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## Evaluation of astrological yogas as indicators of spiritual competency: A case study with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

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### Abstract

In the system of Vedic astrology Yogas are held as the most powerful tools for denoting the various aspects of an individual's life. However, those yogas relevant for spiritual development is a lesser attended topic. The classical texts on Vedic astrology also treated this aspect of human development with lesser weightage. The current article evaluates the efficacy and relevance of some of these yogas with the case study of the life of renowned 19<sup>th</sup> century saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), the great Sādhaka of Dakshineswar. His speedy attainment of culminations of different spiritual disciplines prescribed by different religious schools in a single lifetime is a unique phenomenon in the religious history of mankind. Certain astrological yogas that are found in his chart are indicative of performance of such intense asceticism leading to spiritual enlightenment. Such yogas described mainly in Sarvarthachintamani, Jataka Parijata and BPHS are taken into consideration for the present work. A close scrutiny of these yogas in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's birth chart clearly corroborates with the intense asceticism he had undergone and the rich spiritual fulfilment he attained through various disciplines prescribed by different religious scriptures.

**Keywords:** Religion, spirituality, asceticism, astrological yoga, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Hindu astrology

### Introduction

The Vedic culture has prescribed four *Purushārthas* (human goals) to seek by a rational individual, e.g. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Moksha*. The fourth goal *Moksha* is something unique to this culture. Consisting of knowledge of the Self, it is the ultimate goal to be reached by an individual. Merely believing in some doctrine and practising some moral codes of conduct are not sufficient, rather one has to come face-to-face with that knowledge. No one else can do it on his/her behalf. Nor can it be guaranteed by reaching some other world after death. One has to work out his/her *Moksha* here and now. Says Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā* (5.19) that even here the birth (cycle of birth and death) is conquered by those whose mind rests in equality <sup>[1]</sup>. In *Bṛihadāraṇyakopaniṣad Yājñavalkya* says to his wife *Maitreyī*, "the Self, my dear *Maitreyī* should be realised- should be heard of, reflected -on and meditated upon. By the realisation of the Self, my dear, through hearing, reflection and meditation, all this is known." <sup>[2]</sup>. Though *Moksha* i.e. the realisation of Self is the final goal of each individual, everyone is not fit to pursue it in his/her life exclusively. Only very few are endowed with the required qualifications for a purely spiritual pursuit in one's life. For the pursuit of any of the four *Purusharthas* certain general requirements are: a sound health, a mind having the capacity to think clearly, a sharp intellect, patience, perseverance, a strong desire to achieve the goal, one-pointed effort etc. However, apart from these general qualities, a firm moral character is of paramount importance for the spiritual development. After mentioning the numerous divine and demoniac qualities, Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgītā* (16.1-5) that the divine attributes conduce to *Moksha* while the demoniac attributes to bondage <sup>[1]</sup>. Sri Krishna says elsewhere (*Bhagavadgītā* 4.39) that one who is endowed with faith, having mastered his senses and is intent on it receives that knowledge (of Self) <sup>[1]</sup>. The Yoga aphorisms of Maharshi Patanjali enumerates the basic moral codes of conduct as Yama and Niyama as the first two steps in his eight-fold yoga path.

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*Yama* consists of *Ahimsā*, *Satya*, *Asteya*, *Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha* while *Niyama* incorporates *Shaucha*, *Santoshā*, *Tapas*, *Swādhya* and *Ishwara Prañidhāna* [3]. Adi Shankaracharya elaborates *Sādhanachatushtaya*, the four-fold essential qualification for a seeker of knowledge as *Viveka* (discrimination), *Vairāgya* (dispassion), the six-fold treasures of discipline and *Mumukshutva* (intense desire for freedom) [4]. According to Sri Ramanujacharya the attainment of *Bhakti* and *Prapatti* (surrender) requires the seven-fold qualifications, viz. *Viveka* (purification of body by means of pure food), *Vimoka* (freedom from clinging to desires), *Abhyāsa* (worship of God, the Home of Goodness), *Kriyā* (performance of *Panchamahāyajna*, five great sacrifices, according to one's ability), *Kalyāna* (auspiciousness, consisting of truth, uprightness, mercy, liberty, harmlessness and non-coveting), *Anavasāda* (absence of weakness) and *Anuddharsha* (absence of excessive merriment) [5]. In his famous book, "Bhakti Yoga" Swami Vivekananda says that the requisite qualifications of a student of spiritual knowledge comprises of "purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance" [6]. Hence, it can be said that any of the paths towards perfection demands *Adhikāritva*, i.e. certain set of qualifications for its *Sādhanā*. When a seeker has become a fit receptacle of receiving knowledge of the Self through the development of the prescribed qualities according to the respective paths, the Guru appears to quicken his/her journey to its final destination. Swami Vivekananda says "as soon as the soul earnestly desires to have religion, the transmitter of the religious force must and does appear to help that soul" [6]. Sri Krishna asks to Arjuna to obtain knowledge from the Guru thus, "know that, by prostrating thyself, by questions, and by service; the wise, those who have realized the Truth, will instruct thee in that knowledge" (*Bhagavadgītā* 4.34) [7]. When the *Sādhanā* has become a *Siddha*, i.e. accomplished supreme attainment through the grace of the *Guru* and *Īshwara* he/she goes beyond any scriptural or social rules. However, none of his actions become harmful to anybody, rather his/her life becomes a beacon light for many treading in the path of Self-realization. How the Vedic astrological yogas indicate such great possibilities in an individual's life is the subject matter of the present study.

