

Jaimini Jyotiṣa:

A Theory and Research Regarding Ketu and Argala

by Greg Stein



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1.1.9. *viparītam ketoh.*

viparītam = the reverse, the opposite

ketoh = from Ketu

"the reverse/opposite from Ketu"

Within the first 10 “threads” of the Upadeśa Sūtras, Maharṣi Jaimini explains a concept called “Argala.” This concept is described just following sign aspects, implying that Argala is yet another way that grahas can influence other places in a chart in the context of Jaimini Jyotiṣa. However, there are some different opinions as to the proper and complete interpretation of Jaimini’s Sūtras on the matter of Argala. One Sūtra that has elicited numerous alternative interpretations is 1.1.9 - regarding Ketu’s role in Argala formation. The author wishes to share one theory regarding a possible interpretation, which differs from any presently known as far as he is aware, as an invitation for this matter to be investigated further by any who may wish to do so.

First off, what is Argala? “Argala” is a Sanskrit word which can be translated to mean a “bolt” or “latch.” Argala to a point in a chart (thus influencing a specific sign, house and any planets therein) is considered a favorable factor in the context of Jaimini chart analysis. It is said it helps make any results indicated by the point (sign/house/planet[s]) receiving Argala more definite when that point is activated during its Rāśi Daśā.^{1 2}

¹ Boney, M. (2017). The Essentials of Jaimini: A Practical Guide. Cardiff, CA: Sarasvati Publications.

² Please note that a basic knowledge of Jaimini is assumed in this article. Readers unfamiliar with the methods of Jaimini style analysis and the concept of argala are invited to refer to the above book.

Considering the minimalist approach that Jaimini has taken in his sūtras, with the intent of conveying the maximum meaning with minimum words, I imagine the term “Argala” was chosen very carefully and intentionally. “Bolting something down” implies securing a particular outcome. One can only “bolt down” something which is physical or material in nature. Thus, after some reflection I have come to think of Argala in terms of the word “materialization.” I feel it is a factor which aids in the manifestation of tangible, material results.

Now in the last sūtra devoted to Argala, Jaimini “singles out” Ketu:

1.1.9. *viparītam ketoh.*

Viparītam can be translated as “the reverse” or “the opposite,” and *ketoh* means simply “from Ketu,” or “of Ketu.” Please note that I am not a Sanskrit scholar, although I have studied the very basics of the language. Logically however, I would like to pose the following question:

“The opposite ___?___ from Ketu?”

I imagine the great sage cleverly presented this to us as a puzzle or kind of riddle. Perhaps he did not flesh out all of the “nitty gritty” details, because he wanted us to have to think, reflect, and deeply understand the underlying principles behind Argala. Having understood the intended meaning, perhaps a very logical “picture” would emerge which could then be verified by research and testing of the principles. He is counting on us to really “know our stuff” in terms of the basics of Jyotiṣa.

So, what sets Ketu apart? How is Ketu different from all of the other grahas, such that it should get “singled” out in this series of sūtras on Argala? The answer which seems most apparent, in my humble opinion, is that Ketu is the “Mokṣa Kāraka” - the planetary significator for liberation. Mokṣa or liberation implies a “letting go” or a “release” - indeed the very opposite of “materialization,” yes? So I would like to offer one possible answer to the above ‘puzzle:’

“The opposite results from Ketu.”

i.e. interpreted as: “Ketu, when in an Argala position to a sign/house/planet will give the opposite effects of Argala, indicating the results (of that sign/house/planet) will be less likely to materialize or come to fruition.”³

³ This may also be thought of as possibly indicating dissolution or loss.

Implications of this interpretation of the Sūtra

I believe that the above interpretation has a number of implications. First, having a reason in mind for why Ketu may be different in this respect with regards to Argala helps us to more fully understand the very function of Argala itself. Gracefully, in such succinct language, Jaimini has perhaps painted a complete picture for us in order that we may thoroughly comprehend the underlying concept. This suggests that Argala is to be used in terms of assessing material or tangible results such as finances, worldly success, and relationships, but not intangible or subtle results, such as spirituality.

A second point to consider is that perhaps Rāhu (but not Ketu) can be used in the formation of Argala. Rāhu after all can be characterized as a materialistic graha by nature. If this were not the case, it would have been logical for Maharṣi Jaimini to include Rāhu in sūtra 1.1.9.

A third implication of the given interpretation of sūtra 1.1.9 is that the kāraka nature of any graha(s) forming Argala is significant, and may indicate the manner in which the results materialize. This is the very idea behind the notion that Ketu will give the opposite results, because Ketu's kāraka nature is to "de-materialize" (and/or "spiritualize").

