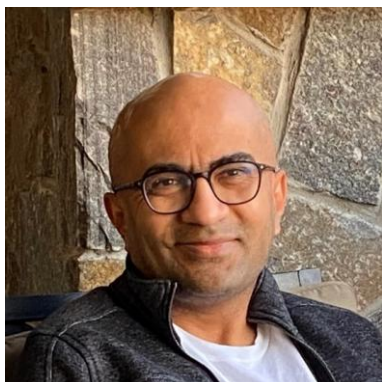


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Practical *Pañcāṅga* – *Tithis* in-depth Part 1 (Introduction)

Namaste, Svāgatam. Hello and welcome to this exciting new expedition wherein we'll explore the collective of enchanting enigmas known as the *Tithis*, that we shall traverse over the course of the next year or so, Lord Ganesha willing.

The word expedition is defined as “a journey or voyage undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose, especially that of exploration, scientific research, or war.” In the realm of *Jyotisha*, *Tithis* are akin to the undiscovered lands that Bravehearts like Columbus set out to discover. There is hardly any literature around *Tithis* (ergo enigmas) but, once discovered, *Tithis* are bound to leave the observer spellbound, thereby making them enchanting to say the least.

As with any expedition whose success is directly proportional to the drive and passion of its participants, the success of this exploration of *Tithis* is completely reliant on a certain level of collective engagement and experimentation. As we go through this series of articles on *Tithis*, take the time to observe, experience and share how these enigmas are unfolding and unraveling around you. The hope being that this collective experience would in time contribute towards resurrecting the lost glory of this Divine dance between the luminaries that the Seers codified as *Tithis*.

Let's dive in.

Rapid refresher

It's been a while since we first spoke about *Tithis* in Part 1 of the *Introduction to Pañcāṅga* series. So, here's a quick refresher because it's the foundation that this in-depth series will be building on.

1. *Tithis* are determined by the synodic movement of the Moon around the Earth.
2. There are 30 *Tithis* in all as counted from one new Moon to the next.

3. The 30 *Tithis* are divided into two halves of 15 each and the *Tithi* names repeat in each of the halves. However, they are distinguished by the prefixes.
4. The waxing Moon *Tithis* are prefixed with “*Shukla*” and collectively referred to as “*Shukla Paksha Tithis*”. The waning Moon *Tithis* are prefixed by “*Krishna*” and collectively referred to as “*Krishna Paksha*”.
5. *Tithis* as *Pañcāṅga* elements are ruled by the Devi, the Supreme Divine in its feminine form, and associated with the water element thereby forming the bedrock of our emotional constitution and experience.
6. The *Tithis* are listed in the table below.

Tithi No.	Tithi Name	Saṃskṛita Name
1	<i>Pratipadā</i>	प्रतिपदा
2	<i>Dvitiyā</i>	द्वितिया
3	<i>Tritiyā</i>	त्रितिया
4	<i>Caturthī</i>	चतुर्थी
5	<i>Pañcamī</i>	पंचमी
6	<i>Ṣaṣṭhī</i>	षष्ठी
7	<i>Saptamī</i>	सप्तमी
8	<i>Aṣṭamī</i>	अष्टमी
9	<i>Navamī</i>	नवमी
10	<i>Daśamī</i>	दशमी
11	<i>Ekādaśī</i>	एकादशी
12	<i>Dvādaśī</i>	द्वादशी
13	<i>Trayodaśī</i>	त्रयोदशी
14	<i>Caturdaśī</i>	चतुर्दशी
15	<i>Pūrṇimā</i>	पुर्णिमा
15	<i>Amāvasyā</i>	अमावस्या

15 vs 16 Tithis

Before we go any further, let's take a moment to understand a small nuance when it comes to the number of *Tithis*. Even though for most practical purposes, 15 is the number that matters, there are 16 *Tithis* referenced in the scriptures. One can think of the 16th *Tithi* as a “super *Tithi*”, an all-encompassing indivisible unit of time that has no beginning or end, a place in the space-time continuum that only the truly enlightened soul can existentially experience. Befitting its nature, this 16th *Tithi* doesn't have a name and is never referenced in any of the readily available *Pañcāṅga* (Hindu almanacs) that find a place on the walls of almost every Hindu household.