It has been discussed by Vegaraju *et al.* [8]. How the Vedic astrology can signify different aspects of our lives. The twelve bhavas represent the path of an individual's journey towards fulfilment. Astrological Yogas (not to be confused with the *Yoga* in *Yogashāstra*), i.e. special combination of planets (with respect to their respective locations, aspects, interrelations and lordships of *Bhāvas*) are the unique features of Vedic astrology that makes it different from other astrological systems. According to Sri B.V. Raman the Yogas are actually the indicators of enjoyments and sufferings one faces in life "as a sequel to his own actions in previous state of existence" [9]. Again, he says, "the different specific planetary combinations show a summation of inherited physical and psychological tendencies which condition our present environment; the extent to which we can offset the inherited tendencies by effort; the characteristics that will be dominant and those that will be recessive" [9]. So, it can be said that these Yogas are actually two-way pointer concerned with an individual. It reveals the inherent characteristics of the native as well as it can indicate the kind of situations the native is going to face in life. Usually the yogas of wealth, erudition, political power, fame etc., mentioned plentifully in the classical texts can be found in the birth charts of various famous personalities and can be analysed and verified easily.

But for the persons of high spiritual attainments it's difficult to perform such study. The primary reason is that the lives and intense austerities of such ardent seekers are not known to the public, as in most of the cases they leave the social and family lives to dedicate themselves completely for spiritual pursuit in some lonely places like mountains, forests or in some secluded *Ashramas* etc. Secondly, even if they come in the public gaze when they are *Siddhas*, they do not always disclose the account of their austere lives as *Sādhanas*. Hence, the study of the *Yogas* of spiritual illumination are very difficult for most of these saintly personages. Moreover, the number of such *Yogas* related to the success in spiritual pursuits mentioned in the classical literature are comparatively fewer. In Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra (BPHS) only fifteen verses are devoted to the chapter dedicated to asceticism (BPHS, Chapter 79) whereas thirty-four verses are dedicated to special yogas of wealth (BPHS, Chapter 41) and six chapters are dedicated to *Rājayogas* of different forms (BPHS, Chapter 35-40) [10]. "Brihat Jātaka" (Chapter 15) of Varahamihira (6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) includes four verses on this topic while in "Sārāvalī" (Chapter 20), Kalyana Varma (10<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) has dedicated thirty-seven verses on *Pravrajyā* [11] [12]. Vyankatesha Sharma's (13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) "Sarvārthachintāmañi" also has four verses devoted to *Sannyāsa Yogas* [13]. Mantreshwara's (13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) *Phaladīpikā* (Chapter 27) contains eight verses on *Pravrajyā* Yogas. [14] *Jātaka Pārijāta* (15.15-42) of Vaidyanatha Dikshita (15<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) deals with this topic in twenty-eight verses [15].

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1936-1986) is a unique example of spiritual genius whose life as a *Sādhanas* is free from such obscurity as many aspects of his different *Sādhanās* took place in broad daylight in front of the eyes of many of his contemporaries, in and around the temple garden of Dakshineswar, near the busy city of Kolkata (then Calcutta) and has been elaborated in great detail in his biography by his own disciple Swami Saradananda, "Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master" [16]. As the chronological details of the various incidents in the life of this great saint is available in this biography, one can have ample opportunity to correlate those events with the corresponding astrological *Yogas* and *Dashā* periods.

For the students of astrology, the life of Sri Ramakrishna provides a unique opportunity to study the spiritual competence as his whole life was solely dedicated only for spiritual pursuits. From his very childhood it is observed that he did not care for earning either scholarship or wealth or fame. His formal education reached only upto the level of acquiring the skill to read and write in his mother language Bengali. From the age of twenty years to thirty years he spent on performing various sadhanas to gain a first-hand experience of Self-realization. The next part of his life that lasted upto fifty years of his age was spent on personal guidance to various seekers and to train a bunch of young monastic disciples who would spread his message of universal religion throughout the world afterwards. The speciality of Sri Ramakrishna as a *Sādhanā* lies in the fact that he was not a monotonous aspirant. With an approach of an honest experimenter he embarked on the path of spiritual practices, avoiding any personal prejudices. He followed the instructions of a competent teacher diligently and realised the ultimate Reality for himself. After reaching the final goal promised by a particular *Paramparā* he plunged into another course of sadhana prescribed by another religious school throughout the whole period of his sadhana. He attained