Thus, the concept that "śubha argala" (argala formed by natural benefics) tends to be more favorable than "pāpa argala" (argala formed by natural malefics)⁴. We can thus extend this principle to make more nuanced interpretations. For example, Venus forming an argala to a point may indicate results materializing in a beautiful or elegant way, while Jupiter may indicate something materializing in a very dharmic or virtuous manner. Argala from Saturn may cause something to materialize slowly, or with delay. Rāhu may indicate something materializing via odd, unusual, or unconventional means. We can extend this to understand how any of the grahas (other than Ketu) may give their argala effects.

⁴ i.e. Note however that argala formed by strong natural malefics may give relatively more favorable results, while argala formed by weak natural benefics may not prove as favorable as they would otherwise.

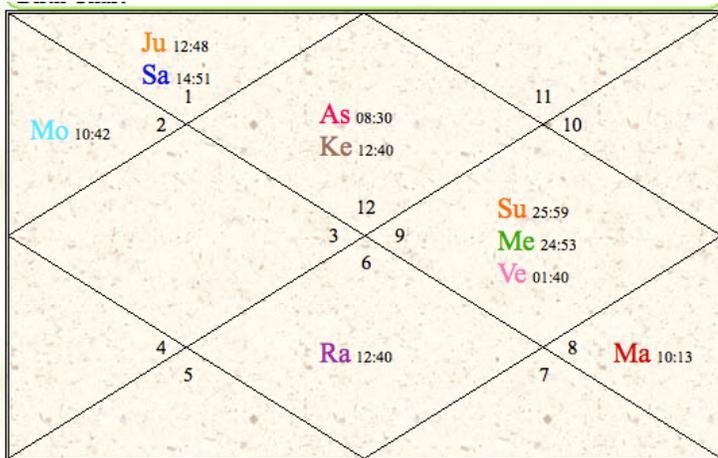
Researching this Principle

With Argala as only one of numerous factors to consider while interpreting the results of a Rāṣi Daśā in Jaimini Jyotiṣa, the challenge is to isolate this principle enough to correlate it with objective events which have occurred in the life of a native. The author has made an attempt to find examples where Ketu is in a principle argala position to a particular Rāṣi⁵, with no other grahas forming any type of argala to that same point. Another criteria was that there should be no grahas in an obstruction point to Ketu, which might nullify the effects of “de-materialization.”

The final step was to note the karma phala one might predict during that Rāṣi’s Daśā⁶, and then to see what actually happened at that time. Did Ketu in an argala position correlate with the other-wise expected results becoming unraveled in some way?

Examples of the Effect of Ketu in Argala Positions

Joan Baez’s Taurus Daśā



Birth Details:
January 9th, 1941
10:45am Staten Island, New York, USA

MO is the PK
Taurus Daśā ran from 1/9/59 until 1/9/66

⁵ i.e. 2, 4 or 11 Rāṣi’s away.

⁶ Note that for the sake of simplicity, Cara Daśā has been used exclusively in this article.

From age 18 until 25, Joan Baez ran her Taurus Cara Daśā.⁷ Note in Taurus her bright, waxing, Exalted Moon which is the Putra Kāraka. It is not aspected by any other graha (via Rāśi Dṛṣṭi), and therefor unafflicted. In the context of Jaimini, one important theme the PK can represent is education. Considering its dignity in her chart, and the impeccable timing of her Taurus Daśā, one might predict that she would receive a good college education during those “education years.”

Now, note that Ketu is in the 11th house from Taurus - a principle argala position. There are no other grahas forming any type of argala, and also no grahas in the 3rd from Taurus which might be taken to obstruct the effects of Ketu’s placement. In 1958, Joan moved with her family to Boston where she did enroll in Boston University, only to drop out after about 6 weeks.⁸ This must have been just before her Taurus Daśā began, the point being that running that period “at the right time” for a college education did not give the results one may otherwise predict.

Note that running her Taurus Daśā, which would give the results of the 3rd house and her PK-Moon, is a very nice indication for the pursuit of her music career as an expression of her creative gifts. As a matter of fact, it was at this time that she created her first albums and gave significant performances which resulted in a career breakthrough. So one might say that something surely did “materialize” at this time despite Ketu’s “interference.” However, with further reflection one way to understand this is that Baez’s music was essentially a “spiritualizing” phenomena and therefore congruent with Ketu’s effects here.

