

**The Nakshatra Report for**

**Nelson Mandela**

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Umtata, South Africa

*Technical Details:*

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# Introduction to the Nakshatra Report

The 12 zodiac signs are very familiar to most of us, and many people know their Sun Sign. In India a different system of celestial signs has also been used. It is a system of 27 signs and each sign has a length of 13 degrees and 20 minutes, rather than 12 signs of 30 degrees each. These 27 signs are known as "nakshatras".

Whereas the 12-sign zodiac is based on the yearly cycle of the Sun, the 27-sign zodiac presented here is based on the monthly cycle of the Moon. The moon is both the largest celestial body observable in the night sky and the closest one to earth. This makes the observation of the Moon the most logical starting point for human understanding of the movements of the celestial bodies. Most ancient societies had some kind of Lunar zodiac, but as societies changed, the Lunar zodiacs were replaced by Solar ones. India is perhaps unique in that it has preserved the knowledge of both the Lunar and Solar zodiacs. The first references to the nakshatras come from the Vendaga Jyotisha, the Yajurveda and the Shatapatha Brahmana, ritual texts from the first century BCE. The oral tradition associated with the nakshatras may be much older.

Also, in the astrology of India the placement of the nakshatras in the sky is based on the sidereal rather than the tropical system. This technical detail does not help you better understand and appreciate this report, but it is mentioned here only to emphasize that the "Sidereal Moon Position" listed on the cover page is not the same as the tropical Moon position that is typically used in western astrology. The difference between the tropical and sidereal zodiacs is that the sidereal zodiac used in Vedic astrology accounts for the slight wobbling of the earth on it's axis. Because the Western tropical zodiac has not factored this phenomenon into it's mathematical calculations, it diverges from the sidereal zodiac about one degree every 72 years. At this point in history, the tropical zodiac has drifted approximately 24 degrees away from the sidereal. This places the date of their original schism at about 279 CE.

In the Indian system of astrology, the nakshatra signs are subdivided into 4 sections of 3 degrees 20 minutes each, and these sections are called padas. There are a total of 108 padas, and the word pada means step. The 108 padas are essentially the 108 steps to enlightenment that are also employed in Indian art, architecture, and religion (108 prayer beads, 108 steps in some temples, 108 cowherd girls who attend Krishna, etc.)

Nakshatras are widely used by Indian astrologers to provide vitally important information. For example, nakshatras are used for determining compatibility in marriage and the naming of children. In this report astrologer and artist Tara Cochrane paints a picture of your relationship to the cosmos. The nakshatra image combines with the descriptive information to provide you a window into the deep wisdom of ancient India. This report is designed to shed light on your individual nature and soul's purpose.

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## Moon in Vishakha nakshatra:

### SACRIFICE AND TRIUMPH

The Moon in your birth chart is in the sixteenth nakshatra, Vishahka (20 deg Libra to 3 deg 20 min Scorpio).

The information below is divided into 3 sections:

1. The "About Vishahka" section which describes the myth, legend, symbolism, and overall significance of Vishahka,
2. The "About You" section which describes how the Moon in Vishahka affects your life, and
3. The "Your Step on the Path: the Pada" section, which describes the pada placement of your Moon.

#### ABOUT VISHAKHA

Vishahka, sometimes called "the star of purpose", is composed of four stars (Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Iota-Librae) in the left side of the constellation Libra. The ancients saw this star formation as representing a forked branch. Vishahka means "forked", "forked branch" or "poison vessel". Another name for Vishahka is Radha. Radha (whose name means "delightful") was a devotee and lover of the heroic god-man Krishna (whose name means "dark"). Krishna was the eighth earthly incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver, the god who maintains order in the universe. Radha adored Krishna with a singular obsession which caused her much hardship as well as ecstasy. The story of Radha's undying love for Krishna is an allegory of the human devotee's adoration of their god. It is a metaphor for worship, a longing for union with divinity, and the tribulations and satisfaction inherently invoked in this pursuit. Vishahka forms a pair with the next nakshatra Anuradha, which means "another Radha" or "subsequent success".



