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THE CO-RELATION OF JYOTISA AND KARMAN IN THE SAMHITAS AND BRAHMANAS

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ABSTRACT

The interaction of Jyotisa and Karman in the early Vedic period play a significant role in the culture so as to study the activity of the cosmic light and nature forms of all sorts on which sacrificial and other ritual actions were arranged. Actions performed on specific times promised a future inclusive of long life, heaven and immortality to vedic man. The co-relation presently and by largely restricts itself to read human future by means of planetary astrology and arranging to some extent rectificatory actions on specific times.

KEYWORDS: Co-relation of Jyotisa ,Samhitas and Brahmanas.

INTRODUCTION :

The discrepancy as also the limited survival of the subject so as to its present form demands an attention to it aiming to throw a light on the nature of the co-relation in its earliest form. The present article also attempts to reconstruct the form of the co-relation in the Samhitas and Brahmanas so as to understand its relevance.

Co-relation in the Samhitas : Divinations and rectificatory actions:

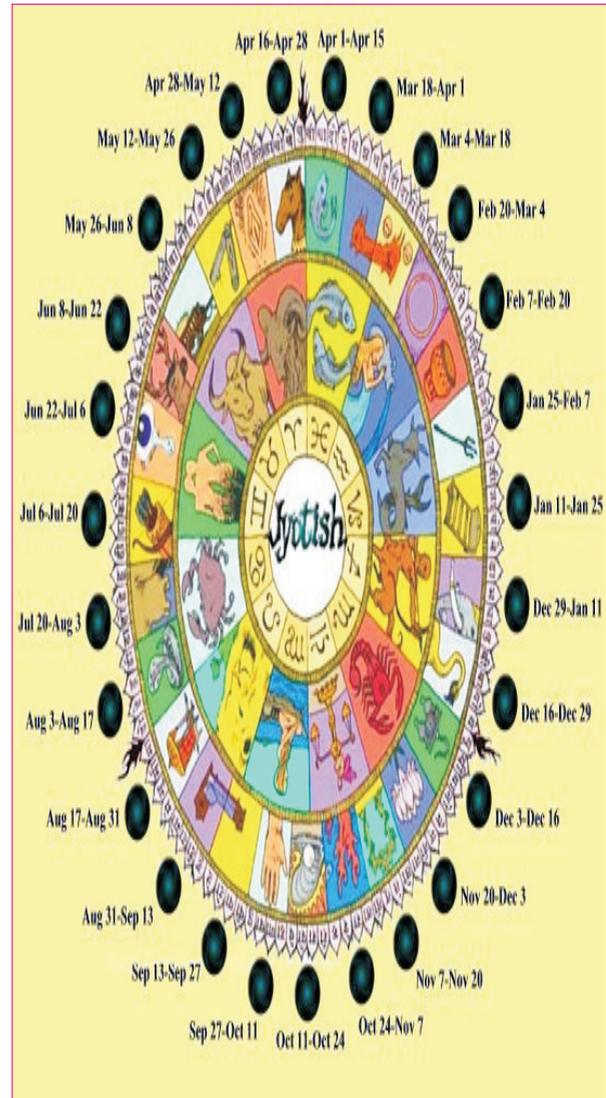
The interpretation of the spontaneous actions of cosmos for human future and countermeasures for cosmic actions deemed inauspicious constitute one of the aspects of the co-relation of Jyotisa and karma in the Samhita period.

Samhita period considers actions of specific birds as indicators of good and evil. References of ominous birds occur in early Rgveda and continue in the Samhitas. Cries of birds were considered as a pointer to forthcoming events.¹

Utpata were considered inauspicious being categorized in three types as heavenly, atmospheric and earthly² and included earth quakes, falling of meteors and comets.

Eclipses were rendered inauspicious in the Samhitas. Rgveda V.40. refers to a total eclipse and Atharvaveda 19.9.10 refers Rahu.

Dreams were considered lucky or unlucky and they being indicative of future was believed in the Samhitas. Rgveda V. 82.4,5 refer to a dream whereas Rgveda VIII. 47.14 refers to a bad dream.



