

The Birth of a Clairvoyant: Charles Webster Leadbeater

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One of the greatest clairvoyants of the 20th century, Charles Webster Leadbeater, claimed to have been born in Stockport, UK, on the 17th of February, 1847, as stated on his passport, but his birth certificate mentions another date: the 16th of February, 1854. Though his biographers still argue over the date of his birth, there is no doubt that he died in Perth, Australia on the 1st of March, 1934.

Perhaps some light can be shed on this discussion regarding the date of birth of Bishop C.W. Leadbeater, which, so far, does not seem to have found a solution in official documents, from the very occult science to which he was so dedicated in his life. Its unique definition of occult science or occultism is: “the study of the hidden side of Nature [...] in its entirety, and not just that minute part which is the object of investigation of modern science” (LEADBEATER, 2017, p. 22). Blavatsky considers “Practical Occultism or Rāja-Yoga” (BLAVATSKY, 1998, v. 12, p. 488) as synonymous. In the same line of reasoning, Ecstasy or *Samādhi*, studied in the classic *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali (c. 2nd century BC) as the culmination of perfect meditation, is taken here as a possible means of obtaining corroborative marks of external knowledge through the development of psychic powers (*siddhis*).

Thus, one of the *siddhis* or psychic powers mentioned in the *Yoga-Sūtra* is the power or faculty of clairvoyance applied to the world of atoms, that is, in the lowest dimensions of matter: “Knowledge of the small, the hidden or the distant by directing the light of superphysical faculty”² (PATAÑJALI *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 26, p. 324). This *siddhi* is known in Sanskrit as *aṇimān*. Patañjali mentions: “Thence, the attainment of *Aṇimān* etc., perfection of the body and the non-obstruction of its functions (of the body) by the powers (of the elements)”³ (PATAÑJALI *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 46, p. 357). It is obtained by the culmination or perfection of the process of Concentration called *samyama*⁴.

Through the exercise of this faculty of clairvoyance applied to the world of atoms, discoveries were made, published in *Occult Chemistry*, in 1908, by Annie Wood Besant and Charles Webster Leadbeater, which are, to say the least, unprecedented. It is not by chance that Jeff Hughes, an expert in the history of science at the University of Manchester, considered it opportune to write an article for the renowned scientific journal *Physics World* about such discoveries, entitled *Occultism and the Atom: the curious story of isotopes* (HUGHES, 2003).

In this way, Besant and Leadbeater discovered, before science, isotopes and other elements still unknown, as these were not even on the periodic table at the time, as well as their respective atomic weights. Among them, for example, metaneon, which was then an unknown isotope of the element neon. The discovery was published in *Occult Chemistry* (1908), offering the world one of the greatest historical corroborative marks of extrasensory perception⁵ in

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² “*Pravṛṭty-āloka-nyāsāt sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam*” (PATAÑJALI *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 26, p. 324).

³ “*Tato ’ṇimādi-prādurbhāvaḥ kāya-saṃpat taddharmānabhighātaś ca*” (PATAÑJALI *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 46, p. 357).

⁴ *Samyama* is the sum or total process of meditation which, according to Patañjali, includes Concentration (*Dhāraṇā*), Contemplation (*Dhyāna*) and Ecstasy (*Samādhi*) (PATAÑJALI, *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 4, p. 286).

⁵ Extrasensory perception also known by the acronym “ESP”.

scientifically verifiable language. With this, Besant and Leadbeater occupied a prominent place among the greatest clairvoyants of the 20th century, as they demonstrated mastery of the classic siddhi called *añimā*, which enables to know what is small or microscopic (PATAÑJALI *apud* TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 26, p. 324). Additionally, they anticipated, by at least 56 years, the discovery of subatomic particles called “quarks”, which occurred in 1964, as argued by Stephen M. Phillips in *Extra-Sensory Perception of Quarks* (1980).

H.J. Arnikar, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of Puna, India, looks back at the History of Science in the discovery of deuterium (^2D), the heavy isotope of hydrogen (^1H), by Urey, Brickwedde and Murphy, at approximately the same time, in 1932, and tritium (^3T), its radioactive isotope, discovered by Rutherford in 1934. Arnikar comments that this discovery was anticipated by Besant and Leadbeater before science had arrived at the concept of isotopy:

In fact, due credit must be accorded to Mrs. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater who had pre-empted the discovery of isotopes, when they reported Adyarium (^2D) and Occultum (^3T) besides neon atoms of two different masses, ^{20}Ne and metaneon ^{22}Ne in 1907, i.e., some four years before Sir J.J. Thomson reported two parables for neon of masses 20 and 22 in his classical work on the positive ray analysis in 1911, followed by the work of Aston and Soddy (ARNIKAR, 2000, p. 71).