*Siddhi* (perfection) not only through following the *Tāntric*, *Purānic* and *Vedāntic* schools but also realised the final goal of Sufi tradition by sincerely following its precepts. As if the mission of his life was to show to mankind the relevance of the different religious faiths as a valid means for attaining the ultimate Truth. Another distinctive feature of his sadhana is that he never had to go around searching for a *Guru* to tread the path leading to God realisation. Rather his *Gurus* presented themselves to him (at Dakshineswar) to teach their priceless wisdom obtained through their lifelong austerities. Where an ordinary aspirant needs a whole lifetime of Sadhana for attaining perfection even through one specific path, Sri Ramakrishna succeeded in realizing goals prescribed by different sects within a few years, proving his extraordinary qualification as an aspirant. His keen desire for God realisation and speedy success in that endeavour can be indicated by the special auspicious yogas present in his birth chart. The versatility in his approach and temperament towards spirituality can be attributed to the variety of planets that are responsible for producing the *Pravrajyā* (ascetic) *Yogas* and other conducive *Yogas* in his birth chart through various intricate combinations.

In his celebrated book, "Notable Horoscopes" Sri B. V. Raman has given many examples of spiritual stalwarts along with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa [17]. In his analyses of these birth charts he has mainly dealt with the interpretations based on the positions of the various planets in different houses and their lordships. The important *Rāja Yogas* and *Pravrajyā Yogas* present in those birth charts are also described in details in that book. Sri B. V. Raman attributes the absence of passion and sensuality in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa to the favourable position of Venus (the natural *Kāmakārika*) without any malefic influence. The *Pravrajyā Yoga*, formed through the placement of the Moon in the Mars' Navamsha while being aspected by Saturn, is also mentioned. According to BPHS this *Pravrajyā Yoga* is supposed to be dictated by Saturn, i.e. the native is supposed to be initiated in the *Sampradāya* (lineage) of *Nirgrantha* (naked ascetic). [10] However, while studying the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa we see that he actually got initiated into various different disciplines of Sadhanas instructed by competent teachers belonging to different traditions. In the current study the versatility of the sadhanas carried out by this great saint is analysed through the special yogas found in his birth chart. In his monumental work, "Srisriramakrishnalilaprasanga" Swami Saradananda has quoted the particular verse from Bhrigusamhita (as mentioned by the famous astrologer of that time, Sri

Narayanchandra Jyotirbhusan who prepared the birth chart of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa) that says that the native will become the *Samprādayaprabhu*, the master of a new religious order. [18] The details of this particular yoga will be given in the later part of the article. However, as far as the knowledge of the present author goes, no detailed analyses of astrological yogas indicating him as a great *Sādhaka* has been carried out as of now. It will be shown in the subsequent sections that all the planets in his birth chart indicates his great inclination towards a "God-intoxicated" life that led him to perform intense spiritual sadhana and subsequently the dissemination of the spiritual knowledge gained through such severe austerities.

### Methods

In this work the various life events are taken from "Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master", authored by Swami Saradananda. [16] Jagannatha Hora 8.0 software has been used for casting the birth chart. The birth time is reconciled from the ascendant longitude mentioned in the birth chart prepared by Narayanchandra Jyotirbhusan (mentioned in the book, "Srisriramakrishnalilaprasanga") [18]. The birth time so obtained is 6:04 a.m. on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1836. The birthplace is Kamarpukur (87° E 39', 22° N 59'). All the calculations for casting the birth chart are based on "Sri Surya Siddhanta" of Varahamihira (option available in Jagannatha Hora software). Maharshi Parashara's method has been implemented for the calculation of *Bhāvasphutas* and *Bhāvasandhis* for the twelve *Bhāvas*. The various divisional charts are also cast according to the principles of Maharshi Parashara. The translation and interpretation of the verses related to different yogas are carried out by the present author in this work. The method of interpretation of results of various Yogas discussed by Sri B. V. Raman in "Three Hundred Important Combinations" [9] is followed in this work.

### Results and Discussion

The natal *Rāshi* chart, Navamsha chart and the *Bhāva/Chalita* charts are shown in Figures 1 and 2. At the first glance a student of astrology can observe multiplicity of exalted planets. Venus, Saturn and Mars are in their exaltation signs. The positions of Rahu and Ketu are also considered exaltation signs according to BPHS. In the *Navāmsa* chart also the planets Venus and Saturn are situated in their respective houses. Total seven planets are in either the *Kendra* (1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>) houses or the *Koṅa* (1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) houses. Hence, it can be said that the native to whom the chart belongs is full of auspiciousness.

