

The Real Secret of Vedic Astrology ~ Nakshatra

By Acharya Bharat

In the Vedic (Hindu) system of Astrology, known in Sanskrit as *Jyotish*, the 27 constellations and not the 12 star-signs are the key to understanding celestial influences on our planet. These 27 constellations are known as the 27 *Nakshatras*, which are 300 to 400 light years away from earth. Based on a person's moon *Nakshatra* at the time of birth, *Jyotish* offers a most powerful predictive technique compared to other forms of astrology.

The term "*Nakshatra*," when broken down into its constituent parts: "*naks*" meaning "sky" and "*shetra*" meaning "region", translate into "Sky Map." Another translation is arrived at using a different dissection: "*naksha*" is "map" and "*tara*" is "star" and so *Nakshatra* is "Star Map." Both meanings clearly show that in the eyes of the ancient *Vedic* (Indian) seers the 27 *Nakshatras* (constellations) and not the 12 zodiacal star-signs map the sky.

It was the Moon that ancient people first looked to for calculating time and connecting to the stars. '*Nakshatras*' is the name given to the constellations or mansions of the Moon, as the Moon resides in each of these constellations for one day.

The system of constellations is very ancient, dating back more than 5,000 years as they were referred to in the oldest *Veda* (Hindu's scripture). These lunar mansions appear in Chinese and Arabic astrology but have not received much attention in Western or European astrology. Each of the 27 *Nakshatras* consists of 13° and 20 minutes of the zodiac. Multiplying this length by 27 equals the entire zodiacal belt of 360 degrees.

The *Nakshatras* are classified in various ways, according to basic attribute, primary motivation (*Kama* - sensual desires; *Artha* - material desires; *Dharma* - living life based on spiritual principles; *Moksha* - liberation from birth and death), sex, caste, species and so on. They are particularly revealed by their presiding deities, ruling planets and their symbolic form.

The *Nakshatra* and the signs of the zodiac both begin from the same point. The beginning of the first *Nakshatra*, or constellation of *Ashwini*, the first *Nakshatra*, is the same as that of the first sign of Aries. Each sign contains the combined influence of the *Nakshatras* falling with it. Compared to the signs, the *Nakshatra* or *Nakshatras* possess a deeper effect. The signs are merely "a heap, mass, or collection" of influences as their Sanskrit name suggests.

The planets are the cosmic creative powers. Each planet radiates certain specialized forces. The planets make their impact on the zodiacal field. This specialized circle divided by the signs and *Nakshatras* is the negative or passive field of influences, while the planets are the positive or active fields. The signs and *Nakshatras* create the necessary environment, while the planets are the precipitating forces.

Prakriti (the female creative impulse) is the force that sustains the general background of the zodiac. *Prakriti* produces the basic conditions on which the seeds sprinkled by *Purusha* (the male consciousness factor) fructify and grow. The *Nakshatras* and signs of the zodiac are the passive creative potency whereas the planets are the creative or generating forces. The planets are active causes whereas the signs and *Nakshatras* are the material layer of the action. The *Nakshatras* and signs constitute the horizontal arm, while the planets represent the vertical arm in the cross of cosmic creation.

In Vedic astrology, the personality traits are read more through the birth star (*Nakshatra* of the Moon) than by the Sun sign. *Nakshatra* positions of planets are examined in the birth chart as well. The use of *Nakshatra* is very important in Vedic astrology, much more than with zodiac signs.

Indian seers say that the *Nakshatras* represent the abodes into which the fruits of our labor (our *Karma*) is transferred and stored. The *Nakshatras* dispense the fruits of *Karma*, the highest of which is the fruit of our worship and meditation, our spiritual labor of life.

Vedic astrology uses a system of planetary periods called *Dasha* (Major Period) of various planets based on the Moon Nakshatra at the time of birth. Most important is *Vimshottari Dasha*, a 120-year-long cycle of planetary positions based upon the birth *Nakshatra*, stars. The planetary periods of *Vedic* astrology provide an easy and comprehensive system for judging the effects of planets throughout our lives. The planetary periods are the most accurate system of how the planets distribute their effects through time and different stages of our lives. The major seven planets plus two lunar nodes are assigned periods ranging from 6 to 20 years.

With the help of this *Dasha* (Major Period system) a *Vedic* astrologer can predict future events very accurately. However, Western and other astrological systems do not have predictive capabilities as *Vedic* astrology.

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