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INSIDE

To be Silent

The Universe, the Atom and You: the Microcosm and the Macrocosm

Shiftings Towards the Flowering of Unity

Report on Theosophy-Science Activities in Australia

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The Theosophical Society welcomes students or seekers, belonging to any religion or to none, who are in sympathy with its Objects. The motto of the Society is 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit dharma, which among other things means practice; way; virtue; teaching; law; inherent nature; religion; and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit *satya*, meaning among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, sometimes translated as boundless unconditioned existence.

Theosophy is not defined in the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, or in any official document. It literally means Divine Wisdom, *theosophia*, but members of the Society are left to discover what it is for themselves, taking as guides whatever religions or philosophies they wish.

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The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity
without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion,
Philosophy and Science.
~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature
and the powers latent in the human being.

From the International President To be Silent

Tim Boyd



Let us turn our minds towards something a bit deeper than just the surface. From time to time it is good to ask some simple questions to remind ourselves of what has brought us to a spiritual path.

A question for us to consider is a very basic one: Why is it that we are here, trying to live the spiritual life?

What happens when we ask ourselves a question? Most of the time we are probably asking for simple information. But when we find ourselves on the spiritual path, the nature of the questioning and of the questions becomes slightly, if not profoundly, different.

Questioning actually involves us in a process that requires that we listen. So we ask, we listen, and if we engage in the process properly, we hear. There is an old prayer that says: 'May I see what I see and may I hear what I hear.' On a superficial level, this sounds almost absurd. Of course, we see what we see, and if we hear, we hear. But do we?

We can take the case where there is an argument or discord going on. Very often one person will tell one story about what was said, and the other will tell the exact opposite. In such a case both heard but, because of their prejudices and expectations, they really did not hear.

One of the main requirements to really listen is that, firstly, we have to drop whatever expectations we have. One of the things Confucius said was that his tailor was the wisest man that he knew, 'because every time I see him, he measures me again'. Obviously this was not given as tailoring advice. It is a counsel to us in terms of our ability to truly see and hear the things that we see and hear.

So we listen, we create an open space, and then we have the possibility to hear. This requires a certain all-important quality, the quality of entering into silence. There is an occult maxim listing four activities that are the responsibility of anyone who engages in the spiritual life: to know, to will, to dare, and, most importantly, to be

silent. To dare to be quiet, to dare to listen beyond the borders of our prejudices, is something that few of us are willing to undertake.

One of the beauties of the spiritual life is that the major focus every time we come into each other's presence is not the things we say, nor what we hear, nor the words that we recite, but how we are able to cultivate and then enter into the realm of silence. This silence allows for a presence which we might describe as that of the Inner Founders, or the Masters, the Holy Ones, a Higher Energy, or Divinity. How do we do that?

When somebody speaks, a process of 'meditative enquiry' can take place. It is the process of being silent in the presence of noise in a way that something else can register itself on the screen of the mind.

During my recent travels I was in Paris. The Eiffel Tower is the tallest building in the centre of Paris. When the elevator arrived at the top level of the tower I was in the midst of maybe one hundred and fifty people. Soon I was looking out over the expanse of the city, and seeing this vista before me; everybody around me faded into the background.

I spent the next forty-five minutes in that condition, just looking out over

the city. One could see the pattern of the traffic and people that looked like little different-coloured dots. I was following them as they moved, each one thinking that it is moving in its own independent way, but each moving down these streets that channelled and limited their movement.

From this elevated point of view it became very clear in a sense how small we are, but in another sense how deeply connected we are with something much greater. The problem for us tends to be that we are unable to see this. It is only in our elevated moments that we gain a deeper perspective. After a while, my reverie ended.

But I had not forgotten. The fragrance, or *vāsana*, of that experience lingers. For each of us the experience is similar. We rise in consciousness only to return. But the one who rises is not the one who returns. The experience of seeing from a higher, more expansive perspective changes us. We are living from the memory of what we have seen. We are reminded of a Greater Presence – always present, but mostly forgotten. The hope for us is that we can remember.

