

Twins

Authors: Akruranatha Dasa, Marici Dasa, Nikhilananda Dasa,
Shyamasundara Dasa and Urmila Devi Dasi
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Edited by bh. Jan

07-Mar-94 Akruranatha.ACBSP@com-link.org

I am new to this conference, and I want to just ask some submissive questions, as one who knows nothing of astrology. It seems to me that if two people are born at the same time in the same place, then everything we could learn about either of them based solely upon their time and place of birth would be true for both. Is there not more to astrology than the chart itself? (i.e., astrologers may also look at physiognomy, or even the family from which you descend, in order to be accurate, no?) If the chart is so important, can we not find pairs of people with the same chart (this should not be hard in big cities like Calcutta, New York, Mexico City, Shanghai, etc.), and prove they have remarkably similar characteristics? Or couldn't we at least learn, by interviewing such people and compiling data, the limitations of reading peoples' charts? Is this kind of empirical research inappropriate? Is anyone doing it out there, now that there is even a proliferation of Astrology and New Age magazines sprouting in my grocery store?

Sincerely,

Akruranatha das

09-Mar-94 Nikilananda (das) ACBSP (D)

On Akruranath Prabhu's question: Should two persons born same time and place not have a strikingly similar fate?

If two persons are born exactly in the same time and place the similarities in their fate are certainly there. But mostly even twins are born at slightly different times, which can result in a difference that increases due to the multiplication effect as time goes by (One event leading to a series of other events). So at the end there is a somewhat different life story for the two. Still some similarities are there. (Which of course the materialistic researcher will attribute to the biological similarities. That is okay. These

are also part of karma.) Even people born in the same age in the same country still have many things in common. This is obvious. Even apples grown under the same planetary influence will have similarities. People born in the sixties in Timbuktoo (Sahara desert) may have little in common with people born in the sixties in San Francisco due to the difference in place and planetary influence.

There are academic scientists in the US and Germany who conducted extensive research on twin births and their fate over decades. Most interesting to them were some amazing cases of one-egg twins who were born practically at the same time and place and who later became separated by circumstances and did not know of each other for many years and still had an almost identical life. In one case, twin girls lost contact with each other in their childhood. They did not even know where the other one lived.

They married exactly in the same year on the same day. Their husbands' first names were the same. They had the same likes and dislikes. They had a car accident on the same day. The color of the car involved was the same in both cases! They had the same number of children. Their daughters were given similar names and they took the same profession.

They also liked the same type of music, food and clothes. To find such cases is very rare but most interesting to the scientists who concluded: That the biological gene similarity leads to amazing results in brain similarity and resulting incidents.... That is their view. For us it is proof of astrological science.

Of course, there is a certain freedom of choice even in identical karma, which means that the same karma is slightly differently used by the individual. Each individual soul is different. Srila Prabhupada says that as soon as you are born your good and bad karma is born along with you. What we make out of it is up to us.

Y.S. Nikhilananda Das

10-Mar-94 Akruranatha.ACBSP@com-link.org

Thank you Nikhilananda prabhu. The twin study you mentioned with all those amazing "coincidences" is certainly very interesting! Brain similarities indeed! How could any genetic similarity hope to explain why a car accident or marriage would happen on the same day, or why the first name of the husband should be identical? Enough of this type of data would prove at least that there is something more at work than either genetics or "nurture". Neither factor could explain why such strikingly similar events would take place to

twins separated at young age. Of course, you need a more significant sample than one such pair of twins. And then again, the results would be even more striking if the pairs of people with identical charts were not twins, but were as genetically different as possible.

Some more questions, though: Is the chart of a person born in Timbuktoo more similar to that of a person born on the same latitude halfway across the world twelve hours later than it is to, say, a person born in Timbuktoo 3 1/2 years later? If so (as I would expect), what explains the “similar karma” of being born in that particular place and the consequences that we might expect of being born in that place? Does being born in a particular place have any astrological significance other than the location of heavenly bodies with respect to that place at a particular time (i.e. I think Shyamasundara in an earlier message mentioned that questions, omens, palmistry, phrenology, numerology, etc. were also branches of astrology. Is there not some sort of “place-eology” as well?)

