

## ASTROLOGY AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

### Astrology as Esoteric Science

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After *The Secret Doctrine* was published at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new tendency arose, which recognized Astrology as an occult science which rested on a truly spiritual basis. In her masterpiece of occult thought, H. P. Blavatsky stated that “*Sidereal influence is dual. There is the physiological and physical influence, that of exotericism, and the high spiritual influence...*” (SD V, p330; Coll. Writ. XIV, p345). This perspective was enthusiastically endorsed by the astrologer Alan Leo, who became a member of the Theosophical Society in 1890. In his book “*Esoteric Astrology*”, written under the inspiration of *The Secret Doctrine* (SD), he claimed that Astrology had both an “esoteric” and an “exoteric” side. Esoteric Astrology – he said - deals with the abstract cause, the philosophy and the inner or subtler point of view; whilst exoteric astrology is content with the effect, the practice, and the concrete or outer expression. A more comprehensive and deeper view can be found, as we know, in Alice Bailey’s book, dictated by the Tibetan master. Today I will focus mainly on the information given in the Secret Doctrine.

Astrology is an ancient science, it is perhaps older than we can imagine. Blavatsky reveals that some “Astronomical Dynasties” taught the Third Root-Race, called “Lemurian”; and after they had passed on that knowledge to Atlantis, they “re-descended” during the Fifth race in order to reveal to those forerunners the mysteries of the heavens (SD II, p. 436). Blavatsky suggests that the oldest branch of our fifth race, the Aryans, is the one that came from Atlantis to northern India bringing the astrological knowledge. Only long after that, the Zodiac was imported into Egypt, where our western astrology was born. That archaic science was lost, and only echoes of it were passed on to later traditions. The implications are extraordinary: According to these accounts, Astrology is no less than 18 million years old.

That this system to a great extent works and is useful, can be demonstrated by thousands of serious and learned astrologers in all ages and around the whole world. However, Blavatsky’s curious statement, that *primitive astrology was as far above modern astrology as the zodiacal signs and the planets are above the street lamp-posts* (SD V, p. 332, Adyar edition; Collected Writings, XIV, page 348) leaves no

doubt that some key is missing which has not been given yet to us modern people. Quite a statement isn't it? Astrology, according to the Secret Doctrine, was once a vast and sublime science.

Ancient astrology was concerned more with the energies of the spiritual man than with physical plane events. Blavatsky states that *the last word on this science is to be sought in the **Occult** forces emanating from the constellations*". *"Each constellation has a mysterious influence over the individual"*. The SD dedicates many pages to the mystery of the Zodiac, indicating also that *"the key must be turned seven times"* before we can understand the many layers of meaning underlying this, one of the most ancient of mysteries. The SD seems to imply that the Zodiac, when esoterically considered, is like a sensitive plate forming a link between the objective and subjective sides of nature, connecting the realm of meaning and the phenomenal world, being a record of all the history of our universe. The Zodiac is seen as a ring of twelve magnetic *foci* which channel the energies of other constellations; being perhaps a reflection of a still greater Zodiac.

When the universe is seen as a living organism, it becomes easier to understand that sidereal motions, cyclic by nature, condition and have an influence on all kingdoms in nature; The planets, stars and constellations to which we attribute some astrological influence upon human affairs are *living beings* subject to a cyclic return, just as the human being. They are pursuing their own evolutionary paths, and have their own inner natures, their own notes, their presence and position having therefore a definite influence, on all else in Space. All stars and planets are Beings and therefore have their own ray nature, their own "sound", within the *"Harmony of the Spheres"*. H. P. Blavatsky looked upon sound as the effect produced by the vibration of the ether<sup>1</sup>. The impulses communicated to the ether by the different planets may be likened to the tones produced by the different notes of a musical instrument. The etheric network thus seems to be instrumental in transmitting those energies throughout Space.

Even when in ancient times the Mysteries were mere shadows of their foregone glory, several clues can be found in the extant texts, that Astrology was considered a matter not to be taken lightly. A very curious pledge is found in an old Astrological book called *"The Anthologies"*, written by Vettius Valens in the second century. *"I must before all prescribe an oath for those who happen to encounter*

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<sup>1</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. 275.

