

# Hindu Astrology's Lunar Mansions

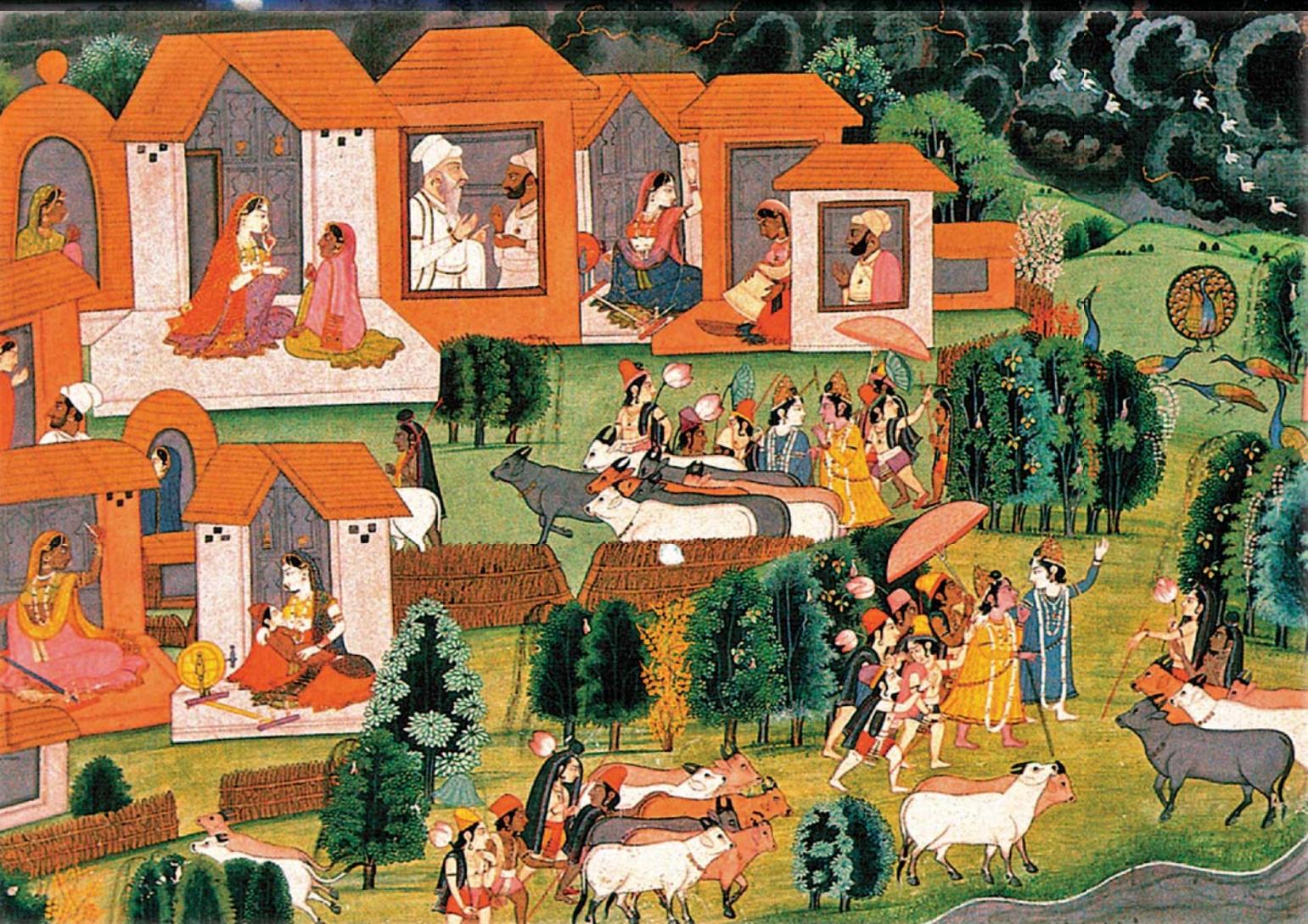
The 27 Nakshatras and Their Impact  
On Human Nature and Behavior



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## The 27 Nakshatras and Their Impact On Human Nature and Behavior

In the upper background photo we see Krittika, the six bright stars of the Pleiades, a nakshatra division that spans Aries and Taurus. The cluster contains more than 4,000 stars and lies 400 light years, or 2,400 trillion miles, from Earth. Life's various activities and pursuits, as represented in the scene below from ancient India, flow more smoothly when in tune with the Moon's vibration.