In accordance with Vishahka's forked nature, this asterism has two ruling deities, Indra (king of the gods), and Agni (god of Fire). Swati, the previous nakshatra, is under the influence of Vayu, the caretaker of the element of air. Agni serves the same purpose for maintaining the presence of the element of fire on the earthly plane. Fire's main functions in nature are destruction and cleansing. Fire is hot and active. Vishahka has a unique affinity with this element due to its relationship with Agni, whose name gives us the English words ignite and igneous. Vishahka is a demonic nakshatra which functions actively. Its energy is purpose-driven, excitable, all-consuming, destructive and often painful.

Indra, the king of the gods, imparts to Vishahka the single-minded drive towards triumph and victory. Indra is primarily concerned with vanquishing his enemies. He is known for exhibiting the bitter traits of jealousy, arrogance, excessive force, scheming and petulance. Indra will win his battles by any means necessary, and so will Vishahka. He is also associated with Jupiter, Vishahka's ruling planet. Indra and Jupiter give Vishahka the both the burning desire for power and dominion and the fortitude to achieve it. They imbue Vishahka with a desire for supremacy.

Vishahka's forked branch symbolizes the duality of the need to suffer and to sacrifice and the need for lustful and gluttonous excess. Vishahka is obsessive, and in the process of pursuing the object of its obsession (which is often a form of power) it suffers many hardships and goes to abysmal extremes (like Radha pursuing Krishna). Our symbol for Vishahka combines a downward pointing forked branch (which is reminiscent of a hanged man or upside down crucifixion) representing Vishahka's self-destructive and penitent side, and a triumphal arch (another

traditional symbol for this asterism) representing Vishahka's pleasure seeking, celebratory, social and victory-minded side. This dichotomy is also illustrated by Vishahka's Mixed (Soft and Sharp) disposition. Vishahka's number is 16, signifying accomplishment, drive and chaotic upheaval.

The crucifix, an image of human suffering for godly aspirations, is associated with Vishahka. In Christian depictions of Jesus on the Cross, the Latin acronym INRI (meaning Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) is often inscribed. The alchemical tradition ascribes another meaning to INRI, Igne (Agni) Natura Renovatur Integra, or "Through Fire Nature is Reborn Whole". It is easy to see the connection between the image of self sacrifice and the essence of Agni, the fire god who rules Vishahka.

Yet another meaning for Vishahka is a "poisoned vessel". Vishahka, like serpentine Ashlesha (the ninth nakshatra), has an affinity with poisons. Both of these asterisms are sattwic in essence and demonic in type, creating a forked, or dual yet unified, quality. The tongues of Ashlesha's nagas are forked, like Vishahka's branch. These two nakshatras share the poisonous serpent's love of secrets and mystery, death and regeneration (nature reborn whole). They also impart an inclination towards psychic sensitivity and social manipulation.

Given below are some characteristics of Vishahka:

Number: 16  
Planetary Ruler: Jupiter  
Ruling Deity: Indra (King of the Gods), Agni (God of Fire), Radha (Consort of Krishna)  
Essence (Guna): Sattwic (Pure Divinity)  
Element (Tattwa): Fire  
Type (Gana): Rakshasa (Demonic)  
Disposition: Misra (Mixed, Sharp and Soft)  
Orientation: Downward  
Mode of Functioning: Active  
Gender: Female  
Motivation: Dharma (Purpose)  
Life Phase: Midlife/Menopause

A list of associations with Vishahka is given below:

Metals and Minerals: yellow sapphire and citrine (traditional Vedic gemstones of Jupiter), tin (alchemical metal of Jupiter), ruby and brown tourmaline (stones associated with Agni), bloodstone, hematite, lodestone, gold

Botanicals: rock rose, nettles, licorice, bitter melon, bleeding heart, bloodroot, carnation, cotton

Animals: male tiger (traditional), hornet, spider, scorpion, aardvark, racoon, beta fish

Colors: orange, blood red, fuscia, black, purple

Places: celebrity and high society gathering places, banquet halls and celebratory places, places of penitence and sacrifice

Related Subjects: dowsing rods, Zeus, Thor, Shanga and other sky/thunder/father/heaven gods, Christianity, the Hanged Man card in the Tarot, Arc de Triomphe in Paris, Winged Victory, toxicology, self-mortification

ABOUT YOU

With Vishahka prominent in your natal chart, your life entails great sacrifice and much triumph over hardship. You return often to themes of punishment, penitence and self-undoing or self-destruction. You burn with the unquenched longing to merge yourself with a higher power and are willing to give up everything to achieve this. You are no stranger to loss, rejection and disappointment. You perceive these things as personal tests or trials to be overcome in order to attain the personal victory of union.



