

Fundamentals of Vedic Astrology: Julia Roberts' Horoscope by **Ronnie Gale Dreyer**

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Jyotish (Sanskrit for “Science of Light”), is based on the Sidereal, or Nirayana, zodiac, which is fixed in relation to the stars, as opposed to the symbolic Tropical, or Sayana, zodiac, which is based on the Vernal, or Spring, Equinox. The difference between the two zodiacs lies in the ayanamsa, the difference in degrees and minutes between 0° Aries in the sidereal zodiac, and the Vernal Equinox. Since the earth's rotational axis moves slowly in a circular, or “precessional,” motion, the Vernal Equinox, the point where the Sun crosses the celestial equator each year, moving from south declination to north declination, never quite returns to its starting place. Instead, the vernal point moves in a retrograde manner through the zodiacal belt at an annual rate of approximately 50.23 seconds per year,¹ though it varies slowly over time.

Known as the "Precession of the Equinoxes," this slow and steady backward movement of the vernal equinox takes approximately 71.67 years to advance one degree ($71.67 \times 50.23'' = 3600$ seconds or 60 minutes or 1 degree). Although that is relatively inconsequential over one lifetime, over many centuries the Vernal Equinox has moved farther and farther away from 0° Aries, though the Equinox and sidereal 0° Aries actually coincided around 291 AD. In 2004, the Krishnamurti ayanamsa is around 23°52', which means that the Vernal Equinox falls at around 6° Pisces 8' in the sidereal zodiac. This figure may vary slightly from astrologer to astrologer, as there are several different ayanamsas in use. The one most commonly utilized is named for Lahiri, who formulated it, and at present it is 23°58'—only about six minutes difference from the Krishnamurti ayanamsa.² Other commonly used ayanamsas are those used by B. V. Raman, Sri Yukteswar, and the Fagan-Allen ayanamsa, favored by Western siderealists who use the sidereal zodiac but do not subscribe to Vedic astrology.

Calculating the Chart

To arrive at the Vedic sidereal positions, you can of course use any of the current software programs available, or you can simply subtract the ayanamsa of the year you were born from the tropical positions. (The ayanamsa is easy to find in any software program, book, or even almanac.) Using Julia Roberts as an example (**October 28, 1967, 12:16 AM, Smyrna GA**), we first subtract the Krishnamurti ayanamsa for 1967 of 23°18' from her tropical ascendant of 27° Cancer 51', arriving at a sidereal ascendant of 4° Cancer 32'. Known in Sanskrit as Lagna, the ascendant is the sign that rises on the Eastern horizon at the exact moment of birth, and constitutes the first house of personality, destiny, and general life path—making it the most important house of the chart, and the one that best defines one's individuality and life choices. The ruler of that ascendant and where it is placed will also help define all facets of the person's

¹ This is the figure used by astrologer and mathematician, K.S. Krishnamurti, whose ayanamsa I use throughout this article.

² Because Lahiri and Krishnamurti's ayanamsas differ by only six minutes, they give very similar results. The timing of dasas, or planetary periods, between these two ayanamsas differ by about five weeks, and every so often, the difference in ayanamsas may cause a planet to be in a different sign.

destiny and personality. If the ascendant and its ruler are strong, so will the character be strong, and if it is weak, the life force may also be weak. But don't despair, because within the system of Jyotish there are so many ways to strengthen your weaknesses, and direct the events of your life so that you can fulfill your destiny, or karma.

Like most classical systems, Vedic astrology utilizes the whole sign house system, whereby an entire sign, or rasi, comprises each house, or bhava. This is not by any means the only house system used in India, but it is the most common and the most straightforward for beginners to use. In Roberts' chart this means that the entire first house is made up of the sign of Cancer, her rising sign. To that end, the second house will be Leo, the third house Virgo, the fourth house Libra, and so on. Each house contains the entire sign and all planets that occupy that sign. Even if the ascending degree were 29° Cancer, for example, the entire house would still be Cancer, with the exact ascending degree falling towards the end of the house.