**W**HAT'S YOUR SIGN?" PEOPLE IN AMERICA ASK, MEANING, "What was the position of the Sun in the zodiac when you were born?" But in India, when the temple priest queries, "What's your *nakshatra*?" he wants to know the position of the Moon at your birth. The difference is not superficial. In Western astrology, the birth position of the Sun is considered paramount, while in Hindu astrology, the Moon's placement is most critical. While both systems use (with important differences) the zodiac, or *rasi*, division of twelve parts (Aries, Pisces, etc.), Hindus further refine this to 27 *nakshatras*—literally, "star clusters," also known as the "lunar mansions" (Ashvini, Bharani, etc.). The moon passes through all 27 in the course of a lunar month, at the rate of about one a day. The division is ancient. The list of the 27 *nakshatras* given in the *Krishna Yajur Veda (Taittiriya Samhita 2.4.10)* as part of the construction of the sacred fire altar was likely recorded in the second millennium, BCE. Each *nakshatra* is governed by a Vedic Deity—Krittika by Agni, Rohini by Prajapati, and so forth.

A *nakshatra* is male or female, as well as sattvic, rajasic or tamasic in nature. Sattva is the quality of spirituality and purity. Rajas is high-energy activity. Tamas has the basic quality of dullness, inertia and darkness. A specific symbol [see pages

178–179], animal species, sex, caste, temperament and primary motivation—*dharma* (life purpose), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure) and *moksha* (enlightenment)—is associated with each *nakshatra*. An individual is born when the Moon is in a *nakshatra* suited to his destined experiences of that lifetime. Astrological interpretations are based both on the *nakshatra* and the *rasi* [zodiac sign] of each planet, but for both the Moon and the planets it is the *nakshatra* that has the deeper effect.

*Nakshatras* are of primary importance in *muhurtha*, or electional astrology, estimating the optimal timing to undertake any new venture, such as starting a new business, building a new home or choosing an auspicious wedding date.

*Nakshatras* (as well as *rasis*) mentioned in ancient texts provide clues of great historical value. In scriptures, such as the *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Mahabharata*, are found references that at the equinox (or solstice), the Sun was in a particular *nakshatra*. Because of the precession of the equinoxes, the Sun slowly changes *nakshatras* at the equinox—so one can calculate backward to arrive at the date of the scripture, accurate to within a few hundred years. For example, in the *Atharva Veda* (19.7) and *Shatapatha Brahmana*, the solstice is in Magha, the period of 2700–1900BCE. This fact is used to trace the beginning of the later Vedic age.

## Applying Star Knowledge to Daily Life

**N**AKSHATRAS PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO FIND auspicious times for every imaginable human activity. They're also useful for avoiding actions on a day when results are likely to be frustrated. In order to find that date when the cosmic vibrations will be just perfect for you to make that big career move, buy a car or plant your garden, you need a *panchangam*—an astrological calendar—calculated for your region [see resources]. The Moon's *nakshatra* is the same all over the world at the same moment, but the human conventions of time zones and the international date line make the calendars produced in one place inapplicable to another. *Panchangam* in hand, you can proceed to research dates according to the following recommendations. In general, activities will bear more productive fruit if the Moon is waxing, that is, moving in the brightest phase toward full moon day. The *nakshatras* are grouped into seven categories:

**Light:** Ashvini, Pushya and Hasta are especially good constellations for travel, sports activities, doing healing work or administering medicines, opening a business, sales, trade and borrowing and repaying.