Furthermore, it should be reiterated that Besant and Leadbeater, when describing the hydrogen atom (1895) and, later, the others in the periodic table (1908), anticipated the discovery of quarks, since modern science only theorized and discovered them from 1964 (PHILLIPS, 1999, p. 27). Quarks are subatomic particles and therefore invisible to normal human vision. There are six types or “flavors” of quarks (HAWKING, 2016, p. 184, 215), as they are called. Some of them constitute the protons and neutrons of the atomic nucleus of the different elements of the periodic table, others are unstable. Although more difficult to demonstrate, because the subject of quarks demands more technical knowledge of modern physics than that of isotopes, perhaps this discovery of quarks, made by Besant and Leadbeater, is much more surprising than that of isotopes. M. Srinivasan, Associate Director of the Physics Group at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Mumbai, India, points out that they observed “[...] down to the ‘quark’ and even ‘sub-quark’ level; and that they have also observed, using their extraordinary mental faculties, the existence of isotopes of several elements much before the ‘official’ scientific discovery of isotopes by Aston in 1912 using his newly invented instrument, the mass spectrograph!” (SRINIVASAN, 2002, p. 1).

Arnikar, Phillips, and Srinivasan acknowledge in several ways how the discoveries of Besant and Leadbeater predated modern science in the realm of the atom and subatomic particles. In fact, his discoveries, at the very heart of matter, constitute an argument against materialism, because they point in the direction that the subatomic particles of the physical world are made up of more subtle particles from other worlds or *lokas*. In this way, the other worlds (*lokas*) would not be somewhere else, but, so to speak, “inside” the physical world itself.

Dr. Besant, owing to her later dedication to Indian independence policy, had to renounce the practice of clairvoyance from 1913 onwards, but Bishop Leadbeater continued his research on atoms until the end of his life.

Leadbeater thus, through a kind of reinterpretation of chemistry and its atomic subparticles, holds that the world of the so-called dead, or astral plane, contains the physical world of the living, or interpenetrates it. The astral plane would be the fourth dimension⁶, which Leadbeater describes in detail in his book *The Astral Plane* (2005). This plane would largely correspond to the purgatory of Roman Catholics, particularly as a stage of prior purification for later entry into heaven, which Leadbeater calls the “mental plane” in his book *The Devachanic Plane* (LEADBEATER, 1987). Such interpenetration is based on the idea that each atom of the physical world would be constituted by the condensation of astral matter, which is more subtle. Therefore, everything that exists on the physical plane is contained in the astral plane and has a counterpart in it. But as the astral plane has more dimensions, there are many more beings and things there than in the physical world. The same reasoning applies to the higher dimensions.

Thus, Leadbeater reinterprets the ancient seven *lokas*, or worlds of the Hindu tradition, translating them with Western names (LEADBEATER, 1983, p. 18), namely: *Bhūrloka*, Physical Plane; *Bhuvarloka*, Astral, Emotional or Purgatory Plane; *Svarloka*, Mental Plane or Heaven; *Maharloka*, Intuitive Plane; *Janarloka*, Spiritual Plane or Nirvana; *Taparloka*, Monadic Plane; and *Satyaloka*, Divine Plan, that is, upholds the doctrine of the omnipresence of God.

The idea of the interpenetration of the seven worlds, or seven dimensional planes, seems to be one of the essential theosophical teachings, corresponding to the *lokas* of Indian philosophy, as mentioned by Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* (BLAVASTKY, 1980, v. 6, p. 202).

As mentioned, Blavatsky relates occultism or occult science as synonymous with Rāja-Yoga, but also with *Ātma-Vidyā* or science of self-knowledge (BLAVATSKY, 1998, v. 12, p. 488), recognizing the efficiency of Astrology as its eventual helper: “Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature, [...] *Ātma-Vidyā* sets small value on them. It includes them all and may even use them occasionally [...] for beneficent purposes...” (BLAVASTKY, 1987, p. 38-39).

Since ancient times, Astrology has considered that, if there is resonance or vibratory tuning, a distant star can have an effect on us, without ever having touched us. This is the Pythagorean Harmony of the Spheres, as Plato also taught:

The spindle turned in the knees of Necessity [the cycle of Metempsychosis and Nemesis, i.e. Reincarnation and Karma]; and on the upper surface of each circle [the orbits of the planets] is a Siren [like a finger making a sound at pass over the rim of a crystal chalice], who goes round with them, hymning a single tone or note [its natural and singular frequency]. The eight [spheres: those of the seven sacred planets and the of the fixed stars] together form one harmony... (PLATO, 1984, *The Republic*, § 617b, v. 7, p. 439).

