

Astrology: Ancient Belief and Modern Physics

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Astrology has fascinated civilizations for millennia, with ancient Hindu tradition among its most intricate and enduring forms. Far from mere superstition, it served as an early explanatory model—compressing complex human experiences into a system of symbols and celestial correlations. In a world lacking scientific sophistication, astrology offered a low-Kolmogorov-complexity explanation: a seemingly ordered causal map overlaid on life's chaos.

Why were ancient Hindus such strong believers? The answer lies partly in the historical context. Without access to advanced statistics or physical sciences, humans craved structure. Astrology satisfied that craving by offering meaning in the random. Alignments of planets and stars were seen not just as celestial events but as signals of earthly consequences. Over time, a vast repository of stories and predictions accumulated. Many of these were circumstantially feasible, with low-probability events occasionally coinciding with astrological forecasts—just enough to preserve belief. With millions of births, some will always match planetary patterns with later life events, reinforcing the illusion of predictive power.

But does astrology hold any validity when scrutinized under modern physics?

Contemporary physics treats time as a dimension, not a flowing absolute. In the block universe model, all events—past, present, and future—exist simultaneously within the spacetime manifold. This bears eerie resemblance to astrology's notion that one's life can be mapped from the moment of birth. Yet physics does not suggest that these events are causally determined by planetary positions; it only posits that they exist within the structure of spacetime.

Human beings are information-processing systems operating within this manifold, shaped by genetic predispositions, decisions, social interactions, and environmental stimuli. A person's trajectory, such as career path or personal success, can often be modeled probabilistically, but not deterministically. Take a practical example: if someone joins a large company, it is not physically impossible that they become the CEO—but statistically, the probability is extremely low. Astrology might interpret this as fate; physics interprets it as probability bounded by systemic complexity.

Further complications arise from quantum mechanics, where determinism breaks down and probabilities reign. The observer effect tells us that measurement itself influences outcome—strangely parallel to the self-fulfilling power of belief in horoscopes. If you read a prediction that you will succeed, you might act with confidence, thereby increasing your chance of success. Astrology, then, may be performative rather than predictive—it changes behavior in a way that can influence outcome.

Yet physics also highlights the limits of predictability. Human lives are the product of interaction networks—not isolated entities. Even if an individual could be modeled deterministically (which we doubt), their fate is influenced by the unpredictable decisions of others. This is where astrology's causal claims collapse. It may claim certainty in a universe that allows only uncertainty and approximation.

In conclusion, astrology was a powerful explanatory model in its time—a framework

that gave meaning and narrative to an unpredictable world. Modern physics does not validate its causal claims but does mirror some of its deeper intuitions: that time is strange, that systems evolve non-linearly, and that outcomes are entangled. The enduring appeal of astrology lies not in its accuracy, but in its narrative clarity, offering comfort where science offers complexity.

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