**Soft:** Mrigashira, Chitra, Anuradha and Revati are excellent for learning music, dance and drama, performing auspicious ceremonies such as marriage, buying and wearing new clothes, the enjoyment of pleasure, romance, conception of a child and making of friends.

**Fixed:** Rohini, Uttaraphalguni, Uttarashadha and Uttaraprostapada are good for permanent works such as making vows or taking oaths of office, building homes and laying the foundations of cities, plowing the land, planting and purchasing farms.

**Moveable:** Purnarvasu, Svati, Shrivana, Dhanishtha and Satabhishak are good for buying vehicles, for parades, gardening, change of residence or career, travel and other major life changes.

**Sharp:** Ardra, Aslesha, Jyeshtha and Mula. Their vibration contributes to separation from spouse or friends, argument, the working of black magic, exorcism, punishment and harm to others. These are good days for doing things requiring a harsh, strong or cutting force.

**Dreadful:** Bharani, Magha, Purvaphalguni, Purvashadha, and Purvaprostapada. All stir the mind, leading to evil deeds such as setting fires, poisoning and destruction, also imprisonment or confinement. Purvaprostapada is good for repentance and penance.

**Mixed:** Krittika and Vishakha are best for mundane daily activities. Krittika can be good for fire ceremonies due to its Deity, Agni. Excellent for meditation.

Dr. B.V. Raman wrote that "the constellation of Pushya is the most favorable of all the *nakshatras*. It is said to neutralize almost all *doshas* or flaws arising out of a number of adverse combinations. Pushya, the constellation par excellence, has the power to overcome negative forces and assert its benefic nature. Despite all its positive influence, Pushya is still considered inauspicious for a marriage ceremony." The days from the third quarter of Dhanishtha, the 23rd *nakshatra*, to the end of Revati, the 27th, are unsuitable for any kind of auspicious work, except Uttara Prostapada. Each *nakshatra* has a set of syllables which should be used to begin the name of a person born under that *nakshatra*. This gives a name in harmony with the person's nature, and also is an easy way to record one's *nakshatra*.

By consulting an astrologer, or studying books on the subject, one can determine auspicious times for celebrating *samskaras* (rites of passage), medical treatment, beginning of education, etc. This more complex analysis, involving your own birth chart, the location of the planets during the time period in question, can more precisely bring your desired aims into harmony with universal energies—something that is not necessarily going to happen when you schedule activities only according to a convenient day of the week. Those who live by this ancient lunar calendar swear it empowers their life. One way to find out is to try it. On the next two pages we outline the 27 *nakshatras*, how they relate to the 12 *rasis* and the basic qualities of a person born under each *lunar mansion*.

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RESOURCES: PANCHANGAMS: HINDUISM TODAY HTTP://WWW.HINDU.ORG/SCIENCES/PANCHANGAM.HTML; PALANI PANCHANG, 4831 PIPER STREET, FREMONT, CALIFORNIA 94538, USA. EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES CORPORATION OF AMERICA, PO BOX 88852 WORLD WAY CENTER, LOS ANGELES, CA 90009, USA. BOOKS: MYTHS AND SYMBOLS OF VEDIC ASTROLOGY, BY BEPIN BEHARI, PASSAGE PRESS, PO BOX 21713, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84121-0713, USA; NAKSHATRAS BY DENNIS HARNESS P.O. BOX 2149, SEDONA, ARIZONA 86339 USA; NAKSHATRA, BY K.T. SHUBHAKARAN, SAGAR PUBLICATIONS, 72 JANPATH, VED MANSION, NEW DELHI 110 001 INDIA [ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE]; LIGHT ON LIFE, BY HART DEFOUW, AVAILABLE FROM JDR VENTURES, 918 DOUGLAS DRIVE, WOOSTER, OH 44691 USA.