So, the world is not adrift, but we need to learn to tune to the right frequency. This is the basis of the hermetic principle of correspondence: “As above, so below” (BLAVATSKY, 1993, p. 65). As in Heaven, so it is on Earth. Astrology is all based on these principles of vibrational correspondence and affinity. It reads the cosmic clock and is the science of karma.

⁶ The Greeks called the astral plane Hades (“invisible”), the name of the god and his house that, mythologically, embodies the world of the dead (YESHUA, 2003, v. 5, p. 606).

Patañjali, in the Yoga-Sūtra, deals with the Law of Karma or cause and effect (PATAÑJALI apud TAIMNI, 2010, YS II: 12-14, p. 157-160) and seems, according to Śaṅkara, to relate it to the Law of cycles. There is a certain delay until the release of the effects of the Law of Karma, that is, a certain time is necessary for thoughts, emotions, or psychosomatic effects to accumulate, until their fruits ripen. Thus, Patañjali refers to the law or cycle of motion of the stars: “(By performing *samyama*) to the pole-star knowledge of their movements”⁷ (PATAÑJALI apud TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 29, p. 329). Śaṅkara comments on this *sūtra* stating that one who applies *samyama* on the North Star:

[...] will apprehend the motions of the stars – how they converge and how they separate. How at this time this planet is opposed by that one, and how it comes thus to be subdued, and then in that way it rises again – by these means he comes to know, for instance, the good and bad fortune of the living beings (ŚAṅKARA, 2006, p. 335).

It is therefore evident that Śaṅkara interprets Patañjali referring to Astronomy or Astrology (which until then had not yet been separated), that is, as I commented, to “[...] the study or Science [occult wisdom] of the stars [...] [or] of the relationship between terrestrial and celestial phenomena, including all beings on this Earth, whether this relationship may be by direct influence, by synchronicity or of any other kind” (LINDEMANN, 2020, p. 13). It is, at least, a study (logia in Greek), as Isaac Newton said when Egmont Halley, the astronomer who discovered the famous comet that bears his name, questioned him about the foundations of Astrology. Newton replied, “Sir, I have studied it, you have not.” (THE COMPLETE..., 1975, p. 3)

Śaṅkara, in his comment quoted above, refers to at least two planetary aspects or angles: the “conjunction”, when two or more stars or planets “converge” at zero degrees of longitude, and the “opposition”, when they “separate” or “oppose” at 180 degrees. These are the most important angles used in Astrology for thousands of years, but Śaṅkara obviously does not refer to popular Astrology. These planetary angles were also found by John H. Nelson, an American electronics engineer and propagation analyst at RCA Communications Inc., in New York, as the ones that most disturb the propagation of short radio waves in the ionosphere (LEWIS, 1997, p. 380). He wrote this in a letter to the Paris-based *Omnium Litteraire Magazine* on the 17th of November, 1955:

When I engaged in this research pertaining to Ionospheric Perturbations affecting shortwave radio, I did not have any idea what Heliocentric Planetary angles would be found as important angles. Purely empirical research has revealed that 0° - 90° - 180° and 270° angles were associated with bad radio signals, and [angles of] 60° - 120° - 240° and 300° were found to be associated with good radio signals. (NELSON, 1955 apud LINDEMANN, 2020, p. 328).

In fact, Nelson was corroborating the five classic planetary angles known as Ptolemaic aspects or major aspects (LEWIS, 1997, p. 32), namely: the Conjunction (0°), the Sextile (60°), the Square (90°), the Trine (120°) and the Opposition (180°). Nelson says: “I have never studied

⁷ “*Dhruve tad-gati-jñānam*” (PATAÑJALI apud TAIMNI, 2010, YS III: 29, p. 329).

Astrology [...] It is purely by coincidence that my discoveries in radio appear to support the hypothesis of the Astrologers who have claimed for the ages that distant planets can have an influence upon the inhabitants of the Earth” (NELSON, 1955 *apud* LINDEMANN, 2020, p. 328).