*my books, that they ...withhold it in a manner appropriate to the mysteries*". Another Roman astrologer of the fourth century, Firmicus Maternus, informs us that the mythical musician and astrologer Orpheus, initiated strangers into his mysteries by means of a pledge. A solemn oath was taken *"that the entire teaching of divinity will be made known only to those equipped with pure splendor of mind and...uncorrupted soul"*. /The fact that these oaths are very similar to Hermetic pledges (mainly those found in the papyri discovered in Nag Hammadi in 1945) has led scholars to conclude that these ancient astrologers drew their knowledge from Hermetic mystery traditions.

*"Divine Astrology is only for the Initiates"* (Collected Writings XIV, p. 344). As in ancient times, only a true Initiate can know *"those immaterial Forces and spiritual Entities that affect matter and guide it"*. *"Astrology is wholly built upon the mystic and intimate connection between the heavenly bodies and mankind; and it is one of the great secrets of initiation"* (SD II, page 500, footnote). The SD suggests that only those Great Beings who have undergone a complete transformation can understand its deepest side.

So, what is that *"mystic and intimate connection between the heavenly bodies and mankind"* Astrology is built upon? (SD II, page 500). Even when little can be known of this *"Astrology of the initiates"*, something must not escape our attention. If man has his destiny outlined by a certain constellation or star, traced as a self-prophecy (Coll. Writ. p. 349) it is precisely because the human Monad in its first beginning is that Spirit of that planet itself. The great Paracelsus indicated the same thing, when he said: *"The essences in man's sidereal body are intimately related to the essences of the stars"*. Somewhere else, he adds: *"What is the human being but a constellation of the same power that formed the stars? What would become of the heart, if there were no sun in the universe? As our sun irradiates its beams on each body in Space, so the Regent of every planet, the Parent-star emanates, irradiates from itself the spirit or spark of every pilgrim soul born under its house within its own ray group. "Humanity and the celestial bodies are bound together indissolubly". This is precisely because those celestial orbs are "Intelligences" (id. P. 352). With these "Intelligences" Esoteric Astrology is concerned: "There is the exoteric influence, and the high spiritual influence, imparted by the knowledge of the Planetary Gods"* (SD V, p330; Coll. Writ. XIV, p345).

Who are those Planetary Gods or Regents of the planets? The SD presents these primordial Seven Logoi as a channel for each of the Seven rays or

Hierarchies. Each of them is one step or degree in the musical scale of the cosmos, the builder of one of the seven Kingdoms in nature, and rules one of the seven “sacred planets”. Why are certain planets and stars “sacred” whilst others are not? According to the suggestions found in the SD, this seems to be related to the spiritual status of the planetary Logoi,— on their incomprehensible level. Our planet Earth, as well as the Sun, are not considered “sacred stars”. Through our work with triangles we are certainly helping our planet become sacred. Venus is said to be a sacred planet, being “the most occult, powerful and mysterious of all planets, light-bearer of the earth both in a physical and mystical sense”. Mercury is also said to be highly mysterious.

As we read in the Secret Doctrine (I, page 572) the occult teaching claims that the star under which a man is born will remain forever his star throughout the whole cycle of incarnations in this solar system. But *this is not his astrological star* (SD I, page 572). The personal horoscope is only related to the present incarnation, and therefore his “astrological star” is related to the personality, not to the soul, as the former is. This seems to imply that each individualized being coming into a separate existence is a pure ray of the Divine Light; it is like a seed cast into the phenomenal worlds, in order that it may grow like unto its Parent Star, his “Father in Heaven”. Each of those seeds belong to one particular star, one specific ray or musical note of the cosmic soundboard, and these “Sons of Mind”, our own souls on their own plane, are in a way under the protection or influence of their Parent Star. Man’s spiritual heredity is therefore derived from those seven Spirits before the Throne of God. The long way towards the recognition of that Parent Star (which only takes place at Initiation) is made according to the Law of Cycles, the culmination of such process, generally called “Initiation”, being in some way a return to the Spirit’s homeland, that ray of the Parent Star.

