

The Origin of the Names of Days in the Light of Hora Shashtra of Hindu Mythology

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Abstract: *The seven-day week, a universal temporal framework, has its origins deeply embedded in ancient civilizations. In Hindu mythology, the naming of days is systematically explained through Hora Shashtra, a branch of Jyotisha Shashtra (Vedic astrology), which associates each day with a ruling planet (Graha). This paper explores the astronomical, philosophical, and cultural foundations of the seven-day nomenclature as derived from Hora Shashtra, emphasizing its scientific precision and spiritual symbolism. The study also examines parallels between the Hindu planetary week and similar systems in Babylonian and Greco-Roman traditions, highlighting the enduring influence of Vedic cosmology on global timekeeping.*

Keywords: Hora Shashtra, Jyotisha Shashtra, Hindu mythology, planetary week, Graha, Vedic astrology, Surya, Chandra, Mangal, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani, planetary hours, cosmic rhythm, time division, Hindu cosmology, ancient astronomy, cultural continuity, comparative chronology, temporal symbolism.

1. Introduction

The division of time into a seven-day week is a phenomenon observed across multiple ancient civilizations, including the Babylonian, Roman, and Hindu cultures. In the Hindu tradition, the **Hora Shashtra**—a specialized branch of **Jyotisha Shashtra**—provides a systematic and scientific explanation for the naming of days based on planetary rulership. Each day is governed by a celestial body that influences both cosmic and human activities. This study investigates the origins, logic, and continuity of this system within Hindu cosmology, exploring its philosophical depth and its resonance with other ancient timekeeping systems.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, comparative, and interpretative research approach. Primary sources include classical Sanskrit texts such as **Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra**, **Surya Siddhanta**, and **Vishnu Purana**. Secondary sources include modern scholarly interpretations, astronomical analyses, and comparative studies of ancient

calendars. The methodology integrates textual analysis, historical comparison, and philosophical interpretation to trace the evolution and significance of the planetary week in Hindu thought.

The Concept of Hora in Hindu Astrology

The term **Hora** originates from the Sanskrit word **Ahorātra**, meaning “day and night.” According to **Hora Shashtra**, a day is divided into 24 **Horas**, each ruled by one of the seven visible planets: Sun (**Surya**), Moon (**Chandra**), Mars (**Mangal**), Mercury (**Budha**), Jupiter (**Guru**), Venus (**Shukra**), and Saturn (**Shani**). The sequence of planetary rulership follows a cyclical pattern, forming the foundation for the naming of days.

The first **Hora** after sunrise determines the planetary ruler of that day. For instance, if the first **Hora** after sunrise is ruled by the Sun, the day is called **Ravivara** (Sunday). This pattern continues throughout the week, creating a cosmic rhythm that aligns human activity with celestial influence.

The Seven Days and Their Planetary Rulers

Day (English)	Sanskrit Name	Ruling Planet (Graha)	Symbolic Attributes
Sunday	Ravivara	Surya (Sun)	Vitality, authority, illumination
Monday	Somavara	Chandra (Moon)	Emotions, intuition, fertility
Tuesday	Mangalavara	Mangal (Mars)	Courage, energy, conflict
Wednesday	Budhavara	Budha (Mercury)	Intellect, communication, trade
Thursday	Guruvara	Guru (Jupiter)	Wisdom, spirituality, expansion
Friday	Shukravara	Shukra (Venus)	Love, beauty, prosperity
Saturday	Shanivara	Shani (Saturn)	Discipline, endurance, karma

Astronomical and Philosophical Basis

The **Hora Shashtra** system is grounded in both astronomical observation and metaphysical reasoning. The sequence of planetary hours follows the Chaldean order—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon—based on their apparent speed and distance from Earth. The Hindu adaptation integrates this order into a cyclical pattern aligned with sunrise, symbolizing the renewal of cosmic energy each day.

Philosophically, each planet represents a distinct aspect of cosmic consciousness. The weekly cycle mirrors the interplay of divine forces governing creation (**Srishti**), preservation (**Sthiti**), and transformation (**Samhara**). The **Hora** system thus encourages alignment of human actions with planetary energies, fostering harmony between the microcosm (individual life) and the macrocosm (universe).

Comparative Analysis with Other Civilizations

The planetary week in Hindu tradition parallels similar systems in Babylonian and Greco-Roman cultures, where days were also named after celestial bodies. However, the Hindu **Hora Shashtra** predates many of these systems and offers a more intricate mathematical and spiritual framework.

The Babylonian system, for instance, was primarily astronomical, while the Greco-Roman adaptation emphasized mythological associations. In contrast, the Hindu model integrates astronomy, astrology, and spirituality, reflecting a holistic worldview. The continuity of the seven-day week across civilizations underscores the universality of celestial observation as a foundation for temporal organization.

3. Discussion

The **Hora Shashtra** not only provides a scientific explanation for the naming of days but also reflects the Hindu understanding of time as cyclical and sacred. The planetary week serves as a symbolic representation of cosmic order (**Rta**), where each day embodies a specific energy influencing human consciousness.

Modern astronomy validates the ancient observation of planetary motion, while modern psychology recognizes the rhythmic influence of time cycles on human behavior. The **Hora** system thus bridges ancient wisdom and contemporary science, offering insights into the synchronization of human life with cosmic patterns.

4. Conclusion

The origin of the names of days, as explained in **Hora Shashtra**, reveals the profound synthesis of astronomy, philosophy, and spirituality in Hindu thought. The system's precision in linking planetary motion with daily cycles demonstrates the scientific acumen of ancient Indian scholars. Moreover, its philosophical depth underscores the belief in cosmic interconnectedness—a principle that continues to inspire both scientific inquiry and spiritual reflection.

The study concludes that the Hindu planetary week, rooted in **Hora Shashtra**, not only influenced global timekeeping traditions but also embodies a timeless vision of harmony between the celestial and the terrestrial realms.

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