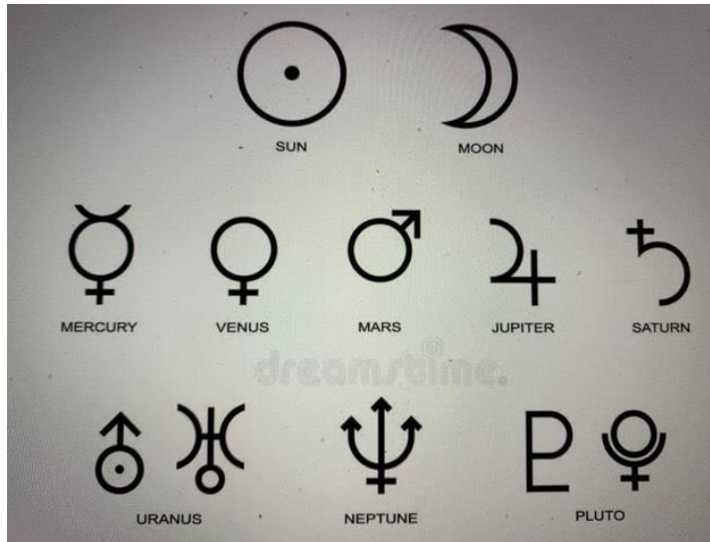
The underlying reasoning is simple: if in an opposition between the Sun and the Moon (Full Moon) the tides rise, in a heliocentric opposition between Jupiter and Saturn, the most massive planets in the solar system, the Sun will produce bulges (sunspots), because its plasma is much more fluid than the oceans. Sunspots have a powerful electromagnetic action and influence radio waves, as Nelson's work has shown. If the angles of the planets, Sun and Moon can even affect sunspots and tides, they could equally influence the cycle of human hormones and moods, releasing the effects of accumulated emotions and thoughts related to the main glands and their respective nervous plexuses and *chakras*.

Stephen Arroyo, who also considers Astrology as a path of self-knowledge associated with karma and transformation, states: “Indeed, Astrology could legitimately be called a ‘science of karma’ ” (ARROYO, 1992, p. 9). Besant also states that “ ‘ripe *karma*’[...] can be sketched out in a horoscope⁸ [Astral Chart] cast by a competent astrologer.” (BESANT, 1977, p. 287).. “Ripe karma”, called *prārabdha karma*, corresponds to a subdivision of individual *karma*, which Śāṅkara considers as “[...] *Karma* already incurred in a previous incarnation” (ŚAṅKARĀCĀRYA, 1973, sl. 454, p. 173). Therefore, it must be outlined already at the time of the current birth.

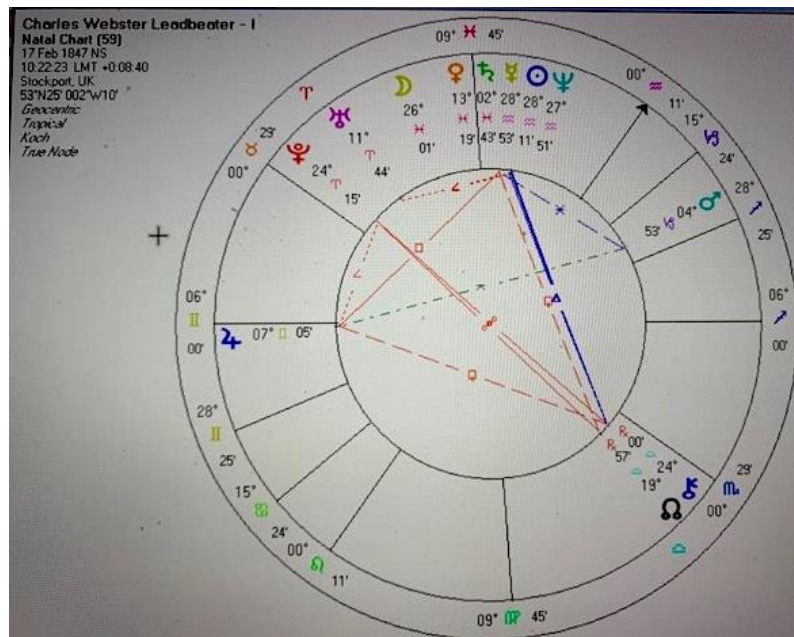
The question could arise as to how one intends to read this mature karma in an individual's Birth Chart, or for example, his predisposition to clairvoyance. Charles Ernest Owen Carter (1887-1968), former President of the Astrological Lodge of the Theosophical Society in London, states, in his Encyclopedia of Psychological Astrology, in the entry “Clairvoyance” that the planetary aspect or angle of “Neptune in conjunction with Sun or Mercury seems to be a common indication” (CARTER, 1979, p. 60). Max Heindel (1865-1919), renowned astrologer and founder of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, also mentions, in his work *The Message of the Stars*, that Neptune's aspects to Mercury are “successful in the occult sciences and often develop a supernormal faculty” (HEINDEL, 1978, p. 158).