After subtracting the ayanamsa from the ascendant, we then do the same with all the planets, or grahas. Julia Roberts' sidereal lagna retains the same sign as her tropical ascendant because it is above 23 degrees; many of her planets, however, change signs. Although most modern Vedic astrologers use Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, I have only used the traditional grahas—Sun through Saturn, and North and South Node (Rahu and Ketu). By taking that ayanamsa and subtracting it from her tropical planets we get the positions as follows:

| | Tropical Positions | Sidereal Positions |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sun (Surya) | 4° Scorpio 03' | 10° Libra 45' |
| Moon (Chandra) | 24° Leo 47' | 1° Leo 29' |
| Mars (Kuja) | 3° Capricorn 45' | 10° Sagittarius 26' |
| Mercury (Budhi) | 13° Scorpio 53' R | 20° Libra 34' R |
| Jupiter (Guru) | 1° Virgo 22' | 8° Leo 4' |
| Venus (Sukra) | 18° Virgo 04' | 24° Leo 45' |
| Saturn (Sani) | 7° Aries 09' R | 13° Pisces 50' R |
| North Node (Rahu) | 27° Aries 55' | 4° Aries 36' |
| South Node (Ketu) | 27° Libra 55' | 4° Libra 36' ³ |

The next step is to draw the horoscopes, and I have used both North and South Indian diagrams, which vary from region to region. To read the North Indian-style chart (Fig. 1), follow the signs-houses by starting with the ascendant (the top central box) and proceeding **counterclockwise**. The houses are always in the same positions, but the signs contained therein vary depending on the rising sign. In this chart we can clearly see the order of the houses. To read the South Indian-style chart (Fig. 2), in which the signs are always in the same place, begin with Aries, which is the second position from the upper left corner, and proceed **clockwise**. Placing a diagonal through it marks the Cancer ascendant. We then place the planets in their appropriate sign.

³ This is the order that the planets are always listed. They also correspond to the days of the week as follows: Sunday-Sun, Monday-Moon, Tuesday-Mars, Wednesday-Mercury, Thursday-Jupiter, Friday-Venus, Saturday-Saturn.

Julia Roberts' Lagna and Lagna Lord

To understand the course of her journey, we begin with Roberts' lagna. Cancer is a cardinal, water sign that represents, home, family, emotions, and often turmoil that lies beneath the surface. Cancerians are devoted to their families, and quite often, their relatives and loved ones are instrumental in helping them achieve their goals. It is no wonder that Julia went into the family business of acting—her mother ran a drama school throughout Julia's childhood, and her older brother Eric (with whom she has a difficult relationship) was an established actor when Julia started out. Her older sister Lisa, also a struggling actress, welcomed her younger sister to share her New York apartment after Julia graduated high school. Without the support of her family and doors that opened for her, she might not have succeeded. George W. Bush's family relationships are also clearly seen through his sidereal Cancer ascendant. Although family is of utmost importance, Cancerians are very sensitive, and since their feelings often stay beneath the surface, they are accustomed to relationships that fall in and out of favor. As close and loyal as they are to those they love, they are equally unforgiving to those they feel have betrayed them.

After examining the rising sign, we move on to the planets that occupy the first house (Roberts does not have any planets there), and then we analyze the chart ruler, that is, the planet that rules the ascendant. To assess what area of the chart will dominate the individual's life, our first step is to see the sign and house that the ascendant lord occupies. Remember that classical Vedic astrology does not use Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, and that we use traditional rulerships so that Mars rules Scorpio, Jupiter rules Pisces, and Saturn rules Aquarius.

Using Julia Roberts' chart, we see that the Moon, which rules her Cancer ascendant, is placed in Leo, a fixed, fire sign that is dramatic, independent, egotistical, controlling, and magnanimous. It occupies the Magha Nakshatra (Moon Mansion), which contains the royal star Regulus and whose natives, according to Dennis Harness, are “great actors and performers on the stage of life.”⁴ The Moon is placed in the 2nd house of finances and—because the houses relate to parts of the body—the face. With the ruler of the 1st house of destiny placed in the 2nd house of assets in the grand sign of Leo, it is no wonder that her face is her fortune, she is known for her huge smile, and the role that catapulted her to fame was *Pretty Woman*. Additionally, the last movie she starred in was called *Mona Lisa Smile*.