You are obsessive, focused and driven. In life, you are always striving towards achievement. You may see life in the context of war, and every action as a small battle. Your social life is riddled with conspiratorial scheming (often between you and yourself), psychological manipulation, and power struggles. You use people to get what you want or where you want to be. Like natives of Chitra, the fourteenth nakshatra (with whom you are most compatible), you are adept at assuming facades that suit your needs based on the precepts of any given social situation. On your quest towards your ultimate goal, you may be temporarily sidetracked by petty and superfluous power games. Like your patron deity Indra, you cannot stand to be proven wrong, publicly humiliated or bested in any way. This weakness is your main downfall.

Your public image is of the utmost importance to you. You love parties, high profile social events and any context in which you will be seen looking good. You can certainly be elitist in your dealings and like to be in the inner circles or upper echelons of social hierarchy. You desire to surround yourself with powerful and influential individuals. You love indulging in sensual pleasures and indulgent excesses, yet you never forget your purpose.

Purpose is your true motivation. You feel the pull of destiny, and naturally intuit the fact that you have a unique roll to play in the cosmic drama. Whether playing the savior, saboteur or seductress, you are highly aware of your individuality and importance. You are an agent of the end of separation. Your sacrifice is necessary.

You are courageous and defiant. When life presents you with failure, you redouble your efforts and take the challenge head on. The more discouragement you invoke, the more effort you will exert to conquer impediments. You will inevitably gain the esteem you crave, because your internal programming prevents you from accepting subjugation.

Fire and poisons are your allies. You feel most alive and invigorated near a bonfire, fireplace, torch or candle. Vishahka includes a theme of worship, and the element of Fire is used universally in religious activities. You relate in a primal way to the practice of burning offerings to the gods. Many poisons can also be used as medicines, and you may become skilled in the medical arts.

Mundane chores and household activities bore you. You are not interested in family life, and struggle with personal commitments. Like Radha, you may experience much pain and disappointment caused by love early in life. You may initially attach a godlike persona to the person you fall in love with. When they prove to be a mere mortal, you will react by withdrawing into a state of bitter disillusionment. You tend to either give too much or nothing at all to your partners emotionally, a trait that can be overcome by redirecting your sharp, fiery power towards personal growth and self knowledge. At times, your obsessions may seem to possess you entirely. Your bold, rash actions may surprise you as much as they shock those around you. This creates an odd relationship between your conscious mind and your subconscious desires or intentions. Inward reflection and journal writing can help you gain clarity, and integrate your purpose driven soul with your attention-craving ego. In love affairs and close friendships, you are most compatible with other Vishahka natives and natives of Chitra.

## YOUR STEP ON THE PATH: THE PADA

Each nakshatra is further subdivided into four padas, each with a length of 3 degrees and 20 minutes. Each pada highlights different attributes and qualities of the nakshatra. Each pada is ruled by a different zodiac sign and that sign's ruling planet, and is associated with a different sound. The word "pada" means "foot" or "step" and the pada indicates a step you are taking in this life.

The Moon in your birth chart is in the third of the four padas of Vishahka (26 deg 40 min to 30 deg Libra). The third pada of Vishahka is ruled by Gemini and Mercury. It's sound is "Tay" as in "Taint". This pada delves into Vishahka's obsession with social hierarchy and social manipulation. It is clever and scheming. It's archetype is the conspirator.

## Appendix

Described below are some terms that have been used in this report.