Also, Shyamasundara made some remarks in an earlier posting about exoteric effects (which scientists would concede have an effect on apples) and esoteric effects (which are not part of legitimate Vedic Astrology, since it is a “code language” only, without a causal relationship). Do you agree Nikhilananda Prabhu? Does “planetary influence” refer to actual influence of the planet on the person whose chart is being read, or is it just a shorthand way of saying “planetary significance in the chart”? The only reason I ask is because I am new to this whole subject and your use of the word “influences” alerted me to the possibility there might be differences of opinion.

Concerning the multiplication effect of one event leading to series of different effects, I am a little perplexed.... I presume the birth chart of someone does not change over his lifetime. Even if one event leads to different effects, and so on, shouldn’t all these effects be indicated in the self-same chart? If not, and the exponential progression of effects soon creates an enormous variety of different fates, what does the chart really tell us?

As far as a person making out of their karma what they will, this seems to raise theological questions about the nature of free will and determinism that could be explored by serious devotee scholars. I have heard statements by Srila Prabhupada that would appear to contradict (e.g. “Even if you go to Calcutta your forehead goes with you” is a proverb he repeated approvingly). We know we have free will to surrender to Krsna or Maya. We also know that pious and impious deeds affect our future good and bad reactions, but that whether we will perform them is also affected by our previous deeds, at least to some extent. “The intricacy of action and reaction is very difficult to understand.” Anyway, karma or no, Visnu knows all the choices we will make and

have made, in past, present and future. Does He not indicate all of this in the signs a learned astrologer can read?

Speaking of free will and karma, I have wondered at times what effect performing devotional service has on a person's karma in this life if the person later falls down (if the person does not fall down are they not to be considered transcendental and beyond ordinary actions and reactions of material nature?) We have heard, "When we clap our hands before the deities, all the lines change", but there is also the story of Romaharsana Suta, who offended the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Balarama, and whose low birth as a Suta again became a consideration. We know that unsuccessful yogis take birth in opulent or righteous families where they can continue their spiritual activities, but what about fallen devotees in this life? Do they return to the fate indicated on their charts, or have they departed from that fate irrevocably, or was their "stint" in devotional service also indicated on their chart, and whether or not they will ultimately prove successful in this life?

Please feel free anyone to answer these questions. Please forgive my ignorance and feel free to point out if and when the very question itself is inappropriate. Although I have never "dabbled", I am now anxious to be convinced and instructed by devotees with authorized Vedic astrological knowledge, so long as this will not interfere with Srila Prabhupada's wishes for me.

Your servant, Akruranatha dasa

11-Mar-94 Marici (das) SKS (Malmoe - S)

As you have kindly invited "anyone" to answer, I will have a go at one of your highly relevant questions. As far as my understanding goes (and here I stand to be corrected by those more learned in Vaishnava philosophy), it is not the prarabdha-karma, i.e. the karma which comes with the present body, which is destroyed by bhakti: APRARABDHA-phalam papam kutam bijam phalonmukham / kramenaiva praliyeta visnu-bhakti-ratatanam (Padma Purana). Furthermore, the birth chart does not show merely karmic results; if so, why the descriptions of Krsna's and Mahaprabhu's charts? In the chart of a fallen devotee, an expert astrologer (by which I am NOT referring to myself) can clearly see: a) that he will take up spiritual life and receive initiation, along with the times of these events; b) the nature of his sadhana; c) that he will fall down, and when; d) whether he will resume his spiritual practices, and if so, when; and (if the astrologer is really good) e) what will be his fate after death, including his next birth if there is one.

Did I understand the proverb about going to Calcutta right in linking it with the saying that one's fate is written on one's forehead by Lord Brahma?

Your servant, Marici das

12-Mar-94 Nikilananda (das) ACBSP (D)

This is to answer some of Akruranath's and Marici's questions.

1.) What significance have the twin-studies?