Once we view the location (sign, nakshatra, and house) of the ruling planet, we can then assess whether the planet is generally favorable or unfavorable. There are many layers that reveal the quality of each planet in the chart, and in this article we will skim the surface with a few easy to use, yet profound, rules that apply to the lagna lord. As already stated, if the ruling planet is beneficial, the person should be able to fulfill his or her destiny without too many obstacles.

First, we see if the planet is in its dignity (rulership), exaltation, or debilitation. While Vedic Astrology does not use detriment, a planet is usually not strong if placed in the sign opposite its ruler. Although the planets are exalted and fallen in specific degrees where they have the greatest strength (see table below), they are still considered exalted or fallen in the entire sign.

⁴ Dennis Harness, *The Nakshatras*, p. 39

| Planets (Grahas) | Rulership (Swakshetra) | Exaltation (Uchcha) | Debilitation (Neecha) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sun | Leo | 10° Aries | 10° Libra |
| Moon | Cancer | 3° Taurus | 3° Scorpio |
| Mars | Aries, Scorpio | 28° Capricorn | 28° Cancer |
| Mercury | Gemini, Virgo | 15° Virgo | 15° Pisces |
| Jupiter | Sagittarius, Pisces | 5° Cancer | 5° Capricorn |
| Venus | Taurus, Libra | 27° Pisces | 27° Virgo |
| Saturn | Capricorn, Aquarius | 20° Libra | 20° Aries |
| Rahu | Aquarius | Taurus, Gemini | Scorpio, Sagittarius |
| Ketu | Scorpio | Scorpio, Sagittarius | Taurus, Gemini ⁵ |

Her ruling planet is not in any of the above positions, but we do notice that the Sun in her chart is located at 10°45' Libra—its exact degree of debilitation. That means that what the Sun represents in the chart both as Karaka (significator), and as the lord of a house, will be problematic. The Karaka of the Sun is the father, and Julia lost her father twice as a child, first through her parents' divorce, and later through her father's death from cancer when she was only 10 years old. It also means that her life, charmed as it is, will always have its ups and downs.

Planetary Aspects

The next step in examining the Moon is to look at its associations with other planets, since those might influence the graha more than the graha itself. The primary means by which we look at a planet's association with another planet is through its aspects, which are slightly different from the way we are used to judging aspects.

Drishti (Sanskrit for “seeing, viewing, beholding with the mind's eye, wisdom, intelligence, look glance, turn the eye to”) is the word we use to mean aspects. Planets that aspect one another are said to be face to face, influencing each other, looking at each other, and therefore, knowing each other and providing knowledge. For that reason, planets only aspect other planets in a forward motion; if Jupiter aspects Saturn, for example, Saturn does not necessarily reciprocate the aspect. In that case, Jupiter will have more influence over Saturn quite often than Saturn itself. If Jupiter and Saturn mutually aspect each other, then Jupiter and Saturn will be influenced and modified by each other.

In Jyotish, aspects are defined by the nature of the planet, and NOT the nature of the aspect. Aspects from a natural benefic strengthen a planet and aspects from a natural malefic weaken it. Planets that aspect another planet give the result of their natural tendency, and the house(s) they rules. Rather than categorizing an aspect by its type (ie. square, trine, etc.), they are judged by the planets that are involved. If Mars rules the second house and aspects Venus, then the aggressive, hostile, energetic Mars colors the nature of Venus. By the same token, Mars' rulership over money and assets will also accompany love, beauty and whatever else Venus represents in the chart.

⁵ There are differences of opinion about whether Rahu and Ketu rule signs, and where they are exalted and debilitated.