Extract from
The Theosophist, November 2015

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



The pages of this issue range from the philosophical to the scientific. On the science side, a tribute is given to the late Dr Hugh Murdoch through the inclusion of two fine, related articles of his on the microcosm and the macrocosm. Science is described as ‘the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and the natural world through observation and experiment’. On the other hand, philosophy is defined by the same source as ‘the use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge of reality, especially of the causes and nature of things and of the principles governing existence, the material universe, perception of physical phenomena, and human behaviour’ (*Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*). Truth is the Holy Grail of each discipline, revealed more fully through new insights.

The New Year, too, is an opportunity for new insights as well as new adventures, opportunities and goals. The crossing of the invisible line of time, from one

year to the next, is frequently seen as an opportunity to become a better version of ourselves by resolving to change something in our lives; New Year’s resolutions are legion.

On the other hand, for one whose mind is not open to change or new possibilities, the start of another year may denote simply more of the same – perhaps no more than the continuation of what is perceived as a rather drab, ‘grey’ life. Such instances are sad, for we live in a remarkable world possessed of great beauty. If our mental aperture is grey, though, it follows that gradations of grey are all that we perceive.

The quality of our many experiences hinges so much on our mental lens, which colours virtually everything that we perceive – ourselves, ideas, other people, inanimate objects, as well as the many daily events of life. Ideally, we should be able to view not just each year, but each day, and even each moment, as a new opportunity. If we are not alert, it may be possible to miss

something which would otherwise have been significant and important to our changing 'self'.

It is actually possible to understand a passage which we have read, perhaps fifty times, in a new light, if the mind is not closed. For example, consider literature about Theosophy. There may be a temptation to think that once we have read something then the subject is finished and it is time to move on to something else. But such literature – whether from ancient China, a modern Theosophical publishing house, or many other writings in between – tends to have one particular quality. This quality is Wisdom.

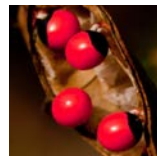
Wisdom is different from knowledge because it is not static. Due to the fact that Wisdom contains Truth in some form, it possesses a most remarkable quality; it remains perennially fresh and therefore does not grow stale with time. The individual who is awake, to a certain extent, is capable of perceiving this. Therefore, we may attribute a certain meaning to one particular passage on a given day. Yet several weeks later we might find new insights which were not previously apparent. In fact, this is one of the advantages of exploring something meaningful within the context of a group. Even if

our mind is a little 'closed' during such exploration, the very fact that there are other points of view can help open it up to new possibilities, expanding its reach and depth.

In 'The Golden Stairs', HPB identified an open mind as one of those important qualities which lead to Divine Wisdom. This passage can be found in her *Collected Writings*. Its words may be very familiar but are worth revisiting, for they provide the blueprint for a life which is new, fresh and open.

Finally, Divine Wisdom – Theosophy – is reflected in the heart-mind which is rhythmically breathing into the core of Unity, and out again towards its circumference, just as the physical body breathes in and out. Such a mind therefore knows when and how to expand outwards, and when and how to contract inwards in order to refresh itself and revitalise.

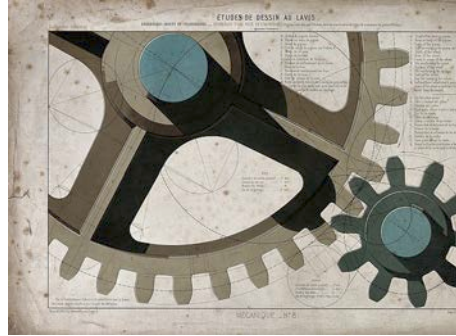
Comments on this issue of up to 200 words are welcome and may be published.



The Universe, the Atom and You:

Part I – The Microcosm

Hugh Murdoch



Source: Wikimedia Commons, Wellcome Trust

The atom (the microcosm), the universe (the macrocosm) and our perceiving self are in fact all part of one whole. This I believe is the essence of the fundamental postulates of *The Secret Doctrine*. Our task here is to explore the trend among certain leading scientific thinkers towards such a viewpoint.