The twin study I referred to was described in a respected newspaper in Germany recently. It was not a study on the validity of astrology but on genetic similarities. The case I mentioned was not the only one. There were more such cases which left the scientists puzzled as to similar life stories. Their motives were not to prove astrology but to find how strong are biological influences on the destiny of people. They would argue that even things as overlooking a car of a certain colour at a precise time may be genetically pre-programmed. There are 30 billion neurons on the surface of the human brain, which are connected by ten times the number of wires between each other. Each of these 300 billion connections develops in an individual way. So they can argue that the influence of the brain's biology goes into very minute and precise details of our life. So, the story is not so simple as your questions would make it appear and still any kind of proof we give could be argued against by materialistic scientists who even reject the very possibility of astrological science from the very start.

I used the twin example to illustrate the point that if you look for proof, there is also much you can find. But no two people are born exactly at the same time and place except in rare cases a few twins when the belly of the mother is cut open. Such studies are very laborious and time consuming and hardly any scientist would undertake this endeavor to prove Vedic astrology. Nor would it be practical for us to undertake such study. Even a small difference in time and place can make a big difference in the actual chart.

But if you actually learn the Vedic astrology science first, you will after some time find an overwhelming percentage of statistical proof that certain yogas (planetary combinations) are conducive to certain results. This is what convinced me personally most of the validity of Vedic astrology. You can easily see after some time that for example certain vyartha-jivan yogas and kalasarpa yogas produce in a significant number of horoscopes criminals and murderers. Of course, you have to know the science very well or else you will overlook certain bhangas or cancellations of these yogas, which after some

practice can also easily be detected. So before you can evaluate such statistics you must have knowledge of balancing yogas and strengths etc., which can be as complex as human life of which it shows a picture.

Here is one such case of definite kalasarpa yoga with no cancellation, belonging to two twin criminals both of whom were sentenced to life-long imprisonment at age 35. Even here, although the rasis are the same, in the navamsa they have a different ascendant accounting for the minute difference in birth time! Rasi for both: Rahu - Aquarius, Saturn - Capricorn, Moon - Sagittarius, Mercury, Venus, Mars - Scorpio, Sun - Libra, Jupiter - Virgo, Ketu - Leo, ascendant - Gemini.

The Indian astrologer B.V. Raman collected data for over 30 years on the statistical value of yogas. One yoga makes you administrator of a small rural village. This yoga he found in 60% of such administrators although the chance of having it is less than 5%. In his books he mentions his statistical experiences on hundreds of such yogas with many good examples. The author Rattan Lal also collected a lot of valuable data, which he uses as examples to illustrate certain yogas.

There have also been investigations by Western scientists. Their motives were to prove astrology to be nonsense. So their studies were biased and referred to Western astrology, which is speculative.

Whatever proof we find, they may never accept it, saying that any similarity may also have some known or unknown direct material reason. And they would accept only something that is totally beyond the present laws of nature (?). In this way we could keep on arguing forever. They do not realize that whatever subtle laws are there, they do not disagree with our presently seen reality but are only a deeper aspect of it. The same problems I believe to see in your questions, Akruranath Prabhu. Therefore I gave the example of the apples. It reminded me of one taped Prabhupada's conversation where a guest asks Srila Prabhupada in a very mysterious way: "The stars in the sky, Swamiji, the stars - do they actually exist?" And Prabhupada answers: Don't you see they exist? Are they not there in the sky every night?

So this urge to find some hidden esoteric meaning sometimes goes too far. The laws of karma and the gross reality are just different aspects of the same thing. Nothing is mysterious about it. But without proper Vedic knowledge we may be able to see only one aspect at a time just as scientists can only see atomic particles either as waves or as particles since both seem to outrule each other. In practice, however, they are forced to accept both as aspects of the same thing which they cannot describe. Do you get my point?

The world is filled with proof of similarities by closeness of time and space

since time immemorial. Just open your eyes. Any such example can proof anything that is real.

The Vedic science is not to disprove the material reality as the Mayavadis and esoteric speculators are proposing but to see it in the proper context. So by proper cultivation people in Vedic ages could see the world of the demigods and that of men both at the same time.

The subtle karma will work through gross matter like genetics and nurture. If you want to find out whether there are actually higher causes behind them you will have to learn Vedic astrology first. If you learn the classical system from authors like Parasara (the father of Vyasa) or Varaha Mihira you can find ample proof. If you do not, it is more or less impossible to prove anything and your challenge is irrelevant. It is like challenging physics without knowing physics first.