If one decides to investigate what, therefore, the astrological argument would be for choosing between the two dates of birth that appear in Bishop Leadbeater's documents, which basically differ by seven years, it would suffice to compare the Birth Astral Charts calculated for these dates. It is opportune to use, for this purpose, the Birth Astral Charts chosen and calculated by Alan Leo (1860 –1917) for the 17th of February, 1847, as found in his book *Thousand and One Notable Nativities* (LEO, 1917, p. 25, 92, 93), as follows [as shown on p. 6]:

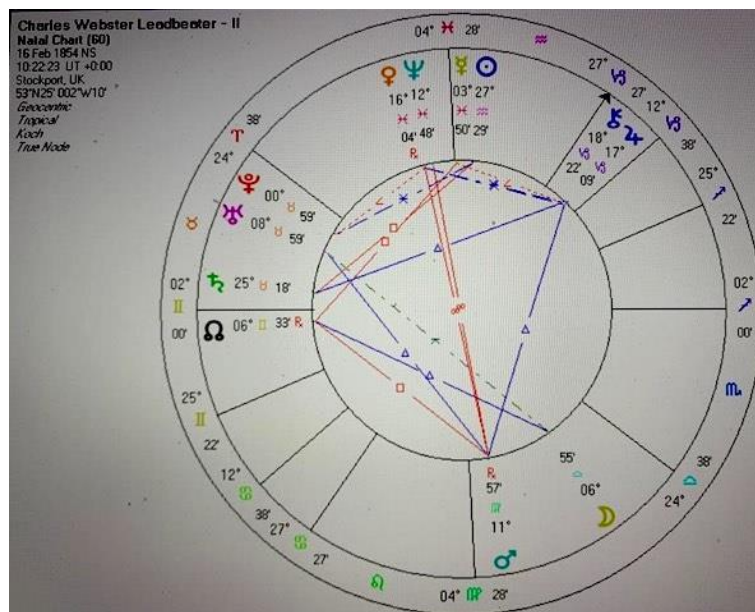
⁸ The word “horoscope” did not originally refer to collective “newspaper” predictions. Today, the term Natal Astral Chart is used more, or simply Astral Chart, to designate that photograph, so to speak, of the position of the stars in the sky at the time of birth of the individual in relation to the lines of latitude and longitude of the place where he was born. on Earth (LINDEMANN, 2020, p. 14-15).



Symbols associated with Astrology



Taking the same birth time, the Birth Astral Chart calculated for the other date in question, the 16th of February, 1854, would be [as shown on p. 7]:



In this visual comparison, even a layperson can observe that the very rare triple conjunction of Sun, Mercury and Neptune is found to be very accurate, with a dispersion of less than one degree on the 17th of February, 1847. It is opportune to point out that in an Astral Chart analysis, one of the most important points are the aspects, which are angles measured between the stars with vertex on Earth, since it is desired to determine the influence of the stars on us who live on Earth. The most powerful or intense aspect is the longitudinal conjunction or alignment of the stars at zero degrees. A dispersion or orb tolerance of up to 1° is considered nearly exact or very strong, and even up to 6° is still considered strong.

Since the planet Mercury has an inner orbit or is closer to the Sun than the Earth, its aspects are never more than 30° before or after the Sun. Therefore, statistically, the chance of having a conjunction of one degree between them is 1° in 30° = 0.033333. As Neptune is an outer planet, it can revolve freely, the chance of a one degree conjunction with the Sun is 2° in 360° = 0.005555. The probability of both events occurring simultaneously, as in the case of a triple conjunction of one degree of maximum dispersion (so the degree of both events must be in the same direction, which is still a one in two chance) between Sun, Mercury and Neptune is 0.033333 X 0.005555 X 0.5 = 0.000092, that is, almost 1 case in 10,000 or 0.009259%, which is similar to winning the lottery.

Another way of sampling the rarity of this aspect is to check the maximum dispersion between Sun, Mercury and Neptune on the date of the 17th of February in subsequent years, remembering that more than 6° no longer constitutes a triple conjunction: In 1847 => 1°02'; 1848 => 14°42'; 1849 => 12°08'; 1850 => 24°22'; 1851 => 34°29'; 1852 => 30°10'; 1853 => 19°08'; 1854 => 15°19'; becoming evident that, among these eight years observed in the sample, the triple conjunction only occurred in 1847. Therefore, from the above, according to the astrological argument, for the Bishop Charles Webster Leadbeater could indeed have been a great clairvoyant, it is much more likely that he was born on the 17th of February, 1847, since the dispersion of the triple conjunction of Sun, Mercury and Neptune on that date was only 1°02' (one degree and two minutes of arc), that is, practically exact.

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