Two or more planets that occupy the same sign and house form a powerful and influential relationship with one another. While many Vedic astrologers use the word “conjunction” to describe this association, planets that share the same sign and house may be separated by a much wider orb than our normal conjunction and yet still be potent. Although these combinations are not considered to be “drishti” per se, but rather fall under the category of double and triple planetary yogas (planetary combinations), they are still one of the main associations (along with mutual aspects and mutual reception) that planets form with each other. The conjunction is defined by the nature of the two planets; if Mars and Jupiter are placed in the same sign and house, the leadership abilities of this combination will prevail. Additionally, Mars will get the influence of Jupiter, while Jupiter gets the influence of Mars.

A planet always aspects the house (and planet occupying that house) that is seven places from itself. Even if a house is unoccupied, it still receives the planetary aspect. In Julia Roberts’ chart, Mars in the 6th house aspects the unoccupied 12th house even though there is no planet present. Planets that aspect each other by 7th house aspect are called mutual aspects because they face, and therefore, influence each other. Like the conjunction, two planets that aspect each other by mutual aspect are defined by the combination of what they represent, as well as the influence of one planet on the other. It is important to note that mutual aspects are NOT oppositions, and are judged by the nature of the planets involved. In Julia Roberts’ chart, Sun and Mercury form a mutual aspect with Rahu. (I did not include Ketu because the North and South Node are always opposite each other, and therefore seven houses apart.)

While every planet aspects the 7th place from itself, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn also have special full aspects. Mars aspects four and eight places from itself, Jupiter aspects five and nine places from itself, and Saturn aspects three and ten places from itself. Some people feel that Rahu, as well as Ketu, aspect five and nine places from itself, while others feel that only Rahu, and not Ketu, aspects forward. After all, Ketu is headless with no eyes; it cannot see, and therefore, cannot aspect. The key is to always count the planet “throwing” the aspect as the first position. Julia Roberts’ sixth house Mars, for instance, aspects Saturn in the ninth house (four places), the twelfth house (seven places), and the first house (eight places).

Other mutual aspects include Mars aspecting Saturn by 4th house aspect, and Saturn aspecting Mars by 10th house aspect. That always occurs when Saturn is four signs ahead of Mars. In Julia Roberts’ chart, Mars is in Sagittarius in the 6th house, which aspects Saturn in Pisces in the 9th house. In return, Saturn aspects Mars by 10th house aspect. Other than 7th house aspects forming full, mutual aspects, Mars and Saturn in this particular situation is the only exception. (Mutual reception has the same effect as a full, mutual aspect, but it is not classified as an aspect.)

Using Roberts’ chart again, we can see that her ruler, the Moon, reaps the benefit of its association with Venus and Jupiter, the two most powerful natural benefics, in the second house of money. The natural benefics are Moon, Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter, while natural malefics are Sun, Mars, Saturn, and the Nodes. There is not much more one could ask for in a ruling planet. Other than that, the Moon only receives a full 5th house aspect from Rahu in Aries in the 10th house, which links material (Rahu) ambition (tenth house) to her destiny.

Other means by which planets become strong are whether they are placed in the house of a friend, enemy, or neutral planet. Since the Moon and the Sun are best friends, the Moon's placement in Leo, ruled by the Sun, provides Roberts' ruling planet with a very comfortable living space, so to speak. Additionally, the yogas that involve the Moon also add to the story of Roberts' life. Sanskrit for "union," yogas refer to planetary combinations, which yield specific results including conjunctions, mutual reception (also called Parivartana Yoga) and certain spatial relationships. Julia's Moon and Jupiter combination constitutes a Kesari (Lion) Yoga, formed if the Moon and Jupiter are angular from each other, that is, in the same house, 4th, 7th, and 10th places from each other. Anyone born with this yoga is said to be passionate, emotional, famous, wise, and able to defeat enemies like a lion.

All of the above associations have their most profound effect during the Dasa (planetary period) and Bhukti (sub-period) of the planets involved. Just as we have done for the ascendant, we can define each house of the chart by viewing the sign that makes up the house, planets occupying that house, and the condition and position of the house ruler. Although this is a simplistic look at the chart, and there are many more rules, even a rudimentary look such as this can reveal a great deal about character, periods, trends, karma, and destiny.

