viṣnusthānas or Kendras in Jyotiṣa



By Pratik Mehta
Vedic Astrologer

For anyone who started their Jyotiṣa journey with the north Indian styled charts, the Kendras are probably what drew their attention at first glance. The Kendras are the four neatly-arranged and connected rhombuses that sit right at the heart of the chart. No rookie can miss them and no seasoned Jyotiṣi can afford to ignore them. Perhaps that's the reason these foundational blocks of the chart are known as Viṣnusthānas. After all, which Jyotiṣi worth their salt would even in their wildest dreams venture to overlook the Divine Grace that is staring right at them?

Most of you probably knew all of that already. However, in this article you'll learn a little more about why the Kendras are called Viṣnusthānas and, in the process, you'll also see why these four Bhāvas play a pivotal role in chart analysis.

The spiritual underpinnings of the Viṣnusthānas

Imagine someone buying a Tesla without learning how to drive and relying on its technical wizardry to get them home safely every single time they're on the road! No one in their right mind would do that, right? Attempting to do Jyotiṣa, without spending time to fully imbibe the spiritual underpinnings that come with it, is somewhat like that. Jyotiṣa is as much a Divine helping hand for the Jyotiṣi, probably more so, as it is for the querent. To see it as anything else is probably a fool's errand. So, let's try to ponder a bit on the spiritual backdrop of the Viṣnusthānas, aka the Kendras.

According to Sanatana Dharma (colloquially known as Hinduism), Lord Viṣṇu is where it all started and where it all ends. Here's the elevator-pitch version of all that has been expounded in the countless Hindu Shastras. The Divine One, wanting to experience itself, manifested into incalculable life forms; Infinity divvied itself up into the infinitesimal finite so that in the end the

collective experiences of all the finite forms would leave no experiential stone unturned. Phew! That was a mouthful. So, take a breath and let it sink in.

Lord Viṣṇu has been glorified and expounded upon in several of the Hindu scriptures. Quoted below are a few stanzas from the second Chapter of the Lakṣmi Tantra. The reason for choosing this particular rendition of the Lord's praise is because the text then goes on to expand upon topics that are relevant to this discussion of ours.

"He (Viṣṇu) is perfectly tranquil (Śānta), changeless and eternal. He is without end and free from all limitations of time, place etc. The source of that wide diffusion which is called the vast expansion of divine power (Vibhūti) is Brahman, the ultimate location of that power where consciousness is absolute (i.e. where knowledge is free from reference to any object). It (Brahman) is like a waveless ocean of nectar with six (divine) attributes fully manifested."

[Stanza 8, 9 and 10 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

Lakṣmi Tantra goes on to say,

"That glorious manifestation (of the six attributes) of the absolute God assumes four forms (Caturvyuha(s)) in which the six attributes generally manifest themselves or else (remain) unmanifested." [Stanza 38 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

Lord Viṣṇu, therefore, is believed to be present everywhere and in everything. For instance, each of our beloved Grahas are inextricably coupled with an Avatāra (incarnation) of Lord Viṣṇu. No surprise, therefore, that the bedrocks of any natal chart i.e. Kendras aka Viṣṇusthānas, are also linked to Lord Viṣṇu in four of his other forms (other than the Graha Avatārs), namely, Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, collectively known as the Caturvyuhas.

The association between these forms of Lord Viṣṇu and the Kendras is by way of the cardinal directions associated with them as outlined in the table below.

Kendra	Viṣṇu Rūpa	Sanskrit Name	Direction
1st	Vāsudeva	वासुदेव	East and South-east
4th	Saṃkarṣaṇa	संकर्षण	North and North-east
7th	Pradyumna	प्रद्युम्न	West and North-west
10th	Aniruddha	अनिरुद्ध	South and South-west

Now that we have some understanding of the origins of the four forms of Viṣṇu, let's try to get to know them a little bit better so that they can be our guides in unlocking the unique set of mysteries that the Kendras hold in every natal chart we come across.

Vāsudeva

"Through the combination of the three pairs (of attributes) this manifestation (evolution) of my supremely inert state gradually becomes discernible. The first of my (manifestations) in the four-

fold state is undisturbed, undefined, enduringly pure existence lacking the concept of particularization, and is known as transcendental existence and knowledge. That is my first manifestation (Vāsudeva), my first deviation from complete inertia”. [Stanza 43,44 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

The Lord in his form as Vāsudeva is associated with cardinal East and the 1st house. This makes complete sense when we think about it. Lagna marks the point in time where we literally “come to life”. This is the point where the Divinity takes a specific form in order to embark on a specific journey for a specific set of experiences that depend on choices made by free will albeit within a defined range.

If you’ve ever held a newborn child within hours or days of birth, you’ve experienced first-hand the pristine form of the Lord as described in the Lakṣmi Tantra stanza above. At this point, Divinity has taken form but still retains its unmaligned state for a while. The state where the six attributes (we’ll come to these in a bit) referenced Stanza #38 (see above) are in perfect balance – a state of pure bliss and knowing – a state that is still non-dual in nature, where the masculine and feminine energies are still in perfect union and harmony.

It explains why the 1st Bhāva is the only one that has the distinction of being a Viṣṇusthāna and a Lakṣmīsthāna (feminine Divinity). It then follows that the Lagna Rāśi, Lagna Nakṣatra, Lagneśa, as well the planets posited in and aspecting the Lagna (1st house) will provide clues towards the set of Divine hues and colors that this particular incarnation of the Divine has chosen to indoctrinate. It thereby explains why the Rāśi chart is the big daddy of all the divisional charts. None of the other divisional charts have a similar claim to fame.

