

The Virgo Ascendant

by Edith Hathaway

Excerpt from *In Search of Destiny: Biography, History & Culture*
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Introduction

The Sanskrit word for Virgo is **Kanya**, meaning “the maiden” or “virgin.” Its symbol is a young woman, often pictured in a boat, holding wheat (or corn) in one hand and fire in the other.¹ Given this symbol, we know Virgo is greatly concerned with purity – both in food and agriculture and in mental and verbal discrimination. And if not, the body strongly rebels and may well suffer ill health. Virgo is often asked to carry the fire of dispute and to play the role of arbiter. It is a dual sign – *Dwivabhava*, in the earth element, with the Vedic noble aim of **Artha** – oriented towards material security. Ruled by Mercury, it shows the more practical, logical energy of Mercury. In the dual earth sign – there is a versatility that seeks practical avenues and goals. Virgo is associated with the **Shudra** (servant) class. It refers to those who serve with their labor to get things done on a practical level, often producing something tangible in physical terms. Mercury is a neutral planet highly influenced by its sign, house, and *nakshatra* position, as well as by aspects and contacts from other planets. Exalted in Virgo, Mercury in this sign is associated with high intellect and with an excellent level of discrimination, especially as a sign closely linked with work, service and the business community. Virgo can be elevated in these areas, though it often has to deal with tough competition, critics and condemnation in the process of achieving its goals.

All the meanings of the 6th house come into the 6th sign of Virgo: debt, disease, enemies, and competitors. Thus Virgo can bring struggle in various forms, including with health, conflict, and sacrifice. With Virgo, or 6th house emphasis, we are dealing with all these issues, some of them naturally difficult – as they bring discord and the collision of opinions. Virgo Ascendant or emphasis can be argumentative and overly critical, depending on the strength and interactions of Mercury and Mars, but also highly skilled in debate. Virgo emphasis often requires the destiny to deal with dissension of varying degrees, including wars, or correcting wrongs – through military means or through legal or medical procedures. This includes arbitration or mediation. Similarly, if an important transit or *Dasha* focuses on this area in the chart, there may be a short-term destiny to deal with such matters. Virgo is associated with the working efficiency of the body, which puts emphasis on health, but also on work itself as an efficient process, especially the service aspect of work. Occupations often associated with Virgo or the 6th house are these: medicine or the healing arts, diagnostics, law, the military, accountancy, statistics, cleaning or dry cleaning.

¹ “Virgo is a woman standing in a boat carrying with her corn and fire.” *Jataka Parijata*, Chapter 1, *Shloka* (verse) 8.

As with Gemini Ascendant, also ruled by Mercury, the physical body may be overly sensitive – as the Ascendant lord rules over the nervous and digestive systems and the skin, making the person more vulnerable to input from the outside world, but often equally gifted for understanding what to do with that input. In the earth sign Virgo, results can be very practical, and with prominence of *Hasta nakshatra* it may produce a concrete body of work. Health and speech may be adversely affected if Ascendant lord Mercury is poorly placed and aspected, as well as the *karakas* for vitality: Sun and Mars. With Virgo Ascendant, Mars is well placed in its own sign in the 8th house, as is the Sun in the 12th house from the Ascendant. These are two *Viparita Raja yogas*, where lords of *Dusthana* houses reside in their own houses or in each other's houses (6, 8, or 12, clockwise from the Ascendant of a South Indian chart, counter-clockwise for North Indian chart). Fortifying the affairs of those *Dusthana* houses, these *yogas* are considered excellent protection from losses and competition, especially when the Virgo-Pisces axis brings innate themes of sacrifice and hard work which may or may not result in victory.

“Mars is powerful, even in his enemy's house.” **Kalidasa**, *Uttara Kalamrita*, Section IV, *Shloka* 16.