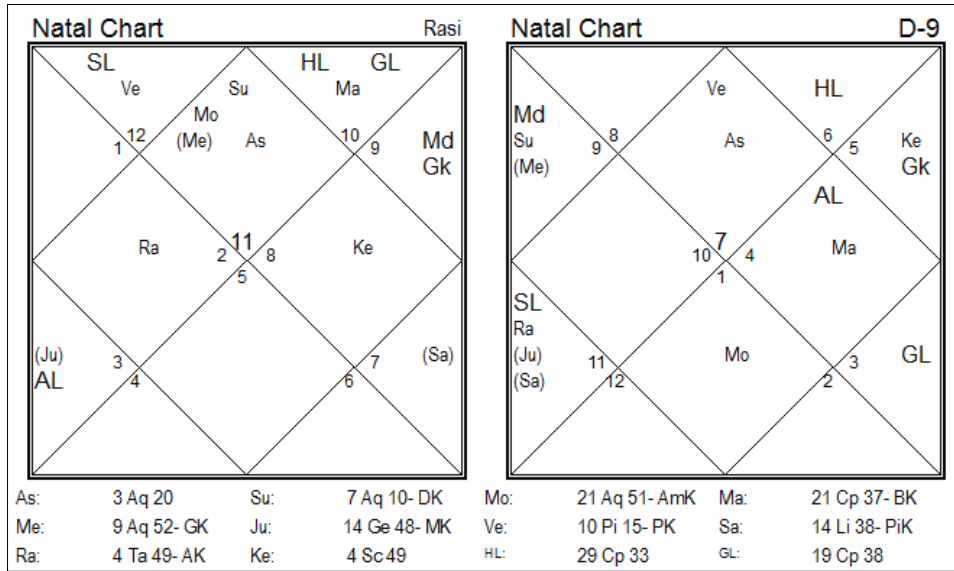


Fig 1: Natal Rashi and Navamsha (D-9) charts of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

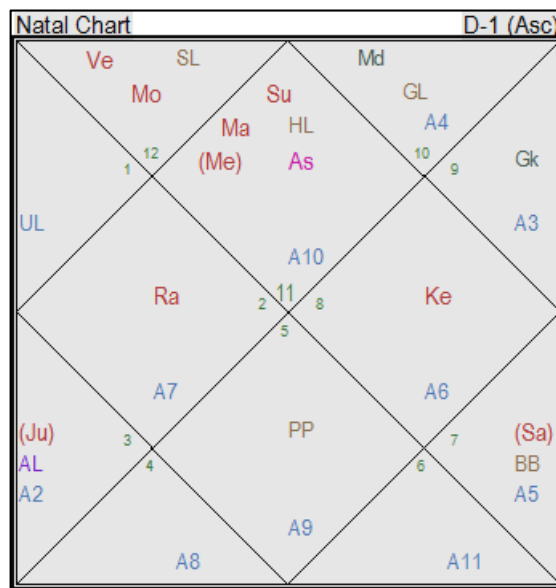


Fig 2: Bhāva/ Chalita chart of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

The Tables-1 to 5 will be used for evaluating the strengths of each of the planets and the influence of other planets on each

of them. The relevant yogas will be analysed on the basis of these Tables.

Table 1: The Dashavarga break-up of the Lagna (ascendant) and planets

Division	Lagna	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Rahu	Ketu
D1 Lagna	11	11	11	10	11	3	12	7	2	8
D2 Hora	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	4
D3 Drekkana	11	11	7	6	11	7	4	11	2	8
D7 Saptamsha	11	12	4	9	1	6	8	10	9	3
D9 Navamsha	7	9	1	4	9	11	7	11	11	5
D10 Dashamsha	12	1	6	1	2	7	11	11	11	5
D12 Dvadashamsha	12	1	7	6	2	8	4	12	3	9
D16 Shodashamsha	6	8	4	12	10	4	2	8	7	7
D30 Trimshamsha	1	11	3	10	11	9	6	9	2	2
D60 Shashtyamsha	5	1	6	5	6	8	8	12	11	5

**Table 2:** The strengths of planets according to *Shadbala* calculations

Planet	Shadbala	In rupas	% Strength	IshtaPhala	KashtaPh...
Sun	456.20	7.60	152.07	27.99	28.92
Moon	500.87	8.35	139.13	13.33	36.15
Mars	382.33	6.37	127.44	14.85	10.94
Mercury	475.13	7.92	113.13	15.39	43.83
Jupiter	410.31	6.84	105.21	52.80	7.18
Venus	382.50	6.37	115.91	37.67	13.76
Saturn	506.95	8.45	168.98	40.86	7.48

**Table 3:** The strengths of planets according to *Vimshopaka Bala* calculations

Vimsopaka	Dasa Varga (10)	Shodasa Varga (16)	Sapta Varga (7)	Shad Varga (6)
Sun	10.23 (51.13%)	10.78 (53.88%)	10.00 (50.00%)	10.50 (52.50%)
Moon	12.93 (64.63%)	12.25 (61.25%)	13.25 (66.25%)	12.85 (64.25%)
Mars	12.32 (61.63%)	12.93 (64.63%)	11.28 (56.38%)	12.25 (61.25%)
Mercury	13.93 (69.63%)	13.78 (68.88%)	11.57 (57.88%)	10.80 (54.00%)
Jupiter	11.63 (58.13%)	10.88 (54.38%)	10.93 (54.63%)	9.05 (45.25%)
Venus	13.50 (67.50%)	14.88 (74.38%)	12.25 (61.25%)	13.50 (67.50%)
Saturn	11.05 (55.25%)	11.55 (57.75%)	11.77 (58.87%)	13.55 (67.75%)
Rahu	14.18 (70.88%)	13.65 (68.25%)	14.07 (70.38%)	14.00 (70.00%)
Ketu	8.38 (41.88%)	8.05 (40.25%)	10.25 (51.25%)	8.75 (43.75%)