Vimshottari Dasa System

What distinguishes Vedic astrology from so many other astrological systems, is the unique Vimshottari Dasa system, which divides the lifetime into planetary periods spanning 120 years. Each period, the first of which is determined by the Moon's Nakshatra, is ruled by a different planet in the following order: Ketu: 7 years, Venus: 20 years, Sun: 6 years, Moon: 10 years, Mars: 7 years, Rahu: 18 years, Jupiter: 16, Saturn: 19 years, Mercury: 17 years. Julia Roberts was born with the Moon in the nakshatra of Magha, which is ruled by Ketu. That is why she is born in that period, with the rest of her dasas following suit.

The qualities of the dasas are determined by the general quality of the planetary ruler, the sign and house the planet occupies and rules, and the planetary associations. Her Venus Dasa brought her the most wonderful and the most devastating experiences. Though Venus in Leo is part of a Raj, or Royal, Yoga promising status, and a Dhana, or prosperity, Yoga guaranteeing money, it is also tainted by its Mutual Reception, or Parivartana (Sanskrit for "exchange") Yoga, with the Sun, ruler of Leo, placed in the 4th house at 10° Libra—its exact debilitation degree. This means that from time to time during its Dasa, Venus exchanges places with, and brings on the results of, the fallen Sun, karaka of the father who literally fell out of Roberts' life—first through her parents' divorce, and ultimately through his death on December 3, 1977 in Venus Dasa, Sun Bhukti—the two planets forming the Parivartana Yoga.

On the other hand, Venus Dasa brought her meteoric rise to the top with the release of the film *Pretty Woman* in 1990, and made her the darling of the movie industry and fans throughout the world. She also got married to country singer Lyle Lovett, since Venus is the karaka of marriage.

Like the Venus Dasa, the debilitated Sun Dasa, which began in early 1994, was disappointing in the beginning—she got divorced in 1995, and starred in several box office flops. In 1997, she finally bounced back with *My Best Friend's Wedding*, the same type of light comedy that made

her a star, followed by the hit movies *Notting Hill* and *Runaway Bride*, released in 1999. She also had a highly publicized romance with Benjamin Bratt, famous for his role in the TV show *Law and Order*. Her renewed popularity heralded the present Moon Dasa (2000-2010) and, even with the usual ups and downs, her present state of personal happiness, professional recognition, and fabulous wealth.

At present, Julia Roberts continues to lead what most people consider to be a charmed life. She is in the Moon Dasa, which is her best one yet in terms of personal and professional fulfillment. The Moon is her ascendant ruler, and due to its association with the great benefics, Jupiter and Venus, this period promises to fulfill her great destiny. Thus far Jupiter's influence brought recognition and opportunity when she won the Best Actress Academy Award in March 2001 for her title role in the movie *Erin Brockovich*, and Venus's magic touch brought marriage in July 2002. Because Jupiter is the karaka of children, and her fifth house ruler, Mars, is placed in the 6th house and aspected by Jupiter, the Moon Dasa, Jupiter Bhukti (December 16, 2002-April 16, 2004) brought her fertility, as did Jupiter's transit through sidereal Leo (July 29, 2003-August 28, 2004), the house that natal Jupiter, Venus, and the Moon occupy. On June 1, 2004, she officially announced that she was pregnant with twins.

Of course, most people do not have an ascendant lord quite like Julia Roberts', but whatever destiny we do have, can be fulfilled to the best of our abilities.

Julia Roberts' Vimshottari Dasa (according to Krishnamurti Ayanamsa)

Ketu. October 28, 1967 - January 14, 1974
Venus. January 15, 1974 - January 14, 1994
Sun. January 15, 1994 - January 14, 2000
Moon. January 15, 2000 - January 14, 2010
Mars. January 15, 2010 - January 14, 2017
Rahu. January 15, 2018 - January 14, 2035
Jupiter. January 15, 2036 - January 14, 2051
Saturn. January 15, 2051 - January 14, 2070
Mercury. January 15, 2070 - January 14, 2087

Birth Data

Julia Roberts, October 28, 1967, 00:16 AM, Smyrna GA, 33N44, 84W23, "AA" Rodden rating from birth records.

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