Contrast this with the idea of a “down-to-earth” worldly education that one might pursue to “get a job and pay the bills” in the conventional sense, and we can understand how this placement seemed to show that Joan was destined to “cast it all to the wind” instead. To get more of a feel for what this time was like for Joan and her music, note this excerpt from Wikipedia:

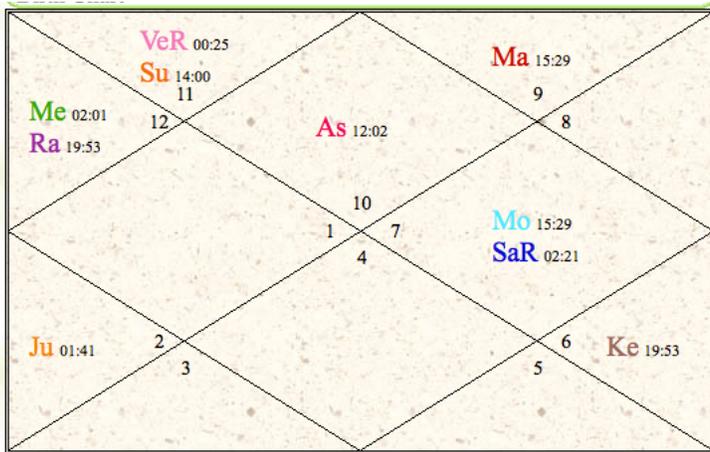
“[Bob] Gibson invited Baez to perform with him at the 1959 Newport Folk Festival, where the two sang two duets, "Virgin Mary Had One Son" and "We Are Crossing Jordan River." The performance generated substantial praise for the "barefoot Madonna" with the otherworldly voice, and it was this appearance that led to Baez signing with Vanguard Records the following year although Columbia Records tried to sign her first. Baez later claimed that she felt she would be given more artistic license at a more "low key" label. Baez's nickname at the time, "Madonna", has been attributed to her clear voice, long hair, and natural beauty, and to her role as 'Earth Mother.' ”

⁷ Note that the author is using the K.N. Rao method for calculation of Cara Daśā.

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Baez#College_music_scene_in_Massachusetts

(Note above: songs with spiritual themes, reference to her “other-worldly voice,” her choice to sign with a low-key label, etc. revealing, it seems, a lack of concern for the material, and a focus on the pursuit and expression of the spirit.)

Meher Baba’s Leo Daśā



Birth Details:
February 25, 1894
5:00am. Poonā, India

Libra Daśā - 2/26/1912 until 2/26/1916
Virgo Daśā - 2/26/1916 until 2/25/1922
Leo Daśā - 2/25/22 until 2/26/28

Meher Baba, who lived from 1894 until 1969, was considered by many to be a spiritual master of India. After a more or less “normal” childhood, from age 19 onwards his life was exclusively dedicated to matters of the spirit. Note that his spiritual quest began during his Libra Daśā, the Rāśi containing his very powerful Saturn, signifying renunciation. In addition, Libra is the pada of the 12th house of liberation, and Jupiter as an important significator for spirituality is in the 8th from Libra (the house of transformation).⁹

Meher Baba met with five spiritual masters in the early years of his journey, and spent seven years from around 1914 until late 1921 living with a teacher named Upasni Mahārāj. Note

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meher_Baba#Early_life

that most of this time with Upasni correlates with his Virgo Daśā, which is his 9th house of the Guru.

It was after this time period and only months before his Leo Daśā began that Meher Baba began attracting his own followers. Note that Leo meets our “research criteria,” with Ketu in an argala position from it. Let us look closely at what unfolded during the 6 years of this Daśā.

In 1922, at the beginning of this time, Meher Baba and his followers established a spiritual center called Manzil-e-Meem (House of the Master) in Bombay. Then in 1923, he moved with his community to a place near Ahmednagar to establish an ashram which came to be called Meherabad.¹⁰ Meherabad became the center for his work, and he went on to open a school, hospital, and dispensary there all during the 1920’s (and during his Leo Daśā). All three of these institutions were free and open to all castes and faiths.¹¹

Similar to Joan Baez’s Taurus Daśā, significant events did come to fruition in Meher Baba’s Leo period. However, these events are distinctively characterized by a lack of concern for material gain, as well as a kind of “other-worldliness.” Note that the free institutions which were open to all, something which was perhaps uncommon at the time, embody the qualities of compassion and universality which can be attributed to Ketu.