A thorough scrutiny is carried out for finding the *Yogas* that reveal the usual traits of Sri Ramakrishna's physical health, intellectual capacity and natural inclination of his mind that are conducive for receiving any teaching in general. Table-6 lists the *Yogas* that are relevant for any sincere pursuits in a person's life. Since these *Yogas* do not form the main theme of the present work their detailed analyses are not discussed here. The interested readers can consult the sources provided in the same table. It shows that the native possessed an overall good health. As the body is considered the primary means for *Dharma*, a good health is a blessing for a spiritual seeker. Secondly, a patient and persevering attitude is indispensable for accomplishing any long-term goal, especially if it is not so commonly appreciated by the society. A *Yoga* that endows

one with such perseverance is also present in this birth chart, according to *Jātaka Pārijāta* (12.52). Jesus Christ said in his Sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God". Hence, purity of emotions is compulsory for progress in spiritual endeavour. *Sarvārthachintāmañi* (4.144) states such a *Yoga* that confers on this native a pure heart. For receiving any knowledge, secular or sacred, sharp intellect and memory are necessary prerequisites. In *Sarvārthachintāmañi* (5.34-35 and 5.40) we find such *Yogas* that are applicable to the birth chart concerned here. After confirming the presence of such useful *Yogas* conducive for a sound physical and mental health the specific *Yogas* helping the native in spiritual *Sādhanās* can be analysed.

**Table 4:** List of *Yogas* showing the general physical and mental characteristics

Name of the Yoga	Source
Deha Saukhya Yoga (General well-being of health)	<i>Sarvārthachintāmañi</i> (2.69)
Dhairiyashali (Patience & Perseverance)	<i>Jātaka Pārijāta</i> (12.52)
Vishuddha Hridaya (Pure heart/ emotions)	<i>Sarvārthachintāmañi</i> (4.144)
Tivrabuddhi (Sharp intellect)	<i>Sarvārthachintāmañi</i> (5.34-35)
Dharanadipatu (Retentive memory)	<i>Sarvārthachintāmañi</i> (5.40)

Extraordinary potential for achieving spiritual goals can be indicated through the special *Yogas* related to the ninth house and those of *Pravrajā* i.e. asceticism. However, before starting that discussion the one unique and rare *Yoga* culled from *Bhṛigu Samhita* that is mentioned in "*Srisriramakrishnalilaprasanga*"<sup>[18]</sup>. the Bengali biography of Sri Ramakrishna can be discussed. The verse states:

धर्मस्थानाधिपे तुंगे धर्मस्थे तुंगखेचरे ।  
 गुरुणा दृष्टिसंयोगे लग्नेशे धर्मसंस्थिते ॥  
 केन्द्रस्थानगते सौम्ये गुरौ चैव तु कोणभे ।  
 स्थिरलग्ने यदा जन्म सम्प्रदायप्रभुः हि सः ॥  
 धर्मविन्माननीयस्तु पुण्यकर्मरतः सदा ।  
 देवमन्दिरवासी च बहुशिष्यसमन्वितः ॥  
 महापुरुषसंज्ञोऽयं नारायणांशसम्भवः ।  
 सर्वत्र जनपूज्यश्च भविष्यति न संशयः ॥  
 इति भृगुसंहितायां सम्प्रदायप्रभुयोगः तत्फलं च ।

Meaning: If i) the lord of the ninth house exalted, ii) an exalted planet is located in the ninth house, iii) the ascendant lord is situated in the ninth house, being aspected by Jupiter, iv) Mercury is in a *Kendra* house, v) Jupiter is in a *Koñā* house, vi) Ascendant is in a *Sthira* (immovable) sign; the native becomes a *Sampradāyaprabhu*, one who is the master of a religious order. He is the knower of *Dharma*, engaged in virtuous activities, a resident of temple and surrounded by many disciples. He is the *Mahāpurusha*, a great man born as a part of the divine Lord *Nārāyana*. He will be revered by people everywhere.

In Sri Ramakrishna's birth chart i) the lord of the ninth house (*Libra*), Venus is exalted in *Pisces*, ii) the ninth house itself contains Saturn, for which *Libra* is the exaltation sign, iii) the lord of ascendant, Saturn is in the ninth house, being fully aspected by Jupiter situated in *Gemini*, iv) Mercury is in ascendant, v) Jupiter is in fifth house, *Gemini* and vi) ascendant is in the immovable sign *Aquarius*. Hence, this *Yoga* is formed in this birth chart. It can be clearly observed

that the formation of this *Sampradā yaprabhu* yoga presupposes the fulfilment of six conditions, making the yoga a rare one. Though this verse of Bhrigu Samhita points to saintly and virtuous disposition of the native, delivering spiritual instructions to his disciples and devotees, the great austerities he has to undertake is not obvious from this particular *Yoga*. The yogas to be discussed now are indicative of the varieties of *Sādhanās* the native underwent during his lifetime.