We pay particular attention to the warrior planet Mars – to whom Mercury is a planetary enemy. Though Mars is technically neutral to Mercury, as 8th house lord it is a challenge to Virgo Ascendant. When it is located in the Virgo Ascendant, it can bring enemies to one's doorstep. However, as *karka* of vitality, it can also bring youthful exuberance. The person may appear brimming with energy, especially if Mercury and Sun are strong and well situated. We look at three examples of Mars on the Virgo Ascendant, the most famous of which is Sir Winston Churchill – a man both praised and criticized for being a “war-monger.” His Mars *Dasha* (Nov. 30, 1913 to Nov. 30, 1920) should have finished his career and reputation, but he survived it. (There were huge losses during the Dardanelles military campaign in World War I due to his bad decisions.)

Venus is the best planet for Virgo Ascendant and is *Nadi Yogakaraka*. It has *maraka* status as 2nd house lord, but escapes most of the difficult connotations of *maraka* due to its ownership of the excellent 9th house. There are special rules from the classic *Bhavartha Ratnakara, Kanya* [Virgo], Stanza 1:

“For a person born in Virgo Ascendant, if the Sun is related to Venus or the Moon by mutual conjunction, aspect, etc., etc. there will be access to wealth in the course of Sun's *Dasha*.” Then in Stanza 2: “The person becomes bereft of wealth in Venus *Dasha*. Mixed results will happen in the course of Moon's *Dasha*.”

Considering the Sun rules the 12th house of loss and expenditures, this is an interesting turn of affairs and just opposite to what you might suppose. But all this depends on whether Venus contacts the Sun in the same sign, which is frequently the case, as they are never more than 48 degrees apart. And on the whole, Venus remains the best planet for Virgo Ascendant. But as with all planets, its *Navamsha* position will be absolutely crucial to the outcome of the birth chart, being the fruit of what is promised in the natal chart.

There are few other favorable planets for the Virgo Ascendant chart. Saturn – the other planetary friend of Mercury – is problematic since it rules both the 5th and 6th houses from the Ascendant. While the trinal (5th) house is favorable, the *Dusthana* (6th) house is not. Benefic Jupiter is also problematic as a *Maraka* planet ruling the 7th house and as a benefic owning a *Kendra* – neutralizing its ability to bestow auspiciousness as a classical benefic. This condition is called *Kendradhipatya Dosha*. (See Glossary) But as noted before, such as with the Aries Ascendant, less harm is done if the planet owning a *kendra* is also a planetary friend to the Ascendant lord: Moon, in that case. Since Jupiter is not a planetary friend to Mercury, it can cause particular problems for the Virgo Ascendant person, especially in the realm of relationships, as it rules the 7th house of partnerships. Beyond those reasons, Mercury and Jupiter also have an uneasy relationship, as described in earlier chapters in the myth of Soma and Tara. Even so, Mercury can benefit from Jupiter’s greater knowledge.

The triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions in Virgo in late 1980 and 1981, all in *Hasta nakshatra*, were the harbingers for the next twenty years and beyond in social/economic/political terms, especially as the second set of triple JU-SA conjunctions to occur in the 20th century. (See Chapter 1) *Hasta nakshatra* is noted for its ability to gain what we are seeking and manifest it, particularly with the use of our hands – as *Hasta* means “the hand.” A new Age of Electronic Information became possible, with the hand-held communication device as a key factor. Set in the EARTH-dominant era and magnified by occurring three times, the JU-SA conjunctions in Virgo would have to bring practical results, illuminating Virgo on a larger scale. They signaled the intense acceleration of events and unprecedented progress in telecommunications and the information technologies. We witnessed the practical side of Mercury that most concerns itself with serving a broad range of people and changing the way people work. The working efficiency of the developed and developing world changed profoundly, as did most technological forms of communications, with the proliferation of the personal computer (more and more portable), more accessible software, cell phones, and by the early 1990s – the Internet, perhaps the most radical development of all. This helps to understand Virgo’s inherent nature and capacities, especially its versatility and adaptability as a dual earth sign, and its rulership over the nervous system of the individual and of the world.