2.) Is there some branch of astrology like “place-ecology”?

Yes, it is known as mundane astrology. Certain countries and places carry their own karmic atmosphere which attract certain souls of a particular karma to be born there.

Let us say, that the US are under a certain planetary aspect that makes it a wealthy technology country. Then living beings desiring material comforts and having a certain karmic trace enabling them to live in an industrialized country will be born there.

These traces are not as simple as being the same for all of them but there is a variety of traces in the same direction. For this complex subject you have to be very expert in this particular branch of astrology. I do not know any such specialist although there may be. I only mentioned it to say that similarities connected to time and space are obvious. I hope that it did not sound sarcastic. I did not think it necessary to get into many details. Perhaps I should have taken your questions more serious. My point is that people cannot accept things as proof when it is too obvious. They want something new, exciting, mysterious. Just like many cannot accept that growing older and changing body in this life is good proof that there may be another change of body at the time of death. The phenomena from everybody's life are just too common.

It is true that two people born in different places at 12 hours difference can be more similar in character than two people born at 4 years difference in the same country.

3.) Do I disagree with Shyamasundara Prabhu that the planets are signifiers

rather than influences?

I agree in total with Shyamasundara Prabhu's excellent sastric views on this point. And I am sure that he could explain this subject much better than I can. Since you asked me, I would say: Don't you see that it is your karma and not the planet which influences you? The words "planetary influence" are used sometimes in the Bhagavatam and astrological literature as a metaphor for a more complex idea. Just like we can look at the watch and say "It is 7 PM, so the watch influenced me to run for the artik."

But the actual force is the force of time, the kala-cakra mentioned in Brahma-samhita and the planets are like the digits in the sky. When you learn the science you find it is like a complex language describing all phenomena in this world at any given time. The planet Saturn has nothing against you and even if it were not there your karma would still influence you. If there is any influence at all from Saturn it is not some rays or radiation in a mechanical sense but the influence of time coinciding with the position of Saturn at a certain place thereby making it the signifier of your bad fortune. Just like in a bad dream the monster signifies your sufferings but it is your horrible experience of the previous day that created the monster. So propitiation of the planets and homage to the devas is sometimes also recommended to remedy the cause i.e. the bad karma but the actual remedy recommended in the Jyotisa-sastras is chanting of the names of God (japa) and sacrifice. In a few cases giving cows to brahmins in charity.

In a sense you can compare the planets to the tax collectors who signify your failure to pay tax or give you credit but are not in themselves influences. At the same time we feel worried when we see them. So who can deny that they are influences in a symbolic sense? The punishment is also not by the tax collector but by the police and the payment of credit comes from the financial office. The tax collector is nothing but a signifier.

So in a way to me the difference is almost only rhetoric but then again the idea of signifier is superior because it leaves the living entity ultimately responsible for his present karma and we learn not to accept fate as something unavoidable in a fatalistic way but learn to take advantage of our choice of freedom, which is granted in the human form of life. And that is the whole point of the Vedic literature. If we miss it, astrological science is also useless for us. That is why Shyamasundara Prabhu's explanations are appropriate and hit the very point of the issue. So no difference of opinion as far as I can see.

4.) Multiplication of effects

This point was mentioned by me to show that small differences in two charts,

even of twins only, let's say, 15 minutes apart in their birth time, can lead to significant changes in their real life's history even though some similarities will also be there. A small difference can lead to a very different life due to the multiplying effect of one divergent factor in chain reactions. The chart is even more different when the tiny difference in time between two charts leads to a different ascendant even though the place is the same.

The chart, of course, does not change during the lifetime and I never proposed it.

5.) Karma and free will

Since we as human beings have the power to make significant decisions within a pre-destined framework we do preach to people. Otherwise what is the point?

So your theological point of complete pre-destination is not correct. Also the Gita verse you quoted refers to a different context. Also, you may "go to Calcutta and take your karma with you" but you may not necessarily chant the holy name or bathe in the dust of Vrindavan and take it with you.