1) *Dharmādhyaksha Yoga*: The word “*Dharmādhyaksha*” is a combination of two words, viz. *Dharma* and *Adhyaksha*. “*Dharma*” means virtue, duty, religion, spirituality etc. whereas the word “*Adhyaksha*” denotes an authority, supervisor or an eye-witness. So, the combined word, “*Dharmādhyaksha*” in the present context can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it can signify a person who is an authority of virtues or religion. Secondly, it can denote a person who is an eye-witness i.e. the seer of religion or truth. Sri J. N. Bhasin has interpreted it as a “*head of a religious institution*” in his translation of *Sarvārthachintāmañi* (7.the 9<sup>th</sup> house.7).<sup>[13]</sup>

गुरौ वा भृगुपुत्रे वा स्वोच्चमित्रांशके शुभे  
धर्माधिपे बलयुते धर्माध्यक्षो नरो भवेत्॥७॥

Meaning: If Jupiter or Venus is located in the its own *Navāmsa*, exaltation *Navāmsa* or a friendly planet's *Navāmsa* that is a benefic one while the lord of the ninth house is powerful the native becomes a *Dharmādhyaksha*.

In case of the present birth chart Venus is located in its own *Navāmsa*, Libra while the lord of the ninth house, Venus is exalted in the Rashi chart. Venus is endowed with three strong vargas in the divisional charts (D1, D9 and D16), leading to *Uttama Vaisheshikāmsa* and 116% shadbala strength.

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa it is observed that he literally qualified all the three interpretation of the word “*Dharmādhyaksha*”. He became the “seer of Truth”. He became the authority of the eternal religion by reaching the Truth through several paths. Though he was not the head of any religious organisation during his lifetime but a worldwide organisation bearing his name came into existence within twelve years of his leaving the mortal body. However, it can be noted that he actually sowed the seed of that organisation by bringing together all of his monastic disciples towards the end of his lifetime.

2) *Japa-dhyāna-samādhimān Yoga*: The specific yoga that are conducive for gaining success in *Japa* (repetition of a mantra) and meditation, leading to the attainment of *Samādhi* (the highest goal of according to Yoga philosophy) in the following verse of *Sarvārthachintāmañi* (7.the 9<sup>th</sup> house.41), relevant to the present chart.

कर्मशयुक्तराश्यंशराशीशे बलसंयुते ।  
तदीशे भाग्यसंबंधे जपध्यानसमाधिमान् ॥४१॥

Meaning: Attainment of success in *Japa*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* is indicated when the navamsha dispositor of the lord of tenth house is endowed with strength while being related to the ninth house.

In the present case it can be noted that the lord of the tenth house (Scorpion), Mars is located in the Moon's navamsha, Cancer. The Moon (the concerned dispositor) can be said highly powerful in this chart for possessing 139% shadbala strength and for obtaining three strong *Vargas* (of D2, D7 and D16 in Table-1), leading to *Uttama Vaisheshikāmsa*. The rashi drishti of the Moon is being received by the ninth house while the Moon itself is receiving the same from the planet Saturn located in the that house, causing a strong relationship between the Moon and the ninth house (along with the planet therein).

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, it is seen that he was adept in the art of meditation. Not only he could reach the highest stages of *Samādhi* but he could also uplift the minds of his various disciples and devotees to those higher realms of spiritual experiences at his will.

3) *Gurubhakti Yoga: Sarvārthachintāmañi* (7. The 9<sup>th</sup> house.55) includes a verse that can reveal special reverence of the seeker to his/her *Guru*.

गुरुस्थानेशसंयुक्तनवांशाधिपतौ यदा ।  
गुरुशुक्रेक्षिते वापि गुरुभक्तियुतो भवेत् ॥५५॥

Meaning: The native becomes devoted to his teacher if the navamsha dispositor of the lord of ninth house is conjoined with or aspected by Jupiter and/or Venus.

For the native under consideration the ninth house falls in the sign Libra, Venus being its lord. In the *Navāmsa* chart also Venus is located in the Libra *Navāmsa*. Hence, Venus itself is the said dispositor and is being aspected by Jupiter through rashi drishti from the sign, Gemini. The native was found to be absolutely obedient to his *Gurus* during his discipleship under their respective guidance, e.g. of Bhairavi Brahmani during Tantra *Sādhanā*, Swami Totapuri during Vedantic *Sādhanā* or Gobind Ray while practising Sufi tradition etc.

4) *Pravrajyā Yoga-1*: A classical definition of *Pravrajya* yoga that has already been mentioned by Sri B. V. Raman in his book, “Notable Horoscopes” is found in BPHS (79.8).<sup>[17] [10]</sup>

शनिदृक्काणसंस्थे च शनिभौमनवांशके ।  
शनिदृष्टे विधौ ज्ञेया प्रव्रज्या शनिसम्भवा ॥८॥

Meaning: If the Moon is situated in the decanate of Saturn or in the *Navāmsa* of Saturn/ Mars while being aspected by Saturn leads to the *Pravrajyā* governed by Saturn.