Western Science over the last several centuries has been very mechanistic. The universe runs according to the laws of mechanics worked out by Newton long ago. Newton was a very religious man. He believed that the universe and its laws were created by God. It was later scientists who believed that the mechanistic laws were all that was necessary. This is epitomised in the well-known story where Laplace was asked by the Emperor Napoleon for a summary of his work. After reading it, Napoleon said ‘I don’t see much about God here’, to which Laplace replied ‘I don’t have any need of that hypothesis’.

That has been typically the scientific attitude for a very long time. Einstein however, was a pantheist. He believed in a superior spirit manifest in the laws of the universe and in this he was rather ahead of his time. Einstein came up against opposition from many quarters during his lifetime. He once listed among all the people who were opposed to him ‘the faithful of the church of the atheists’. To me the essence of Theosophy is a combination of the views of Newton and Einstein. In other words, the whole universe is a manifestation of a superior spirit which transcends the universe as well as being immanent throughout it.

The mechanistic view of science reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth century about the time the Theosophical Society was started. New discoveries since then have forced leading thinkers to move somewhat away from that position and we will explore this trend first with regard to the microcosm. The concept

of atoms as indivisible originated with the Greeks and was well developed by the nineteenth century chemists who found one type of atom for each chemical element. The twentieth century has given us the nuclear atom with a nucleus consisting of protons and neutrons surrounded by a cloud of lighter electrons. Recently it has been suggested that protons and neutrons are composed of three particles called quarks and there have even been suggestions that quarks are also composite particles. One such theory has been proposed by an English theoretical physicist and Theosophist Stephen Phillips, and used by him to explain *Occult Chemistry* (see *Extra-Sensory Perception of Quarks* by S. Phillips, TPH Wheaton).

Philosophical Implications of Quantum Mechanics

The really important philosophical concepts in microphysics have risen from what is known as quantum mechanics. Early this century Planck and Einstein recognised that light consists of small bundles or quanta of energy known as photons. Previously light had been regarded solely as a wave motion but photons seemed more like particles. Matter consists of particles or aggregations of particles, for example atoms, protons, electrons,



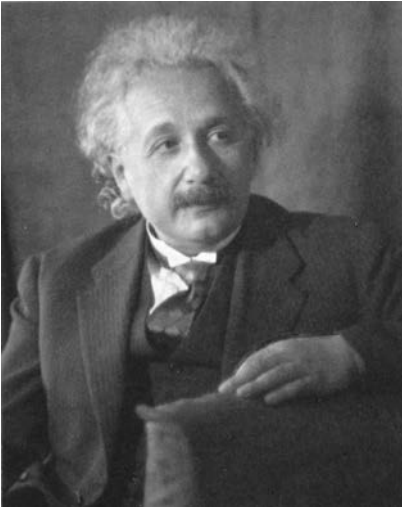
Max Planck

Source: Wikimedia Commons, Clendening History of Medicine Library, University of Kansas Medical Centre

etc., but it was subsequently realised that these can in some circumstances behave like waves. Thus radiation (light, etc.) and matter were once considered completely separate but are now found to have common attributes.

Neils Bohr, the great Danish physicist, introduced the term complementarity to try to explain this phenomenon. In other words, in seeing a wave or a particle, we observe complementary aspects of reality. Complementarity is rather like the story of the blind men and the elephant, with which you may be familiar:

Some Hindus were exhibiting an elephant in a dark room and many people collected to see it. But as the place was too dark to permit them to see the elephant, they all felt it with their hands to gain an idea of what it was



Source: Wikimedia Commons, photo by Doris Ulmann

Albert Einstein

like. One felt its trunk and declared that the beast resembled a water-pipe; another felt its ear and said it must be a large fan; another its leg and thought it must be a pillar; another felt its back and declared the beast must be like a great throne. According to the part which each felt, he gave a different description of the animal.