When a certain amount of piety is either there by your own karma or by the personal favor of a devotee (Prabhupada: "I created your good fortune"), then you may get the choice of accepting the mercy to attain Krsna or to misuse it for falling into maya. So your independence is there eternally and only Krsna knows what decision you will make. No one else knows. It is not mechanic and it cannot be foretold. Even Jesus Christ was led to the choice one day whether he wanted to rule the entire earth or take his place as one of the great devotees of the Lord.

In fact this way of pre-destined thinking is dangerous since it makes one depend on one's previous karma and chart even when trying to be a devotee. If this decision could be seen by the chart then why don't we just examine people's charts as to whether they can become devotees and if they cannot, just forget about them? By the mercy of Sri Caitanya, however, even the most fallen can become devotees if only they desire sincerely in their heart and take the mercy. We should try to offer this chance to everyone. The astrological sastras say that even for Brahma it is difficult to foretell what exactly will happen. Thus there are even sometimes anxieties and struggles on the heavenly planets.

6.) To Marici Prabhu:

I)

The point about our previous karma or prarabdha karma not being destroyed

completely is correct. Otherwise we would give up the material body when chanting the holy name. Rather our present karma is destroyed. But since Krsna takes direct charge of someone who whole-heartedly takes shelter of Him, even the previous karma is given only as much as is good for your spiritual progress. There are many verses to this effect. Ramayana, Bhagavad-gita etc. So we do not give up our material body but at the same time it is understood that at the time of initiation we receive a spiritual body (Rupa Goswami).

So for a surrendered devotee anything is possible by the mercy of guru and Krsna and I have seen sometimes radical deviations from the actual charts in the life-story of devotees from the day they surrendered.

H.H. Harikesa Maharaja once called it the devotee-element in the chart or the "Krsna-planet", which is added to the original chart and changes everything. This is the "Krsna Graha". I think this is a very nice point. Maybe someone knows more about it.

II)

Even though Krsna's appearance takes place in three-dimensional space and historical time, it is nevertheless transcendental. In the Krsna Book it is mentioned that Krsna "took advantage of a very auspicious moment" when He appeared. My understanding is that the chart only shows the events of the kala cakra or effects of time in this universe. This is obvious. It cannot say anything about events in the spiritual world. Krsna manifests Himself in places which seem to have a location in this world but are actually part of His transcendental unlimited abode. Krsna's activities are always independent and free and eternal. They are called lila. No picture of planets in this universe can describe the unlimited nature of these activities. Krsna's activities can not be foretold by studying charts or graphics but they can sometimes be seen in the ecstasy of pure devotion by extraordinary souls who can have a vision of the eternal spiritual world. Meditation on Krsna's chart is nevertheless purifying and auspicious because it is directly connected to Krsna who takes advantage of a particular extremely auspicious time in this universe. It allows us to remember Krsna.

III)

Coming to the point of an astrologer being able to foretell events for devotees, I cannot accept the point that an astrologer will be able to foretell the fall down of a devotee. He may be able to see a certain time when a dangerous influence is there that may lead to fall down but this event is in no way unavoidable. Otherwise, how can we take a vow?

Also, it is a very dangerous view. A devotee who may have been foretold by an astrologer that fall down is inevitable may accept it as inevitable and give up. I have seen this actually happen a few times. In fact however, Krsna

promises the devotee all protection and that he should not fear. Also it is one of the qualities of bhakti that it cannot be stopped or hindered by anything material, including our previous karma. Caitanya accepted Jagai and Madhai who were the most sinful and they never fell down again. If they could make it anyone can make it if he accepts Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy whole-heartedly. Caitanya also never mentioned their previous history ever again.

IV)

So, your karma is inscribed on your forehead by Lord Brahma but: when you apply tilak you may transcend any condition of material life.

It is said in SB that when the devotee is inattentive and in an immature state he may have an accidental falldown even as a surrendered devotee due to previous karma but this is a rare case and special arrangement meant to make the devotee humble or for some other purpose Krsna has in mind. We should not think it applies to us. Mostly we have taken the wrong decision when we fall.

