

A BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE ARTICLE "EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION OF SUBATOMIC PARTICLES" BY DR. STEPHEN M. PHILLIPS

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The origin of this subject, referred to in early literature as "Occult Chemistry", goes back over a century, to the year 1895. The two "clairvoyants" who did this work were the eminent Theosophists Annie Besant and Charles Webster Leadbeater, who died in 1933 and 1934 respectively. Most of the work was carried out during their residence at Adyar, a suburb of Madras, in the sprawling estate of the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society. Between them, Besant and Leadbeater have authored several dozens of books on various esoteric and spiritual topics such as "The Ancient Wisdom", "The Life After Death", "Astral Plane", "Reincarnation" and so on. Annie Besant was also deeply involved in the Indian freedom movement and in fact was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1917. Some Physics News readers may also be aware that the renowned philosopher J. Krishnamurthi was "discovered" by Besant and Leadbeater when Krishnamurthi was barely 12 years old, having been impressed by the brilliant "aura" around the boy.

Besant and Leadbeater are both known to have possessed remarkable "clairvoyant" powers. They were therefore persuaded by A. P. Sinnett, a close friend, to employ their psychic powers to try and find out if there exists an ultimate constituent particle or atomic building block of which all matter is composed. Sinnett had apparently come across an earlier such study reported to have been carried out a decade earlier by Edwin Bahbitt of New York City. This quest which began in August 1895 was pursued by Besant and Leadbeater off and on for almost forty years, right until Besant's demise in 1933. Their first studies were directed towards the common gases of hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen and a report on this was published in the November 1895 issue of "Lucifer", the Journal of the Theosophical Society in London. In 1908, the work done over the previous dozen

years was compiled, edited and published in the form of a book titled "Occult Chemistry's". The second edition of "Occult Chemistry" was brought out in London in 1919 and the third, revised and enlarged edition [- 400 pages, with 230 illustrations], edited by C. Jinarajadasa appeared in 1951. Jinarajadasa, an M. A. from the very inception of occult Chemistry studies. He was responsible for taking down notes and preparing sketches as and when Besant or Leadbeater described their "observations of the structures of atoms and molecules" during the psychic sessions. (Remember there were no tape recorders in those days!)

One of the central and crucial observations made by Besant and Leadbeater was that a hydrogen atom was composed of 18 subatomic particles which they christened as "Ultimate Physical Atoms" or UPAs. Likewise they reported that the atoms of other elements also comprised of identical types of UPAs whose numbers elements also comprised of identical types of UPAs whose numbers increased in multiples of 18. Most Physicists will agree that even today there is no way that physics can accommodate 18 particles in a hydrogen atom or for that matter 4267 particles in a uranium atom which the clairvoyants had apparently painstakingly counted. Following the wide spread acceptance of the Bohr model of the atom by the mid 20s, the observations of Besant and Leadbeater as described in "Occult Chemistry" were dismissed by the scientific community as totally unacceptable. Their monumental work was therefore consigned to gathering dust in remote corners of theosophical libraries, and for all practical purposes all but forgotten and lost to the world, atleast for the next 70 or so years.

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