Certain quarters of the cosmos as understood by the order of nakshatras were also considered portentous, Atharvaveda mentions birth of an individual on certain nakshatras unlucky.³

Ordered activity of light forms:

Study of the order of cosmos displayed by the bright bodies and their actions is a general tendency of early Samhitas. This order or path of light (Jyotispati) termed as Rta whose manifestation perceived in the path of heavenly bodies can be said as a forerunner or a precursor of the co-relation.

Systematic efforts for the development of the characteristics of the body of nakshatras and moon placed in them resulting in a flourished scheme of nakshatras already exist in the Taittiriya Samhita (IV.4.10. 1-3)

Nakshatras are attributed with deities and formed a part of the religious system yet they themselves were least worshipped. The above instances point out a purposeful study of the cosmic pattern which is made a part of the religion and worship of the Veda, the natural connection forming the substratum of the co-relation in the Samhitas.

Human actions on auspicious times:

Ritual actions on auspicious times was a formulated practice in the Samhitas. The concept of luckiness of days existed in early literature.⁴ The connection of sacrificial post planted on an auspicious day with the prosperity of the sacrifice was already established (Rgveda III.8.5). A savana day was used in sacrifices particularly the soma yaga (Atharvaveda VIII.9.17).

Time period as yuga was connected with the kindling of Agni (Rgveda III.55.18) prayers to yuga also occur in the Taittiriya Samhita 4.33). The Vajasaneyi Samhitas (30.18) mentions offerings in the form of Purusa to the yugas in the Purusa medha.

Certain rituals as the Mahavrata were performed with a belief to strengthen the sun. (Taittiriya Samhita VII. 5.9) Atharvaveda (VI.40.1) refers to the oblations to the seven sages.

Nakshatra and karma:

The integration of nakshatras with the religious system occurs in the Samhitas. The Kathaka Samhita 8.1 mentions Agnyadhana on specific nakshatras. The Taittiriya Samhita. VII.4.8. mentions the time for undergoing diksa ceremony as on full moon in phalguni.

Nakshatra for individual actions according to their characteristic was a practice⁵ the astrological character of nakshatras as to predictions from the nakshatra at birth already occur in the Atharvaveda.

Co-relation in the Brahmanas:

The practice of rituals is an obligation in the Brahmanas. It carrier the sense of vrata.⁶ The co-relation chiefly occur in sense of connection of proper time and sacrifices

Brahmanas explain the connection of the rite with the heavenly body or else the time and its reward. The insertion of Pravarya rite after a Soma sacrifice, which unites the gods with a new body for the sacrificer,⁷ or Darsa paurnamasesti performed by the gods to compel the Asuras to give up the half month of the waning moon⁸ are instances of the explanatory nature of Brahmanas in connection with the co-relation.

Nakshatra and ritual actions:

Nakshatra in the Brahmanas are of ritualistic significance. Certain individual acts were prescribed on specific nakshatra.⁹ Also birth on a specific nakshatra for instance Mula was considered favourable (Taittiriya Brahmana 3.1.2). Taittiriya Brahmana III.1.refers to a Naksatresti concerned with offerings to nakshatras and their deities.

Mythological connection of nakshatras and actions:

The mythological character of the Brahmanas associate nakshatras with actions performed on them in the past. Thereby Punarvasu is the nakshatra on which gods performed sacrifice for re-establishment (Taittiriya Brahmana 1.1.2), Also the nakshatras Rohini and Mrga are referred with Prajapati depicting a star picture.¹⁰

Prajapati equated with Yajna:

The construction of the form of Prajapati as a representation of the cosmos and arranging sacrificial actions on various time divisions displayed as the body parts of the cosmic Prajapati is the prime aspect of the co-relation in the Brahmanas, Prajapati equates with cosmic time and order brought forth by the heavenly light bodies and through the medium of sacrifice he has a centralized form of the desires and immortality.

CONCLUSION:

Observation of nature for inferring human future is a common practice in the Samhita period

Proper time derived by the actions of luminaries is associated with rituals though there is not much astronomy in the Brahmanas Naksatras are connected to deities which play a subordinate role in the Brahmanas compared to the Samhitas.

The co-relation of Jyotisa and Karman in the Samhitas and Brahmanas divulge the belief of ancient man in the laws of nature. The study deems essential presently so as to built up the man cosmos relationship which worked in an harmonious co-ordination for ancient man's present and future needs.

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