In fact, bhakti is completely transcendental and is bestowed not under material laws but by the unexplainable mercy of pure devotees. The activities of Vaisnavas are very hard to understand.

V)

So unless you are Krsna or a pure devotee on special mission your chart shows certain facilities given by the wheel of time in accordance with your karma. But what you make out of the facilities is up to you and what you will decide is not fixed. This is the meaning of the human form of life.

Part of the human karma is this freedom of choice and to recognize it is important.

A well-fortified Jupiter and second house may give you material opulences and if your nature is that of self-sacrifice as indicated from the twelfth house, it is a good argument to conclude that you may find it easy to give donations to the temple and free yourself from the material world but you may also decide to give it to a mundane charity institution and become entangled again in your next life even though you had an excellent opportunity to attain liberation.

Even yogis with extraordinary charts indicating life-spans of 10,000 years and so much more piety than we ordinary souls have, and even an excellent twelfth house etc., may not attain final liberation.

So strong tendencies and opportunities are seen in the chart by very expert astrologers to a degree of almost certainty but we should be careful not to

mix up things and underestimate the transcendental nature and opportunities of the path of bhakti. People can even surrender to Krsna in a moment and we have seen it happen.

Therefore we remind people: kamala jala mala jivana tala mala. Use this rare gift of human life now before it is gone.

VI)

I do not consider myself to be an astrologer. I am only studying this science. From my limited viewpoint I have to disagree with Marici Prabhu (and hope that he will forgive me) in that I do not consider these questions as "highly relevant". To me they seem to reveal a certain amount of confusion. But it is also good to ask questions when feeling confused. I thank you for the opportunity given in asking me to explain my remarks.

I would tend to ask both of you to study the classical writings of Parasara and Varaha Mihira etc. and the relevant places in Srila Prabhupada's literature carefully before entering an extended discussion on these topics.

I think with a basic knowledge as such there will be no difficulty in understanding Shyamasundara Prabhu's explanations on these points as presented in his paper for the GBC and in this conference.

Y.S. Nikhilananda Das

12-Mar-94 11:27 GMT Marici (das) SKS (Malmoe - S)

Dear Nikhilananda Prabhu, thanks for your exhaustive reply. Of course I agree with you that we have a free will; this is and must be the very foundation of bhakti. I do not believe in predestination. However, I do believe that every (relevant) detail of a person's life, even a devotee's, can be read from his chart. The reason for this belief is that I have personally seen it done.

The apparent contradiction here arises, so far as I can see, from our rather limited perception of time. If we accept that the division between past, present and future exists only in our minds, then surely there can be no philosophical or theological grounds for denying the observable reality that a good astrologer is indeed "sarvajna"?

I assure you that I have carefully studied the works of Parasara, Varaha Mihira, Prithuyasas, Kalyana Varma, Mantreswara, Vaidyanatha Dikshita, etc. I have also read the excellent book from which I believe you have borrowed the term vyartha-jivana yoga, namely Rattan Lal's "Nadi System of Prediction". In case you found it interesting, you should order Meena's "Nadi Jyotisha" in 3

volumes on the same subject from Ranjan Publications in Delhi.

Regarding spiritual fall down, it should of course not be predicted unless some mitigation can be offered. But what effects would you anticipate in, say, Mars dasa for a devotee with Mars in Cancer in the 8th house in Vimsamsa?

Your servant, Marici das

13-Mar-94 Nikilananda (das) ACBSP (D)

I never doubted that you know the books I mentioned since you wrote it earlier in this conference. Still I recommended to read the classical texts carefully with an emphasis on “carefully”, meaning that confusion can be avoided when we stick to classical works instead of mixing too many books, systems and schools of thoughts and second to try and always come back to the basics and the simple but deep truths of our Vaisnava philosophy. Reading itself, always being alert and keeping the siddhanta in mind is an art. I cannot claim that I have mastered it. So the recommendation also pertains to myself.

The answer to your question is simple: to mitigate this particular weakness you mentioned, increased japa, chanting of the holy names of Krsna and Rama, should be recommended under all circumstances. I tried it in a number of seemingly hopeless cases and it worked miracles.

