YOUNG ANNIE BESANT,

the Social Reformer

**by**

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 When the hand of destiny shapes the life of a beautiful soul, such as Annie Besant, who wanted to save the waifs of humanity, the heart thrills with delight. She was an author, a prolific writer, public speaker, lecturer, editor, political and social rights activist, women's rights activist, union activist, a teacher of science, Indian nationalist, president of several socialist organizations and eventually the president of the Theosophical Society.

 This is her chart. The time of birth (5:39 PM) is from her autobiography.1



 2Her father, Dr. William Wood, was extremely well educated, a mathematician, medical doctor, philosopher, linguist, he spoke French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, a smattering of Hebrew and Gaelic. He was a lover of classical literature. He became a doctor because he wanted to help people. (Saturn in Pisces). He died when Annie was 5 years of age and her brother, Harry, was seven. Retrograde Saturn quincunx Sun signifies a separation from father. He ridiculed the Church's tenets of sin and hell. His Irish wife, Emily, swooned and fell unconscious when she learned he died. When she looked in the mirror her raven black, shining, thick hair had turned white. Jupiter and Moon in a T square in the fourth house denote the disruption of the family life and the influence of her religious (Jupiter) Mother and her religious upbringing. Annie adored her Mother as signified by Mars, (herself) sextile the Moon (Mother).

 The unexpected death of Annie's father, left the family without funds. Her Mother hired a tutor for a boy her son's age, whose parents desired educated. At the same time her son would be educated. She found an old house that had been a vicarage. She now could have more boys stay at her home and be tutored until they were ready to enter Harrow School. (Retrograde Saturn trines Moon in the 4th house.)

 This was the ideal home for Annie. It stood on top of Harrow Hill. Rosebushes covered the front and Ivy vines covered the back of the house. Fruit trees, firs, laurel and maple adorned the sloping landscape. There was not a tree that she did not climb. Annie had one tree, an old widespreading Portugal laurel. It was her bedroom, sitting room and her larder, which was supplied from the fruit trees. There she would sit for hours with her favorite book: Milton's "Paradise Lost." In her vivid imagination she lived with the characters in the book. She does not recall how she learned how to read at the age of 5. (Mercury is the most aspected planet in the chart. )

 When she was eight years of age, Miss Marryat, a maiden lady of large means, was visiting at a neighbor's house. Miss Marryat, who was lame, had been taking care of her ill brother, a famous author. When her Mother died, she felt the need to educate her niece, Amy Marryat, who was the same age as Annie. She took a liking to Annie immediately and asked Anne's Mother, Emily, for permission to be in charge only of Annie's education. Emily finally agreed. Annie would visit her on holidays. This was the beginning of an education that was unique and fortuitous Other children of good families were later added. (The part of fortune trines Mars, the ruler of the ascendant.)

 There were no spelling books, no grammar books. Miss Marryat, now called 'Auntie', taught them everything except music. A professional teacher was hired for that purpose. Learning spelling was a favorite. They would find words that sounded the same but were spelled differently such as weather and whether. Geography was learned by placing cut-out countries on a painted skeleton map. Every day they were required to write what they had observed the day before. Auntie would correct their spelling and grammar. They read books in French and German. Their first German lesson was reading Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell." They learned history by one reading aloud, while others worked, such as learning how to sew. There were picnics that were memorable. Auntie, told them stories from the bible. She was an Evangelical. The children themselves, also taught at the Sunday School. When lessons were over, they had plenty of fun; long walks and rides, rides on a lovely pony. Auntie was their merriest playfellow. They vacationed for months in France and Germany when Annie was 15. The children had such a delightful, wonderful vacation. Emily was proud of Annie's progress in her studies. At sixteen and a half, Annie completed her studies with Auntie. Progressed ascendant conjoined Mars signifying her freedom. Progressed IC conjoined Jupiter, denoting a change in residence.