For us *Jyotiṣis*, though, understanding this nuance is essential for us to be able to comprehend the spiritual underpinnings with which the fabric of *Tithis* is woven. The popular Hindu scripture *Bhagavata Purana* references 16 Divine qualities of Lord Shri Krishna (listed below), that as a composite are the definition of Divinity personified.

These qualities are referenced as “*Kalās*” (not to be confused with *Kāla* or time). As you can see these *Kalās* are personality traits. Here's where it gets interesting. Each of these *Kalās* are in turn mapped to a *Tithi* (shown below). It is believed that our birth *Tithi* is indicative of a specific *Kalā* that we are supposed to nurture and manifest in our current lifetime. Doing so would be a step in the right direction towards “burning down” our *Sanchita Karma* (think multi-lifetime to-do list) and taking our soul that much closer to reuniting with the Divine One.

One needs to bear in mind that these *Kalās* are very broad brush strokes and therefore their interpretation shouldn't, for the most part, be limited to the literal meaning. Instead, the *Jyotiṣi*, akin to any art connoisseur, should attempt to contemplate the ways in which a *Tithi Kalā* is meant to color a native's lifetime as they go about manifesting the Karma outlined in their natal chart.

As an example, the *Kalā* associated with the *Ekādaśī* (11th *Tithi*) is *Nrityajñā*. *Nrityajñā* can be thought of as someone who is an adept dancer. This *Tithi* can therefore most certainly produce someone that goes on to win Dancing with the Stars or America's Got Talent if there are corroborating yogas and such. Obviously, that's not going to happen for every *Ekādaśī* native. So then, it could be as simple as the native using dancing as a hobby to de-stress, or someone that ends up getting their Doctorate in Dance. At a slightly more esoteric level it could mean that the native must learn to take life in stride and dance around the curve balls that life throws at them by being light on their feet and in their mind. The interpretation of *Kalās* can therefore end up being extremely challenging and equally fascinating for the *Jyotiṣi* who is willing to take up the challenge.

Tithi No.	Tithi Name	Samṣkṛta Name	Kalā	Meaning
1	<i>Pratipadā</i>	प्रतिपदा	<i>Dayā</i>	compassion
2	<i>Dvitiyā</i>	द्वितिया	<i>Dhairya</i>	patience
3	<i>Tritiyā</i>	त्रितिया	<i>Kṣamā</i>	forgiveness
4	<i>Caturthī</i>	चतुर्थी	<i>Nyāya</i>	justice
5	<i>Pañcamī</i>	पंचमी	<i>Nirapekṣā</i>	free of expectation
6	<i>Ṣaṣṭhī</i>	षष्ठी	<i>Nirasaktā</i>	detached
7	<i>Saptamī</i>	सप्तमी	<i>Tapasyā</i>	penance
8	<i>Aṣṭamī</i>	अष्टमी	<i>Aparijīta</i>	invincible
9	<i>Navamī</i>	नवमी	<i>Dānaśīla</i>	extremely generous
10	<i>Daśamī</i>	दशमी	<i>Saundaryamaya</i>	full of beauty
11	<i>Ekādaśī</i>	एकादशी	<i>Nrityajña</i>	expert dancer
12	<i>Dvādaśī</i>	द्वादशी	<i>Sangītajña</i>	expert singer
13	<i>Trayodaśī</i>	त्रयोदशी	<i>Nitīvati</i>	sagacious
14	<i>Caturdaśī</i>	चतुर्दशी	<i>Satyavati</i>	veracious
15	<i>Pūrṇimā</i>	पुर्णिमा	<i>Sarvajña</i>	omnipresent
15	<i>Amāvasyā</i>	अमावस्या	<i>Sarvaniyaṃtā</i>	in complete control

Also, if we look closely at the *Tithis* listed in the table above, we notice that there are 16 unique *Tithis*. The first fourteen are differentiated in name by the prefix where the 15th *Tithi* in both the halves are differentiated by name and not just by prefix.

One could therefore argue that the 16th *Tithi* is an enigma among enigmas, a reality wherein *Pūrṇimā* (full Moon) and *Amāvasyā* (new Moon) co-exist or don't exist, whichever is easier for our limited minds to comprehend. That unnamed one whose entity cannot be proven and yet cannot be refuted either.

To close this celestial diversion, here's some interesting *Tithi* trivia. A *Pūrṇimā* (Full Moon) *Tithi* is always formed in the 16th Nakshatra from the preceding *Pūrṇimā*.

To be continued...

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Pratik 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* until he became immersed in 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 this 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.