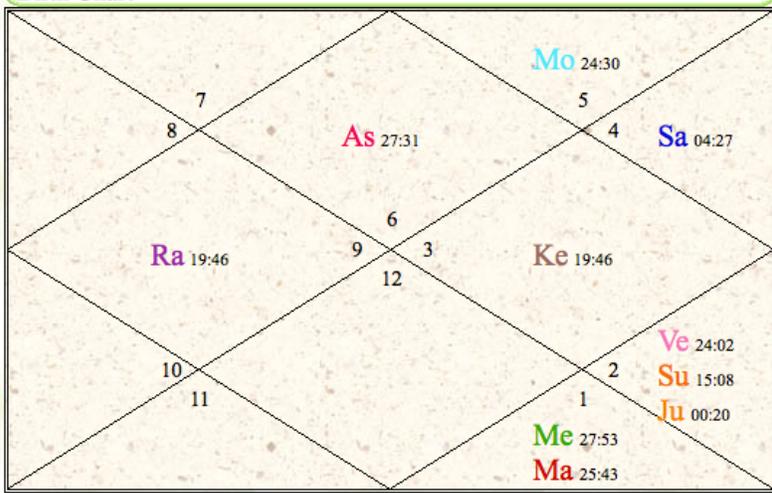
As an aside, because the event is so clearly and fascinatingly shown from the Jaimini angle, note that Meher Baba refrained from speaking for the remainder of his life beginning in July of 1925 onwards. This was during his Leo-Pisces period. Mercury as “speech giver” is debilitated in Pisces, in the 8th from Daśā lagna, and afflicted by Rāhu, Ketu and Mars via Rāśi Dṛṣṭi. As if that wasn’t enough, the 2nd house (of speech) from Leo is afflicted by Rāhu, Ketu, and Mars as well.

Meher Baba communicated only by writing and hand gestures at this point. However, in January of 1927, during his Leo-Gemini period, he renounced writing with pen and pencil as well. Note that Gemini can be considered the Rāśi of communication. It is afflicted here by the same 3 malefics, and its lord is in such a dire placement from Leo (Daśā lagna). Perhaps these events also fit the idea of Ketu in an argala position from Leo implying giving up, renouncing or releasing, rather than some kind of gain or materialization.

¹⁰ Note that Leo is the pada of the 4th (signifying the home or place of dwelling).

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meher_Baba#Early_life

John F. Kennedy's Bhrātri Kāraka



Birth Details:
May 29, 1917
15:01:11. Brookline, MA

The Moon is the BK,
the significator for siblings.

(*Note the MO is debilitated in the Navāṃśa)

In the chart of John F. Kennedy, Leo and the BK-Moon have Ketu in the 11th from them, a principle argala position. Again, no other argalas are formed to that point in the chart. First of all, as a “static” consideration, note the BK is in the 12th, afflicted by Mars, and debilitated in the Navāṃśa (thus, having an underlying weakness). Add to this the idea that Ketu in an argala position can denote some kind of loss or dissolution and we have even more confluence for issues with siblings.

So much tragedy took place in the Kennedy family that Ted Kennedy, one of JFK’s seven siblings, was led to wonder in 1969 if there was some kind of “family curse.”¹² In terms of Cara Daśā, JFK never saw his Leo period, but here a different kind of pattern emerges. Let’s take a look at the three major tragedies which occurred involving his siblings during his lifetime.

The first was in his Capricorn Daśā. Note that from Capricorn, the BK-Moon is in the 8th with the aforementioned affliction, weakness, and of course Ketu in an argala position from it. It was in November 1941, the Leo bhukti, that JFK’s younger sister Rosemary received a lobotomy

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kennedy_curse

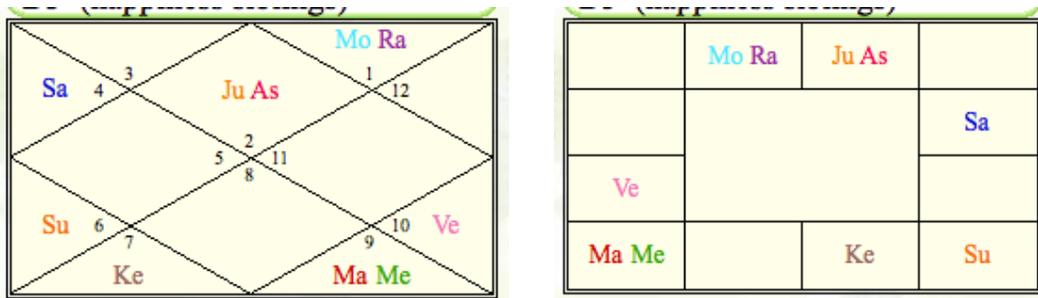
which left her incapacitated. Daśā and bhukti here are in a 6/8 relationship which is also inauspicious. This terrible event fits perfectly with the symbology of Ketu, which is depicted as a body with no head.