Bohr saw profound philosophical significance in the concept of complementarity which could be applied beyond the field of physics. When he visited China he was impressed with the concept of Yin and Yang and when he was knighted he included in his coat of arms the T'ai Chi symbol and the Latin words meaning 'opposites are complementary'.

Unlike the elephant, when we make an observation of an elementary particle or photon, we may interact with it in such a way as to change it profoundly. This is partly the reason why noticing either the wave or the particle aspect depends on the type (of experiment) we perform. We are, as leading theoretical physicist Wheeler suggests, not mere observers but rather participators. We live, he says, in a participatory universe.

The mathematical formulation of quantum mechanics was developed independently by Schrödinger and Heisenberg about 1925. In many respects it deals with probabilities rather than certainties as in the former classical mechanics. We can predict accurately the fraction of atoms in a piece of radioactive material which will decay in a certain time but in respect of any single atom, we cannot say when it will decay; we can only give the probability that it will decay within any given time.

Heisenberg found it necessary to introduce a strange new concept known as the uncertainty principle. There is a limit to the precision of the information we can get about something as small as a photon or a fundamental particle such as an electron. If we want to know its energy precisely, we cannot

also record precisely the time at which we measure it. If we want to measure the time precisely there will be a large uncertainty in our measure of the energy. To continue the elephant analogy, it is rather as though if one man were to measure accurately the trunk of the elephant, then it would be impossible to accurately measure, say, its hind leg at the same time and vice-versa.

There is a great philosophical question which has engaged the attention of many scientists and led to endless arguments, particularly between Bohr and Einstein. The question is whether the uncertainty is inherent in the nature of things or whether it is just a problem with our ability to measure. In other words, in the elephant analogy, is there a real sharply defined elephant at any given time when we cannot simultaneously measure accurately all his attributes?

The majority view among scientists is either that the uncertainty is inherent in the nature of things or, alternately, that it is meaningless to seek any deeper reality beyond what can be actually measured. The answer to the question posed at the end of the last paragraph is thus either 'no' or 'the question is meaningless'. We must in certain circumstances be satisfied with

predictions which can only be couched in terms of probabilities.

Einstein was the leading dissenter from this point of view although there were others including Schrödinger. Einstein maintained to the end of his days that it ought to be possible to devise a more complete theory which would give us access to the reality behind the probabilities; hence his well-known remark, 'God does not play dice'.

Einstein's objection to quantum theory, however, went even deeper. The problem is epitomised in what has become known as the EPR experiment. This is rather crucial and I must allude to it briefly, if somewhat superficially. It was first proposed by Einstein, Rosen and Podolsky as a thought experiment, that is, one which we could imagine as being carried out but which might be difficult to perform for purely technical reasons. There have been several versions of this experiment, but they all relate to a pair of either fundamental particles or of photons which come together in a certain type of interaction and then depart at high speed in opposite directions. Quantum theory predicts that no matter how far apart they go, a certain type of measurement made on one member of the pair will influence in a rather subtle way the result of a similar

Let us accept that two particles having once interacted are not really separate even though they are far apart. Then we must extend this idea to any particles which have ever interacted. It quickly leads to the concept that the whole universe is one unified system and this is in effect the fundamental reality.

measurement made on the distant member of the pair. Einstein objected that this implied either that the result of the first measurement was transmitted ‘telepathically’ to the second member of the pair, or alternately, that it is impossible to attribute independent reality to the spatially separated particles.

The Universe, One Unified Whole

Much attention has been focussed on this problem since 1964 when John Bell and others pointed out that real experiments of the EPR type could be carried out. These experiments confirm the predictions of quantum mechanics as against classical physics, which is not surprising, but Einstein’s objections remain. The problem has been tackled head-on by physicist David Bohm, a former colleague of Einstein at Princeton, now at Birkbeck College, London. Bohm says in effect

let us accept the result of the EPR experiments. Let us accept that two particles having once interacted are not really separate even though they are far apart. Then we must extend this idea to any particles which have ever interacted. It quickly leads to the concept that the whole universe is one unified system and this is in effect the fundamental reality. We must give up trying to find the ultimate building blocks of the universe and then mentally putting it together to form our concept of the universe. According to Bohm, we must ‘be ready to explore a new notion of physical reality in which we start from unbroken wholeness of the universe’. This is his starting point. Various systems we have to consider are part of the unbroken wholeness rather than the whole being considered the sum of its various parts. It is a radical new departure in scientific thought and Bohm, like Bohr and others before him, talks about carrying this idea beyond physics.