Why is it so difficult for us non-initiated to understand how Astrology works at a spiritual level? H. P. B. warns us about the presence in our solar system of other invisible spheres which positively have an influence, some of them not yet physical and on the downward arch towards material density, others no longer physical and in process of disintegration. Our Moon is said to belong to the latter category. A modern astrologer would find it difficult to reconcile the idea of the Moon being “a dead body”, with the importance given to this luminary by modern astrological practice. The occult doctrine treats the Moon as a remnant or residue of those globes mankind once

inhabited in archaic periods, and not as an offspring of the Earth. Her *“metaphysical and psychic nature...must remain a secret”* (id.). This occult influence is connected with the fact that in Esoteric Astrology the Moon is looked upon as a *“substitute for esoteric purposes”* (SD I, p. 575n) just as the Sun, thus *“veiling”* some other influences. In the case of the Sun, Esoteric Astrology considers the physical Sun as a vehicle for the energies of the Heart of the Sun, and the Central Spiritual Sun, thus acting as a veil for other more esoteric influences. We are told that the influences that the Sun, as the ruler of Leo, veils, are those of Neptune and Uranus, the former being the agent of the Heart of the Sun, the latter that of the Spiritual Sun, these planets thus forming a triangle which makes the Leo experience a lesson in *sensitivity*.

According to the Occult Doctrine, the solar system includes hosts of invisible bodies. In the face of this monumental *“Doctrine of the Spheres”*, how can then a non-initiated human account for all the possible influences a person is subject to? All the zodiacal and planetary energies act either as hindering or stimulating forces, according to the type of vehicle on which they play. The receptivity of these vehicles necessarily depend upon the point in evolution attained, the Tibetan warns us. Can a disciple on the Spiritual Path, who is developing a universal kind of altruism and love, be subject to the same quality of energies as those human beings who are the dramatic centers of personal lives?

Do the stars truly determine our destiny? When it is assured in the SD: *“Yes, our destiny is written in the stars”* it by no means implies Fatalism. The subject of the Zodiac arises when the law of cycles and karma are being dealt with. The Secret Doctrine adds: *“Those who believe in KARMA have to believe in DESTINY, which from birth to death, every man is weaving thread by thread around himself, as a spider does its cobweb”* (SD I, page 639). The human being is the weaver of his own destiny. The stars are then only the cosmic clock which indicates that the time is ripe for certain adjustments to be made; they do not cause our happiness or misfortune. They are simply the channels for certain energies set in motion, some of which are meant to restore balance, that is what karma is about after all. As one Mahatma said: *“We recognize only ONE law in the universe: that of BALANCE and perfect equilibrium”* (L. 22).

Even when based on illusion (as the path of the Sun across the sky is) Astrology is essentially one of the deepest and most symbolic presentations of esoteric truth, precisely because it deals with the energies and forces which

play upon the whole field of Space, we are told by the Tibetan. *Astrology is infallible only with the condition that its interpreters must be equally infallible*, Blavatsky states. (SD V, Adyar ed. p. 331; Coll. Writ. XIV, p. 346). On what such infallibility depends, we have two clues: First, that it is more connected with the astrologer's knowledge of occult forces than with astronomical erudition (Isis Unveiled, I, page 314). Astrology is a time-honored system devised to understand all the welter of impacting and conditioning energies which pour forth from so many sources. Second, that accurate predictions rely on some specific knowledge and computations connected with the "Spiritual action of Cycles, pre-ordained by Karmic Law "(SD I, p. 642). There is some knowledge about the Law of Cycles and Karma which is only imparted at a certain stage upon the Path of Return.

The Astrology of the ancients was a great and noble science. Our modern astrology seems to be a relic, a few fragments of that Ancient Astrological Wisdom, combined with some modern hypotheses. Genuine archaic astrology was a branch of the Ancient Mysteries, and had the support of the best minds in human history.

We are now approaching the second full Moon in Leo, and we will be working with the keynote "*I am That, and That am I*", a literal rendering of a powerful Sanskrit mantram, "*Soham*". This lesson on identification will be enhanced by the fact that this full moon will take place on the brightest star of the constellation Leo, *Regulus*, "the little king", one of the most powerful stars of the heavens. The star Sirius also comes to our notice, given its close cosmic relation with Leo: we are told that in the future, Leo festivals will involve contact with Sirian energies. The universal and group energies of Aquarius are also activated, given the interplay of energies between these two opposite signs.

As we move into the Aquarian Age, one can expect that a further revelation on Astrology will someday become possible, mainly being Aquarius a sign related to the etheric web of the planet, to universal brotherhood, and to Astrology itself. Astrology will eventually be restored to its original beauty. "The time is coming... when Astrology will recover its ancient dignity as sublime science" (C. W. III, p. 45). We are also told in Esoteric Astrology (p. 590), that new teachings on Astrology, among other subjects, will come after 2025, which seems to be a crucial year, and it is just round the corner.

According to the Tibetan, the new astrology will deal with significance and meaning.

It is "esoteric" precisely in this sense.