 As she was growing into womanhood, her mystic love passionately twined themselves around sacrifice for Christ through the church. She longed to spend her time in worshipping Jesus. (Exalted Jupiter sextiles Mars, ruler of the ascendant.) When she was 19 she became betrothed to a Cambridge man, Frank Besant, a young clergyman and deacon. {Retrograde Venus conjoined natal Vertex (partners)}.

 In the Autumn of 1867, before she married, she and her Mother were visiting a family friend: Mr. Roberts, 'a lawyer for the poor people'. He told Annie that he saw women working in mines, naked to their waists, with short petticoats barely reaching to their knees, rough, foul-tongued, brutalized out of all womanly decency and grace; and how he had seen little children working there too. Children 3 and 4 years old were at the entrance of the mine, guarding it. They would fall asleep to be roused by curse and kick to the unfair toil. This was Annie's first rude awakening to the political struggle for social justice, that would eventually sever her relationship with the church and with her husband. (Jupiter in the T square with Venus and Uranus)

 In the winter of 1867 she married Frank Besant. Two children, Arthur Digby and Mabel, were born by the time she was 23 years old. {Sun, ruler of the 5th house of children, conjoins Venus and the N. Node of the Moon}.

 While practicing on the organ in the small church, she had a sudden urge to ascend to the pulpit. She gave a superb lecture to empty pews. The words came easily. She knew she had the gift of 'speech'. She wrote short stories and sent them off to magazines. When one was accepted and she received 30 shillings, her joy was equal to that of Archimedes when he shouted eureka through the streets of Athens. She realized she was a writer. Mercury is the most heavily aspected planet in the chart.

 As she began questioning her religious beliefs and the infallibility of the bible and the church, she became ill and even contemplated suicide in the summer of 1871. Her sensitive emotional nature was tortured by doubt. She had to know the truth. Finally, she resolved not to accept communion. In 1873 when she refused to take communion, they legally separated. He was to have the boy and Annie was to have the girl, Mabel. At last she was FREE. Retrograde Uranus conjoining the ascendant won her mutual closeness-freedom dilemma. Planets in Cancer (4th house) and Libra (7th house), desire closeness, while Uranus demands freedom.

 Saturn in Pisces and Neptune in Aquarius are in mutual reception. Her future work (Saturn) was to reveal the love of God (Pisces). The true love of a Christian's god is to work for the education (Aquarius) of humanity and to eliminate religious bigotry.

 Annie moved to London with Mabel. She joined the National Secular Society, which espoused free thought. She developed a close relationship with Charles Bradlaugh, the Editor of the *National Reformer,* an attorney and an MP in Parliament. From one extreme of religious belief, she went to the other extreme: atheism. She wrote many articles (Mercury) on issues such as women's rights, marriage and social justice. In 1874 she became a popular public speaker giving lectures all over the country. Her audience resonated with her Irish passionate heart. She espoused the freedom of thought, women’s rights, secularism, birth control and the rights of the working class. She was a passionate opponent (Uranus) of all injustice to nations weaker than themselves, so that she found herself always in opposition to the Government of the day. Against their aggressive and oppressive policy in Ireland, in the Transvaal, in India, in Afghanistan, in Burma, in Egypt, she lifted up her voice in all towns, trying to touch the consciences of the people, and to make them feel the immorality of a land-stealing, piratical policy. Against war, against capital punishment, against flogging, demanding national education instead of big guns, public libraries instead of warships. It was no wonder she was denounced as an agitator, a firebrand, and that all orthodox society turned up at her its most respectable nose. . . Cardinal signs in cardinal houses signified her executive abilities and her dominant nature. She knew she had power through the word and through her pen, and she used it to open the hearts and minds of men to justice. Her Mistress Truth would dissipate religious bigotry. (Neptune (religion) semi-square (freedom) Uranus, plus Uranus opposition Mercury (writing); and Mars quincunx Mercury).