Nakshatras: Virgo contains the following three *nakshatras*: **Uttara Phalguni** (starting at 26:40 Leo, in the previous sign) 00:00 Virgo – 10:00 Virgo (ruled by the Sun), **Hasta** 10:00 – 23:20 Taurus (ruled by the Moon), and **Chitra** 23:20 – 30:00 Virgo (ruled by Mars). (*Chitra* continues into Libra up to 6:40.) The Virgo Ascendant, or any planet situated in one of these three *nakshatras* is colored by being: 1) in Virgo, ruled by Mercury; 2) in one of these three *nakshatras*, ruled by Sun, Moon, or Mars, respectively; and 3) by aspects to the Ascendant and Ascendant lord Mercury.

Again, Venus is the best planet for Virgo Ascendant, and is *Nadi yogakaraka*. Ascendant Lord Mercury is exalted in Virgo, maximum exaltation at 15:00 Virgo. Venus is debilitated in Virgo, maximum debilitation at 27:00 Virgo.²

² It may seem confusing at first that Venus is debilitated in Virgo, when at the same time Venus is the most auspicious planet for a Virgo Ascendant chart. While Venus and Mercury are planetary friends,

Chart examples:

- 1) **Sir Winston Churchill**, British statesman, soldier, author, Prime Minister 1940-45, 1951-55
- 2) **John F. Kennedy**, famous family, American politician, U.S. President 1961-63, Democratic congressman 1947-53, U.S. Senator 1953-61
- 3) **Barbara Walters**, American television journalist
- 4) **Françoise Gilot**, French artist & writer, mother of two children of Pablo Picasso

Author's notes, Sept. 2015: The Virgo Ascendant chapter, from *In Search of Destiny*, 2012, (pp. 321-388) includes in-depth coverage of the four Example Charts given above, followed by 2 pp. with questions on the Virgo Ascendant charts, reviewing all charts. Continuing the Virgo theme, and with transiting Sun, Mercury Retrograde and Rahu currently in Virgo – we note a number of recurring issues, especially highlighted with the eclipse axis (Rahu and Ketu) transiting through Virgo-Pisces from July 15, 2014 to Jan. 9, 2016. Please see my article “Syria Boils Over...” also in this Oct. 2015 issue of *Astrologic magazine* for further commentary on the astrological reasons why Syria's Civil War has finally now boiled over into Europe and the rest of the world with the refugee crisis and the huge military expenditures from outside the Middle East to try to contain ISIS, the Sunni-extremist movement that now controls much of Iraq, Syria, and large parts of Libya, Nigeria, and eastern Afghanistan – and over 10 million people. The rapid accumulation of ISIS successes in gaining territory has coincided with the transit of Rahu and Ketu on the Virgo-Pisces axis. We examine the significance of this fact.

With Virgo emphasized, we also note themes of needed purification, especially concerning health and environment, of workers' rights and grievances making headlines more than usual, and religious issues or religious figures getting involved in all of the above, with Pisces bringing in the religious component, and/or larger groups of people either suffering or in need of compassion because of their suffering – both going hand in hand with Virgo-Pisces emphasis. This list could go on to include various major product liability suits, one of them with Volkswagon and its computer program to skirt carbon emission regulations, and others with pharmaceutical companies, either regarding a drug's contents or pricing or both. (See items below in the Selected Bibliography.)