### ESSENCES (GUNAS):

There are three basic essences; Sattwa, Tamas, and Rajas. Each nakshatra relates primarily to one these essences, but also includes others within on two deeper levels. The first nine nakshatras are influenced by Rajas, the second nine by Tamas, and the third nine by Sattwa. On another level, the first three nakshatras are influenced by Rajas, the second three by Tamas, the third three by Sattwa and on and on. So there are three levels at which a nakshatra is affected by an essence, the first and most immediate, the second one that binds it into a triad with its neighbors (i.e. Ashwini, Bharani and Kritika), and the third which groups the nakshatras into three groups of nine.

The wheel of the nakshatras is a microcosm of the human experience. The first nine nakshatras (from Ashwini to Ashlesha) influenced by Rajas relate to childhood and adolescence and the excitement, vitality, aspirations and energy associated with this phase of life. The second nine (from Magha to Jyeshtha) espouse the qualities of Tamas, and relate to adulthood, the phase of life in which one is most concerned with the material world. The third nine (from Mula to Revati) are sattwic in essence and relate to old age, the part of life in which one becomes concerned with spiritual matters.

Three nakshatras are affected by the same essence on all three levels, giving us an idea of the purest manifestation of the gunas. Ashwini is completely rajasic. Ashwini is the first (initiatory) nakshatra of the cycle and exemplifies the qualities of action, motivation and fiery enthusiasm associated with Rajas. Chitra is completely tamasic. It is the closest nakshatra to the center of the wheel. Chitra is involved in weaving the fabric of Maya, or illusion, emanating the illusionary and obscurity-loving essence of Tamas. Revati is sattwic on every level. Revati represents ultimate spiritual transcendence.

Sattwa means "being", "existence", "sacred" or "pure". Sattwic nakshatras are balanced, kind, and compassionate. They promote lucidity, clearness of thought and speech, and gentleness. Sattwa is the essence of the joy of being. It is radiant and subtle. The color of Sattwa is white.

Tamas means "darkness", "obscurity" or "inertia". Tamasic nakshatras are chaotic, slow, confused and destructive. They are more immersed in the material realm than the realm of spirit. They are known to promote entropy and mental instability. Tamas is as dark and heavy as Sattwa is clear and light, creating a duality between these two essences. However it must be noted that they are both concerned with just being, or existing, rather than

acting. The color of Tamas is black.

Rajas means "atmosphere" or "air". Rajasic nakshatras stimulate action in the material realm. They are pro-active, volatile, changeable, inspirational and driven. Unlike Tamas and Sattwa, Rajas is glorified by movement rather than stillness. In Rajas, the desire to attain goals is combined with the fear of loss and failure. The oscillation between these two powerful feelings creates the impetus for change and action. The color of Rajas is red.

#### TYPES (GANAS):

Gana means tribe, class, flock or group. Each nakshatra is classified as either rakshasa (demonic), deva (godly) or manushya (human). Understanding the attributes of these three types of beings can dramatically illustrate the personalities of the nakshatras.

Rakshasas, typically translated as "demons", are cosmic beings which embody many qualities which are terrifying to humans. In the Vedas, they are known to cause all kinds of mayhem, including disturbing sacrifices and religious rituals, giving priests hell, and desecrating graves. They love war and chaos and are magnetically attracted to battlefields and locations of human strife and despondency. They have been known to eat human flesh as well as cannibalize each other. Rakshasas are the harbingers of discord and dissolution. They practice magic to create illusions and can change their own forms at will.

Devas are known as "gods", "angels" or "celestial beings". They are similar to rakshasas, yet whereas rakshasas bring chaos, devas traditionally maintain order in the world. They are responsible for managing natural forces, both elemental (fire, water, land, wind, trees, storms, rocks) and abstract (birth, death, love, knowledge, prosperity). The word "deva" gives us the Latin "deus" (meaning god), the French "dieu" (also god), and the English "divine".

The delineation between rakshasas and devas is not always as clear, as the line between order and chaos can be fuzzy at best. For example, Kali is a goddess who personifies the qualities we normally associate with demons; a terrifying appearance and a penchant for battlefields and corpses. On the other hand, the Vedas speak of rakshasas like Vibhishana who were kind, gentle and humble (sattwic in essence). These "tribes, classes, or flocks" of beings are multifaceted and complex.

