

BOOK REVIEW in Dell Horoscope magazine, April 2013

By Chris Lorenz

***In Search of Destiny: Biography, History & Culture As Told Through Vedic Astrology* by Edith Hathaway**

Vintage Vedic Press, San Diego, CA; www.edithhathaway.com; 2012, paper, 544 pp. (7 3/8" x 9 5/8"), \$29.95, ISBN 9780615544472.

Ever wonder what Vedic astrology is all about? To the Western way of looking at things, the zodiac and its twelve signs are anchored to the Spring [Equinox], with 0° Aries beginning around March 21. Astrologers in India tend to look at the zodiac as being anchored to the fixed stars, which over the last 2000 years has drifted away from the Spring equinox at the rate of 1° every 72 years. Known as the Tropical and Sidereal zodiacs, these two had the same starting point around 285 AD, but are now 24° apart. Bill Gates, for example, was born on October 28, which makes him a Scorpio in the tropical zodiac. But in Vedic astrology, he's a Libra.

Edith Hathaway explains what Vedic astrology is all about in *In Search of Destiny*, an exhaustive study on the first seven rising signs. The introduction presents the main terms, underlying philosophy, and the planets and techniques used in Vedic astrology. In this system, the Moon is more important than the Sun, and the Ascendant and its ruling planet are pre-eminent in determining destiny and character. For those used to dealing with Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto – forget these outer planets. In their place, Rahu and Ketu get extra importance (the South and North Lunar Nodes), as do the Nakshatras, which are the 27 lunar mansions.

In Vedic astrology, dharma is determined by the sign on the Ascendant. Dharma is explained as being one true nature, "and by understanding it and living according to it, you will fulfill your karmic destiny in this particular incarnation." Following a clear and comprehensive explanation of the terms, the rest of the book is devoted to illustrating how one reads the birth chart using Vedic principles. The author is a westerner, as is her primary audience, and so the celebrity biographies are recognizable to most Americans and Europeans. The chapter on the Aries Ascendant is fleshed out using the examples of Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Henry Miller, Mia Farrow, and Jacqueline Du Pré.

As a reminder, in the Tropical zodiac, Robert F. Kennedy has Taurus Rising, but in the Vedic system, he has Aries on the Ascendant. For those used to the Tropical zodiac, these shifts may very well be jarring. After all, the qualities associated with an Aries Ascendant are pretty much the same in both systems. Which makes the most sense, that RFK has Taurus or Aries Rising? They can't both be right.

The next [six chapters] present more case studies and how the Vedic astrologer interprets charts. The most in-depth is on Adolph Hitler in the last chapter, which in this book is about the Libra Ascendant. There's no explanation of why the book ends having presented only seven signs of the zodiac. However, in my email exchanges with the author, she does confirm that this is meant as the first of two volumes.

If you're curious about dharma, artha, kama, and moksha (associated with the four elements of fire, earth, air, and water), and other Hindu principles as they relate to

astrology, then *In Search of Destiny* is your ticket to this ancient cultural paradigm using familiar western biographies.