Samkarṣaṇa

My (second) manifestation Samkarṣaṇa, embodying the two attributes Jñāna and Bala, enfolds the entire creation (faintly discernable) like dark spots (on a human body). In my Samkarṣaṇa aspect the wise discern (a combination of) Jnana and Bala. Thereafter, in course of the process of manifestation I gradually become more and more active. [Stanza 45, 46 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

The second manifestation called Samkarṣaṇa is associated with the 4th Bhāva. In this form, the Lord represents Jñāna and Bala. These two attributes are often translated as knowledge and strength (physical, mental, emotional), respectively, but like most other Sanskrit words, connote a myriad of meanings beyond just those two. Beyond the various forms of knowing and knowledge, Jñāna also connotes a state of awareness, a state of enlightenment that is beyond words and can only be fathomed through first-hand experience. No wonder then that the 4th is the Kendra associated with education, erudition and Moksha, and as the old adage goes “Knowledge is power (Bala)”.

Pradyumna

During that stage I am called Pradyumna, in which form I manifest the pair of attributes known as Aisvarya and Virya. [Stanza 47 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

Pradyumna, the third manifestation, is associated with the 7th Bhāva. As the Stanza states, the two qualities associated with this form of Lord Viṣṇu are Aisvarya and Virya. Aisvarya among other things translates to sway, dominion and prosperity. The 7th Bhāva is all about “the other than self”, which is the catch-all designation for any and all types of interactions and relationships experienced during a lifetime. The 7th is also indicative of exchanges and trade of any kind with said others. These two things put together can be thought of as our sway over entities outside of ourselves in an attempt to enlist them to do our bidding as we go about fulfilling our calling for this particular incarnation of our soul. The other quality Virya means virility and therefore ties directly into the 7th being the Bhāva associated with our actual physical ability and drive to procreate.

Aniruddha

And when through the impetus gained from activity (Kriya Śakti) I am swayed by the will to act, the learned call me Aniruddha. [Stanza 48 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

Last but not the least is the Lord as Aniruddha, associated with the 10th Bhāva. The 10th is the Bhāva of our destined profession, the medium through which we interact with the world, the means of our sustenance. The two attributes associated with this form are Śakti and Tejas. One of the meanings of Śakti is skill and Tejas means splendor. Albeit Aniruddha is the form that governs our skills that help us survive and thrive and eventually bask in the splendor which that effort brings along.

Lakṣmi Tantra goes on to say the following about these four manifestations:

These consecutive and gradual stages of mine are (described) as deep sleep, dream and waking (respectively). In the course of manifestation, the three (attributes) Vijñāna, Aisvarya and Śakti, known as my innate attributes, are generally referred to as my three differentiators. On the other hand, the other three attributes, Bala, Virya and Tejas, are divine Guṇas auxiliary to Jñāna, etc, and are defined as the eradication of imperfections such as fatigue and the like. Hence, my states are of two types i.e. the inert and active. [Stanza 49, 50, 51 of the Lakṣmi Tantra (translated by Sanjukta Gupta)]

The above sloka gives us a little more insight into these Rūpas (forms) of Viṣṇu. For one, it tells us about the Avasthās of the Viṣṇu in each of his manifestations. That’s a whole another topic for us to ponder another day. Secondly, it talks about how the six qualities are not so much about individual characteristics per se but more about three pairs of two each, with each pair representing a continuum that manifests both internally and externally, albeit in slightly different forms. They are two sides of the same coin with one unique type of coin associated with each of the forms of Viṣṇu. For example, as mentioned earlier, Śakti and Tejas are a continuum wherein our inner talents (Śakti), if identified and nurtured adequately, can lead to

us shining brighter (Tejas) than the stars in our chosen arena of self-expression. They're distinct and yet inseparable.

Conclusion

To conclude, these forms of Viṣṇu and their linkage to the Kendras isn't a widely-known phenomenon among the Jyotisha circles of our times. There isn't much that has been researched and documented on its use in natal chart interpretation. That said, hopefully this article has provided you enough to whet your appetite on this fascinating linkage between the Divine and the powerful Kendras. As the Chinese proverb goes, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."



One last thing. Here's a simple yet powerful tool which these forms of Viṣṇu bestow on all those who care to believe and use it. For the native, meditating on the respective form of Lord Viṣṇu using the Mantra(s) provided above is a powerful remedy for any afflictions to the associated Bhāva. For the Jyotiṣi, these Mantra(s) can help diffuse the fog in which some charts are clouded.

~ ~ ~

Pratik Mehta is an IT professional by day but a Jyotiṣi at heart. Drawn to Jyotiṣa since his teenage years, he has always relied on it for Divine guidance and grace. He never considered studying Jyotiṣa till he got immersed into learning it by sheer happenstance at age 41, when he had his Lagneśa (Jupiter) and Saturn transiting his ascendant, which he believes brought about this destined transformation. Since then, he has been ardently pursuing the magical science with the sole intent of using it to better his life, the lives of his loved ones and anyone else that the Universe sends his way. To him, Jyotiṣa is a sadhana that brings him mental peace and emotional bliss. He can be reached at jyotishforgood2020@gmail.com.