Evidently, the relationship of any two human beings depends crucially on the state of the immediate social group to which they belong and ultimately to that of the larger social group. Similarly the interactions of any two cells in the body depend on the state of the whole organ of which they are a part and ultimately on that of the organism as a whole ... In this way we see there is accessible to us a wide range of direct

intuitive experience in the form of wholeness. What quantum theory ... shows is that this form is appropriate not only biologically, socially and psychologically, but also even for understanding the laws of physics.

Bohm says that we have to recognise what he calls two different levels of order in the universe and he refers to these as the explicate order and the implicate order. Our familiar world of separate objects and separate individuals is the explicate order, but implicit within this is a higher level of order which he refers to as the implicate order in which everything and everybody are part of one whole. The mystics have always known this, but I find it very interesting to see an important theoretical physicist drawn to such concepts by a lifetime of struggling with the deeper philosophical aspects of quantum mechanics. In Bohm's terminology the whole universe is present implicitly in every part and in every atom. In his words 'everything implicates everything in an order of undivided wholeness'. Other leading quantum physicists such as Heisenberg and

Schrödinger have reached interesting conclusions of a holistic nature but Bohm goes further and whilst he is well ahead of most contemporary physicists, I believe he is leading the way towards the inevitable eventual recognition of the One Universal Principle about which HPB speaks.

reprinted from *Theosophy in Australia* vol. 45, June 1981



Dr Hugh Murdoch held a PhD in astrophysics. Hugh founded and convened the Theosophy-Science Group from 1965 until 2011, and edited its informative newsletter. He also gave honorary service for fifty years as National Treasurer of the TS in Australia. He passed on 8 May 2015, White Lotus Day.

'Read widely, read many points of view, keep an open mind, try to engage in your own search for truth in your own way. Don't be put off by people who are critical of your ideas. Seek your own wisdom.'

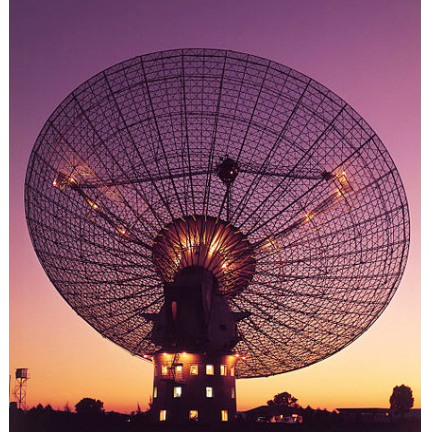
some advice by Hugh Murdoch to a new member of the TS in 2009

The Universe, the Atom and You: Part 2 – The Macrocosm

Hugh Murdoch

Having dealt with the microcosm, I want to turn to the macrocosm, the universe as a whole. There are two very important observations. The first is that we see the universe as expanding. By this I mean that we see all other galaxies receding from us; the further away they are the faster they are receding. It would be just as naive to assume that we are at the centre of the universe as was the pre-Copernican view that the earth was at the centre of the universe because the sun and planets appear to revolve about the earth. It is easy enough to understand an expanding universe in which all galaxies move away from one another, so that people living on a planet around a star in another galaxy would also see all other galaxies receding from them.

Indeed it has been the fundamental assumption of modern cosmology that, on a large scale, the universe looks much the same everywhere. This is known as the Cosmological Principle and in technical language, it is the



Source: Wikimedia Commons, courtesy CSIRO

Parkes radio telescope

assumption that the universe is homogeneous (has the same properties everywhere) and isotropic (has the same properties in all directions).