 In 1877 when Bradlaugh and Annie wrote (Mercury) a pamphlet advocating voluntary birth control, they were charged with publishing material that was "likely to deprave or corrupt those whose minds are open to immoral influence." They were both found guilty of publishing (Jupiter) obscene material and sentenced to six months in prison. (Mercury square Jupiter) The sentence was quashed by the Court of Appeal.

 From 1874 to 1886 she was an atheist. To a woman of her temperament, filled with passionate desire for the bettering of the world, the elevation of humanity, a lofty system of ethics was of even more importance than a logical, intellectual conception of the universe.

 Annie then wrote and published her own book: *"The Laws of Population"* advocating voluntary birth control, better pay for workers and their starving families. Newspapers accused her of writing "an indecent, lewd, filthy, bawdy and obscene book." Her husband used the publicity of the case to persuade the courts that he, rather than Annie, should have custody of Mabel, their daughter. He was given custody of Mabel. The judge denied her custody of her daughter, because she was an atheist. (Retrograde Saturn quincunx Sun). As parent, (Saturn) she separated (quincunx) from her child (Sun). She became seriously ill, but then vowed that all children would be hers to love and help.

 She continued writing. Her pen lashed out at the orthodox teachings of the Church: the eternal torture, the infallibility of the Christian Church, its persecutions, its religious wars, its cruelty and oppressions. She leveled all the strength of her brain and tongue with unsparing hand, to expose the history of the Christian Church. It was the church that robbed her of her Mabel. Later she admitted that she was combative and self-assertive. (Aries planets and ascendant.)

 In 1888 she became friends with George Bernard Shaw, Walter Crane and Edward Aveling, when she joined the socialist organization known as the Fabian Society. She joined and wrote (Mercury) for other socialist organizations urging political change. (Uranus is co-ruler of the 11th house of organizations) They worked for the redistribution of political power and the elimination of poverty. (Uranus opposition Mercury square the part of fortune in the 10th house.) She resigned her membership in the National Secular Society because it was too materialistic.

 On May 10th, 1889. Annie became the beloved pupil of Madame H.P. Blavatsky, the co-founder of the Theosophical Society. Annie said "theosophy is the glory of my life." Annie at last, found her Mistress Truth. (P. Venus conjoined natal Sun exactly and p. Mercury trined the ascendant exactly.) Theosophy is based on the Ageless Wisdom Teachings as was known by Pythagoras and other great individuals.

 In 1893 she wrote her autobiography. It reflected her feelings, beliefs and the events of the time. Six retrograde planets allowed her to express her inner Self. (natal Mercury conjoins Venus and the Sun) When her children were grown, they joined her and became Theosophists.

 While living in India, she founded the Central Hindu College at Benares in 1898. (progressed Part of Fortune sextile Mercury (learning) trine Uranus, co-ruler of organizations.) She continued to write letters to British newspapers arguing the case for women's suffrage. She joined the struggle for Indian Home Rule and in 1916 established the Indian Home Rule League and became its president. At times during the first World War she was interned by the British authorities. (P. ascendant opposes part of fortune in the 10th house of authorities). As President of the Theosophical Society from 1907, (P. Sun sextile Sun) she wrote an enormous number of books and pamphlets on theosophy. She traveled in 1926-27 in England and in the United States with her protege Jiddu Krishnamurti, whom she announced as the new Messiah; however, the young man himself, denounced all claims about himself as the World Teacher. This was her big error. She died in India on September 20, 1933 at the age of 86. (p. Sun conjoins natal MC, within minutes; p. ascendant squares natal Pluto; Natal Mars is at the apex of a yod with p. Mercury sextile natal Mercury.)

 She wrote in her own autobiography: I ask no other epitaph on my tomb but: “‘She tried to follow Truth.'”

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References:

1Born on Oct. 1, 1847 at 5:39 PM local time in London, England; 00W05; 51N32.

2A[nnie Besant Biography •Biography Online](http://www.biographyonline.net/women/annie-besant.html)