The second tragedy involved JFK’s older brother Joseph Jr., who died when a navy bomber exploded in flight. This happened August 12th, 1944 - in JFK’s Capricorn-Aquarius period. Again the BK-Moon is in the 8th from Daśā lagna, and in a māraka sthāna if we use Aquarius as a lagna.

The third and final sibling-related tragedy to occur during JFK’s lifetime was the loss of his younger sister Kathleen Cavendish, who died in a plane crash on May 13th, 1948. This was during his Pisces-Taurus period. Now note that the BK-Moon is in the 6th from Daśā lagna with all of its affliction.¹³ Taurus is the 3rd house (of siblings) from Daśā lagna, with the house and its lord afflicted by the GK-Saturn, the Sun and the DK-Jupiter (which can be considered like a māraka joining in on this pattern). Taurus is also flanked by Mars and Ketu, and therefore destabilized in one way or another by all of the major malefics.

As if all of the above is not enough confluence for serious troubles with siblings, just to convey the whole picture in terms of the unfoldment of JFK’s karma in this respect, let us take a look at his drekkāṇa chart.¹⁴ Again note the BK-Moon is in the 12th, this time afflicted by Rāhu. Mars is in the 8th as the significator for siblings in general (and younger siblings specifically). Jupiter which represents older siblings is in the lagna of this chart, which some consider as a kind of “kāraka bhāvo nāśya”, and therefore a placement inauspicious for older siblings in the drekkāṇa chart.

JFK’s drekkāṇa chart.



¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kennedy_family#Family_incidents

¹⁴ The 3rd divisional chart which relates to siblings.

Thoughts and Observations

In the search for examples of this principle, no effort was made to select charts of individuals who had any particular inclination or life history. The only effort was first to find charts where Ketu was in a principle argala position to a point in the horoscope, with no other argalas formed to that point, and secondly to use the charts of people whose lives were well documented.

The idea was to isolate this concept as much as possible, thus providing a kind of confluence, for the sake of research. Where this criteria was met, the theme of “spiritualizing,” “dissolving,” or “taking away,” rather than “materializing,” was also found. It is interesting to note that the experiences which seem to be indicated by Ketu in an argala position can range from the most auspicious (such as spiritual pursuits) to the most unfortunate (such as violence and loss). Both types of events are congruent with Ketu’s kāraka nature. It seems of great importance to look at the overall tenor of the chart, the strength of the grahas involved, etc. to see which direction this may go.

In cases where other grahas are forming argala to a point, while Ketu is also in an argala position, there is less confluence. As with any technique in Jyotiṣa, where there is less confluence prediction becomes more difficult. Therefore, it must be kept in mind that Ketu in an argala position has to be seen as one factor in the context of a greater pattern.

Limitations

One limitation in researching this principle is that finding it in isolation does not occur in birth charts very frequently. Where it is found, the point receiving this influence from Ketu may or may not be indicating anything remarkable in the first place. So the challenge is in gathering a large enough sample size over time to validate the theory on more solid ground. However, in the relatively few instances where the concept *was* found in isolation, the evidence suggesting this to be a valid principle has been very convincing. For interested readers, “Part Two” of this article is in progress, in order to share more examples. These were not included here, as the intention was to cover the main points of this principle in a relatively concise manner.

More “Grist for the Mill”

Another hypothesis worth mentioning is that Ketu in an obstruction point to a graha forming argala may actually enhance the argala rather than obstruct it. In other words, it could give the *opposite effect* of obstruction, leading to success in materializing whatever results may be indicated. This concept is a possible area of further research. The idea here is that if Ketu indicates “dissolution” or “loss,” then its placement in an obstruction point would actually remove any obstacles.

Similarly, some also say that Ketu in “reverse argala positions” (i.e. 3, 10 and 12 away from a point) will give the effect of argala, aiding in materialization. This may be so as well, even if it is not in a point of obstruction to other grahas in argala positions. All of these concepts may in fact hold true, and again we find an area of possible further investigation. These other interpretations could be seen as logical implications and extensions of the principles explained in this article.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, real-life examples have to speak for themselves and are the best teachers to help one arrive at proper understanding. The author would like to invite other astrologers to investigate this concept further. In doing so, a larger sample size can be gathered in order to more clearly establish whether or not this is a reliable principle.

Furthermore, the profundity of the Jaimini Sūtras ought to be kept in mind. There can be many layers of meaning, and so Sūtra 1.1.9 may yet have further implications. The moment one thinks they have “figured it out” or “cracked the code”, one closes oneself to the possibility of going deeper and growing in understanding. Thus, Jaimini leaves us with both a sense of humility and inspiration.

Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ

Peace unto the three sources of karma!