Similar versions of this *Pravrajyā* yoga is available in *Sarvārthachintāmañi* (8.Sannyasa Yogas.3) and *Jātaka Pārijāta* (15.41). However, these two texts do not mention that this *Pravrajyā* would be actually signified by Saturn. One important observation regarding this *Yoga* is that from its description it appears to be a is very general one as it does not give any importance to either the placement or the lordship of the planets involved in it, i.e. the Moon and Saturn. Hence, its fructification cannot be guaranteed for all natives having this combination in their birth charts. However, for the current chart of interest it is seen that both the planets are located in a *Kendra* or *Koñā* position with considerable strengths. The Moon is considerably strong while Saturn is the most powerful planet here as it is endowed with a shadbala strength of 169% and the *Simhāsana Vaisheshikāmsa* (strong *Vargas* of D1, D3, D7, D9 and D10, shown in Table-1). It can be

noted that each planet that governs the ascetic *Yoga* signifies its own specific type of asceticism. The *Pravrajyālakshanas* (unique characteristics of asceticism) of each planet given in these classical texts can be interpreted as the different temperaments of the seeker that prompts him to choose a particular path for realisation. Table-5 lists the distinctive characteristics of *Pravrajyā* governed by different planets. According to Table-5 it can be said that the seeker for whom the Sun is the dominant signifier of *Pravrajyā* would have an inclination to lead his life in a lonely environment, away from the clamour of society. In case of the Moon it may denote either an ascetic, who is connected with the social life and receives veneration from the public or the ascetic who

may carry a skull for begging or for rituals prescribed by Tantric scriptures. Mars may indicate a tendency towards yogic and meditational temperament. Dominant influence of Mercury may lead an ascetic towards becoming talkative i.e. more interested in intellectual and logical argumentations (*Vichāra Mārga*) regarding the ultimate Truth. Taking initiation in a monastic order and scriptural studies under the supervision of a competent *Guru* may be governed by Jupiter. Venus may indicate one who is inclined towards wandering to different centres of pilgrimage and learning and thus enrich one's knowledge. Inclination towards severe physical austerity may be signified by Saturn.

**Table 5:** *Pravrajyālakshanas* of different planets according to BPHS and *Jātaka Parijāta*

Planet	Name According to BPHS (79.2-3)	Name According to Jataka Parijata (15.15)	Characteristics According to Jataka Parijata (15.16)
Sun	<i>Tapaswi</i> (Ascetic)	<i>Vānaprastha</i>	Dwelling in forests, hills.
Moon	<i>Kapāli</i> (bearer of skull)	<i>Guru</i>	Celebrated teacher with royal splendour
Mars	Raktavastradhrik (wearing red clothes)	<i>Shākya</i>	Yogi/ Meditator
Mercury	<i>Ekadandi</i>	<i>Jeevaka</i>	Garrulous and gluttonous
Jupiter	<i>Yati</i> (Monk)	<i>Bhikshu</i>	Bearing a staff symbolising vow and engaged in the study of holy scriptures
Venus	<i>Chakradhara</i> (bearer of wheel or disc)	<i>Charaka</i>	Wandering monk
Saturn	<i>Nirgrantha</i>	<i>Vivāsa</i>	Naked ascetic

It can be noted that the *Guru* who initiated Sri Ramakrishna into Vedantic Sannyasa was Sri Totapuri, a Naga Sadhu, corroborating the indications given in the verse of BPHS (79.8). However, the following verse from *Jātaka Parijāta* (15.19) points towards multiplicity of the paths followed by the native in his spiritual journey.

5) *Pravrajyā Yoga-2:*

शुक्रेन्दुप्रविलोकिते गतबले लग्नाधिपे निर्धनो  
भिक्षुः स्याद्यदि तुंगभांशकयुतस्तारापति पश्यति।  
एकस्थैरवलोकिते तु बहुभिर्लग्नेश्वरे दीक्षितः  
तद्योगप्रदभावकारकदशाभुक्तौ तदीयं फलम्॥१९॥

Meaning: If the weak lord of ascendant be aspected by Venus and the Moon the native will become poor. The native becomes a *Bhikshu* (mendicant) if the moon is aspected by the ascendant lord that is situated in its exaltation *Navāmsha*. The native becomes *Dīkshita* (initiated) if the lord of ascendant is aspected by many planets situated together in a single sign. In this birth chart the ascendant lord, Saturn is being aspected through *Rāshi Drishti* by the Sun, the Moon and Mercury, all situated in a single sign, Aquarius; resulting in the second *Pravrajyā Yoga*.

6) *Pravrajyā Yoga-3:* According to Mantreshwara's *Phaladīpikā* (27.8) three strong planets occupying simultaneously a single good house can lead the native to the path of asceticism.