This recommendation is there in classical works of astrology and in our Vaishnava literature as well. So when we learn to read carefully and not move too fast we will not overlook the closest and most obvious solutions. Of course, for a full evaluation of the problem you mentioned, we would have to see the whole chart.

As far as your finding out, which book I took the example chart from, I am very proud of you but then it may not have been so difficult to find since I mentioned the name of the author Rattan Lal in my text. It is indeed a good and instructive book when it comes to illustrating the validity of yogas and how to recognize their cancellation. It looks to me like you have some practical experience with chart reading. It would be nice to hear more about your practical experiences with certain constellations of planets and also those of others and maybe some tricky combinations can also be discussed in our group for some more practical benefit. This can be real fun.

Y.S. Nikhilananda Das

13-Mar-94 Urmila.ACBS@com-link.org

On July 28, 1900, King Umberto I of Italy and his aide-de-camp Gen. Emilio Ponzio-Baglia arrived in the town of Monza, a few miles outside Milan. The next day the king was to present the prizes at an athletic meet. The night of their arrival he and his aide went to a small restaurant for dinner. As the owner was taking their order, the king noticed that he and the padrone were virtually doubles, in both face and build. He remarked on this, and as the two men talked an extraordinary series of parallels emerged which caused both of them to marvel.

The two men were born on the same day of the same year (March 14, 1844) and in the same town, and each was named Umberto. They had both been married on April 22, 1868, each to a woman called Margherita. Each had named his son Vittorio. And on the day of King Umberto's coronation, the other Umberto has opened his restaurant.

The king was staggered by these coincidences and asked the restaurant owner how it could be that their paths had never before crossed? In fact, Umberto told him, they had been decorated for bravery together on two occasions, the first time in 1866, when Umberto had been a private and the king a colonel, and the second time in 1870, when each had been promoted, to sergeant and corps commander. With this final revelation the padrone returned to his duties, and the king, turning to his aide, said, "I intend to make that man a Cavaliere of the Crown of Italy tomorrow. Be sure that he comes to the meet."

The following day, true to his word, the king asked for his double - only to be told that the man had died that day in a shooting accident. Shocked, the king asked his aide to find out when the funeral was to take place so that he might attend. At that very moment three shots rang out, fired by an assassin. The first of them missed the king, but the second two pierced his heart and killed him instantly.

(from Reader's Digest "Mysteries of the Unexplained")

I have read a number of similar stories over the years of striking similarities in the lives of those born at close to the same time in the same place. In fact, I went to school with a girl who was born a few blocks from me a few hours earlier. We had many unusual similarities in our lives, at least until we were both thirteen, at which point I lost contact with her.

17-Mar-94 Shyamasundara.ACBSP@com-link.org

Hare Krsna

I'd like to thank Urmila Mataji for sharing that interesting story about King Umberto of Italy. I had read it last summer in the same book. Perhaps she could upload some of the other similar stories. I believe there was one about a man born at the same time and place as Prince Albert (?) of England, or some other royal personage.

Also Nikhilananda, would it be possible to get a complete English translation of the relevant parts of the newspaper article about the twins. I believe I read a similar article a few years ago in Dallas. About separated twins. One pair of boys even had the same habit of crushing their beer cans in the same way. Really weird.

17-Mar-94 Akruranatha.ACBSP@com-link.org

Yes, these "same time, same place" births really are amazing, and I am really glad I asked. I disagree that scientists would all be satisfied that similarities in the brain could cause many of the similarities mentioned in the twin studies... at least those who tried to explain them away would sound far fetched. And of course, the genetically unrelated pairs, like the Italian King, would further bolster the argument that there is something uncanny about the time and place of birth, at least in some places. Sure, you would get plenty of scornful scientists excited and determined to disprove the astrological hypothesis, but if there was enough consistent data a number of reasonable scientists would be willing to admit: there really is something going on here that we cannot account for with the accepted ideas about what could cause such events. I am glad I asked and would also like further information on the "pairs". To explain the same day car accident, for example, you would have to posit not only an impairment of the senses such as color blindness with organic causes, but it would have to be a kind of "time release" impairment that was programmed to happen around the same time and go away again. Not too attractive as a theory. More like something cooked up by someone grasping at straws.