Perhaps the most complex and confusing of all is the tribe of manushya, the humans. They can exhibit both the beneficent and malevolent qualities associated with devas and rakshasas, and in more amplified extremes. Some of the most auspicious nakshatras, such as Rohini and Purvashada are human, as well as some of the most bitter and astringent, such as Purvabhadrapada and Ardra.

#### ELEMENTS (TATTWAS):

There are five elements, known as tattwas; Aakash (aether, spirit), Vayu (air), Agni (fire), Jala or Apas (water) and Prithvi (earth). Each nakshatra relates to one of these tattwas and its qualities.

Aakash (known as aether, spirit or quintessence) is the invisible life force pervading all existence. It relates to the human sense of hearing. Sound waves are the invisible yet comprehensible manifestation of the spiritual world.

Vayu (air) is the breathe of the planet. It relates to inspiration, flow, mental activity, flexibility, travel and

change. It's human sense is the sense of touch, as air touches skin.

Agni (fire) is the element of action, motivation, color and purification. It relates to the sense of sight, as light (the fire of the Sun) illuminates the world for us to see.

Jala or Apas (water) is the element of the emotional realm. It's sense is that of taste, as we must ingest water and fluids to survive.

Privthi (earth) is the element of matter, form, substance and sustenance. It relates to the sense of smell, the most primal and survival-oriented of the senses. It is also the sense most strongly linked to memory.

#### DISPOSITIONS:

The guna (essence) and gana (type) of a nakshatra exposes it's inner nature. The nakshatra's disposition shows how it displays itself to the outer world. There are six basic dispositions:

Chara nakshatras are known to be moveable or ephemeral. They interact with the world by constantly moving, changing, and blending into whatever environment they temporarily inhabit. Chara nakshatras evolve quickly and frequently recreate their forms for circumstantial adaptability. In a fight, they will probably choose to flee.

Tikshna (known as sharp, hard or dreadful) nakshatras are brutal, violent and ruthless. They are domineering in their environments and forceful in their approach to life. They can be impartial to the point of heartlessness.

Ugra (aggressive) nakshatras are passionate, driven, protective and life-loving. They interact with the world in a pro-active way and are constantly modifying their surroundings. They can often be forceful, like the Tikshnas, but their force is warmer and more emotionally charged.

Laghu (light and swift) nakshatras are mentally acute, cunning and witty. They also have an innate advantage in business and health. Laghu nakshatras tend to outsmart their opponents when conflict arises in life, making their position highly auspicious.

Mridu (soft and tender) nakshatras are highly sensitive. They are artistic, empathetic, intuitive and emotional. Relationships between friends and lovers are given weight here. Mridu nakshatra natives tend to value sharing and community above all else.

Misra (mixed soft and sharp) nakshatras combine Mridu's sensitivity with Tikshna's ability to destroy unwanted influences. There are only two Misra nakshatras, Kritika and Vishahka, which are interestingly both under the influence of the fire god Agni. Misra's soft/sharp nature embodies the ability of fire to either warm or burn, sustain or decay.

## ORIENTATIONS:

Each nakshatra is oriented either upwards, downwards, or level. Upward looking nakshatras are extroverted, expansive, expressive and concerned with the future and the world at large. They face heaven. Downward looking nakshatras, in contrast, are introverted, constricting, past event-oriented and concerned with details. They face the underworld. Level nakshatras balance these extremes to produce a centered and present-conscious outlook.

## A FINAL NOTE ABOUT THIS REPORT:

The graphic image and symbol for the nakshatra, as well as the text contained in this report, were created by the author of this report, Tara Cochrane. The basic astrological meanings of the 27 nakshatras and the padas are well established in the Vedic astrological tradition, and every astrologer develops a sensitivity to the nuances of meaning through working with the nakshatras. Tara has added some contemporary associations to the nakshatras to the ones traditionally given. The starting point for her understanding of the nakshatras began with several very helpful books and resources on the Internet, and became refined through the study of the myths surrounding the nakshatras and observing the effect of the nakshatras in the birth charts of people.