Also, in the summer of 2015, U.S. Presidential candidate Donald Trump was attracting large crowds and proposing radical solutions for America's immigration problems, also catering to staunchly xenophobic factions of the Republican Party. Meanwhile, on the other side of the spectrum, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton made ever more progressive policy statements as the Pope's USA visit approached. And Pope Francis and Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders were drawing big crowds with

Mercury-ruled Virgo is the 6th sign and closely associated with the classical 6th house – considered the least advantageous house position for Venus. Furthermore, a planet is always debilitated in the sign opposite its exaltation sign. (Venus is exalted in the 6th house of the Libra Ascendant chart – both beneficial and problematic.)

their statements on climate change and the vast and ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor. They both spoke of the need for more compassion and better treatment of immigrants, especially refugees from war-torn countries such as Syria. The unprecedented 184-page Papal Encyclical “Laudate Si” – dated May 24, 2015 – had its official release at 12 noon on June 18, 2015, at the Vatican, and marked the first time a Pope has definitively entered the discussion on climate change, its implications and imperatives, according to Pope Francis. This was his 2nd encyclical since being installed as Pope March 19, 2013, and the first written entirely by him. The translated subtitle of the Encyclical is: “On [the] care for our common home.”

To close, here are some Virgo/Pisces themes, excerpted from my book *In Search of Destiny*, 2012, Footnote 39, p. 39. This series of events reflects in mundane terms both the astrological reality of the Virgo/Pisces axis as well as the power of the Jupiter-Saturn opposition, which occurs 10 to 11 years into the major 20-year Jupiter-Saturn conjunction cycle:

The **Virgo/Pisces axis** is associated with workers, work and health conditions, and sacrifices made in both arenas. It is also about nations, races, or segments of the population who have been victimized. Pisces can involve spiritual leaders and themes of salvation, or perceived as salvation. If a national chart has Sagittarius Ascendant (such as the U.S. or Japan), the Virgo/Pisces axis radically impacts its infrastructure, especially the oceans or water supply, with Pisces in the 4th house. The **first exact JU-SA opposition in Pisces/Virgo occurred Aug. 16, 2010**. The Deepwater Horizon Oil explosion occurred April 20, 2010, resulting in the largest-ever **oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico**, with 11 workers killed, vast damage to the ecosystem, fishing and tourism industries, and health of workers and local residents. A government commission found BP (British Petroleum), Halliburton, and Transocean lacking in safety and risk assessment. Federal regulation was also found to be very weak. On **March 28, 2011 the second (and last) exact JU-SA opposition in Pisces/Virgo** occurred. Numerous relevant events can be cited: **1)** From Jan. 2011 **unprecedented protests by citizens around the world** focused on inequities for workers and students created by autocrats and/or autocratic behavior favoring the very rich at the expense of the broader population of citizens. Many unarmed citizens were killed by government forces in several nations operating under long-term Emergency powers to protect their unlimited authority. **2)** On March 11, 2011, a **massive 9.0 earth quake and tsunami hit NE Japan**, killing around 24,000 people, with thousands more missing, and de-stabilizing the entire Japanese economy. Already in need of repair, six nuclear reactors in Fukushima, Japan were severely damaged, and evolved into the world’s worst known catastrophe up to that point involving radioactive leaks from a nuclear plant. **3)** On March 14, 2011, **His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV retired** from his position as Head of the Tibetan government in exile (in India), one he had held for 61 years, from March 17, 1950. On May 29, 2011 he delegated his administrative and political authorities to the democratically elected leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration. China has pressured other nations not to recognize him or his government since March 29, 1959, when he fled Tibet during its uprising against China. **4)** On March 29, 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court heard its first oral arguments in the case of **Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores**,

Inc., the largest class action suit (1.6 million women) against the world's largest private employer. On June 19, 2001, employee Betty Dukes first filed a class action sex discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart Stores, charging that Wal-Mart discriminated against women in promotions, pay, and job assignments in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The case began in 2000, coinciding with the **JU-SA conjunction**. On June 20, 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the 1.6 million women plaintiffs, saying that they may not seek a class action lawsuit as a group, but can do so individually. This overturned a lower appeals court ruling. **5)** On April 1, 2011, esteemed African-American scholar **Manning Marable** died, shortly before the release on April 4, 2011 of his life's work, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, a book revealing new facts about his subject, including three chapters of his famous *Autobiography* never published, and held back by co-author Alex Haley. Marable takes a deeper look into the history of black American slaves and slavery.

Selected references

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