चत्वारो द्युचराः खनाथसहिताः केन्द्रे त्रिकोणेऽथवा  
सुस्थाने बलिनस्त्रयो यदि तदा सन्याससिद्धिर्भवेत्।  
सद्बहुल्यवशाच्च तत्र सुशुभस्थानस्थितैस्तेर्वदेत्  
प्रव्रज्यां महितां सतामभिमतां चेदन्यथा निन्दिताम् ॥८॥

Meaning: If four planets occupy a *Kendra* or a *Koṇa* house along with the lord of 10<sup>th</sup> house or if three powerful planets are located in a good house it denotes success in *Sannyāsa* for the native. If the group of planets contain a greater proportion of benefic planets and situated in a benefic house the holy order will be a respectable one while the opposite condition will point to an order that does not command respect of all. Here three planets, viz. the Sun, the Moon and Mercury (with the shadballa strengths of 152%, 139% and 113%, respectively) are situated in the ascendant, Aquarius; causing a third *Pravrajyā Yoga*.

The different yogas conducive for enlightenment for the native is summarized in Table-6 below, along with the planets involved with each of them.

**Table 6:** List of Yogas related to spiritual development and the corresponding planets involved

Serial No.	Name of the Yoga	Planets Involved
1	<i>Dharmādhyaksha</i>	Venus
2	<i>Japa-Dhyāna-Samādhimān</i>	Moon, Saturn
3	<i>Guru Bhakti</i>	Venus, Jupiter
4	<i>Pravrajyā-1</i>	Moon, Saturn
5	<i>Pravrajyā-2</i>	Sun, Moon, Mercury, Saturn
6	<i>Pravrajyā-3</i>	Sun, Moon, Mercury

From Table-6 it can be clearly observed that in totality six planets, viz. the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn are involved in denoting extraordinary possibilities of spiritual growth by the formation of different *Yogas* through

various intricate combinations of their *Bhāva* lordships, positions and strengths. The multiplicity of these rare *Yogas* can be said to have propelled the native to take up different spiritual paths for the realization of the ultimate Reality.

Among all the planets conferring the great possibilities of spiritual growth on the native, Saturn is the most powerful. Moreover, it is the planet that is in relation with the maximum number of planets in the present birth chart. Hence, its period can be the most conducive one for unobstructed spiritual progress for the native. The Vimshottari *Dashā* of Saturn determined from the Jagannatha Hora software lasted from 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1847 to 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1866. The chronology of events related to the various aspects of Sadhana of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is listed in the Table-7. It is clear from the table that the period of his Sadhana that lasted for around ten years was within the *Dashā* of Saturn. However, the types of practices he undertook cannot be attributed to Saturn alone. His versatile approach towards the search after divinity can be the result of the influence of many planets. His aloofness from social life during this period can be attributed to the Sun. The Moon, representing a skull-bearer can be said to be the reason

behind his practising Tantric rituals. Mercury's influence in his ascetic temperament can be the reason behind his great capacity of *Vichāra* required for developing intense *Viveka-Vairāgya*, leading him to the state of a "Paramahansa". Jupiter's influence can be considered as the reason for being a Shishya devoted wholeheartedly to the commands of his *Guru* during each *Sādhanā*. His life history shows that he followed a particular path and after reaching its goal he started to follow another. The easy transitions from one path to another can be attributed to Venus that represents an ascetic called "Charaka", he who wanders. And of course, the influence of Saturn endowed him with immense physical and mental stamina to withstand the unthinkable pains he had to undergo during the period of his *Sādhanā* that lasted for about ten years.

**Table 7:** List of important events occurred in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa during the period of his spiritual Sadhana

Year	Event
1856	First divine inebriation and divine vision
1857	Worship of divine Mother, <i>Kālī</i> with <i>Rāganugā Bhakti</i>
1860	Divine inebriation for second time
1861	Arrival of Bhairavi Brahmani, the <i>Guru</i> of <i>Tāntric Sādhanā</i>
1862	Starting of <i>Tantra Sādhanā</i>
1863	Completion of <i>Tantra Sādhanā</i>
1864	1) Practice of <i>Vātsalya Bhakti</i> under the guidance of Jatadhari, a worshipper of child form of Sri Ramachandra 2) Practice of Madhura <i>Bhāva</i> 3) Initiation into Sannyasa by Totapuri
1866	1) In advaitic plane of consciousness for six months 2) Practice of Sufi faith

## Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that the efficacy of the *Yogas* that endows one with spiritual growth and ultimately the realisation of Self is examined in this work. The life events of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa have been utilized to substantiate the validity of these *Yogas*. The classical texts of Vedic astrology are used for referring to these important *Yogas* that can mould the human life in a specific way. The two-fold utility/ ability of these *Yogas*, i.e. judging the inherent inclinations of a native and the life situations one is going to face is evaluated. During all these analyses the method described by Sri B. V. Raman for judging the strength of such *Yogas* is applied. This work may be expected to stimulate further research on the utility of Vedic astrology in evaluating the inherent potentials of each individual and tap it for the benefit of the society.

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