Can We Reach the Moment of Creation?

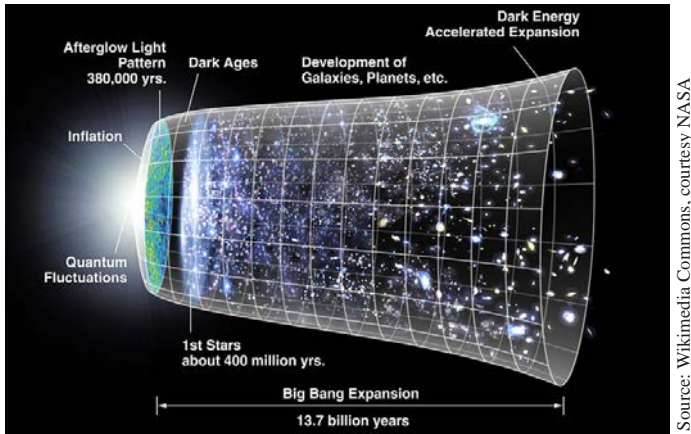
The second important observation was made quite by accident in 1964 by two scientists at the Bell Telephone Laboratory in America, Penzias and Wilson. Wherever we look with the appropriate kind of sensitive radio telescope, we detect coming from all directions in space radiation at the very low temperature of three degrees Celsius above the absolute zero of temperature (which is -273°C). The important thing about the microwave background radiation, as it is called, is that it is highly isotropic. This observation which accords well with

the Cosmological Principle, has given a tremendous boost to cosmology which is now taken much more seriously. Gamov had predicted the microwave background radiation when he introduced the theory popularly known as the Big Bang about 1948. The idea is that as the universe expands, the radiation cools so that if you run the film backwards towards the origin, the early universe must have been very hot as well as being concentrated in a very small space. It is quite remarkable what can be deduced from the known laws of physics including nuclear physics. The broad outline of the history of the universe can be traced back to when the universe was about 1/100th of a second old. At the origin of the universe, microphysics and macrophysics meet. At this early stage nucleons, photons, etc. existed but it was much too hot for atoms to form. These formed later when the universe had cooled somewhat. You might think it is rather preposterous for scientists to extrapolate so far from what we know and directly experience, but the scientists involved are rather staggered by their own success and by how well the calculations agree with certain observations (see later).

Despite this great success in explaining in broad outline the evolution of the universe from when it was an

infinitesimal fraction of a second old, it is not possible to reach the actual instant of creation. Running the film backwards at this point leads us to approach infinite density and infinite temperature, a situation referred to by scientists as a singularity. Calculations by the brilliant (and, tragically, severely disabled) Cambridge mathematician and theoretical astronomer, Stephen Hawking, show that there is no way to avoid the singularity. In other words the laws of physics tell us that if we try to push the clock back to the origin we reach a situation where the laws of physics break down. Scientists may never be able to describe the actual creation of the universe. We shall turn presently to *The Secret Doctrine* for a description of this process regarded there, of course, as the commencement of a Manvantara or Day of Brahma.

Indeed, for human life to evolve we need stars which, like our sun, have a lifetime of many thousands of millions of years. Stars live long lives by converting their hydrogen to helium by the process known as thermonuclear fusion. At the end of their normal lifetime, the helium is converted fairly rapidly to heavier elements, and stars much more massive than our sun, which have shorter lifetimes, finish off with a supernova explosion in which all elements including the heaviest are



created. These are incorporated into second generation stars such as our sun, and in due course provide the material for solid planets. These processes have been understood for over thirty years and can explain the abundance of all elements except the second lightest after hydrogen, namely helium.

Creation – A Miracle of Exactness

On the other hand, the theory of the Big Bang very nicely predicts the observed abundance of helium in the universe, namely, about 25% by weight compared to hydrogen, the most abundant element. The helium is created from protons (hydrogen nuclei) and neutrons when the universe is about three minutes old, but for a variety of reasons the process of primordial nucleosynthesis (or thermo-nuclear fusion) stops at helium, so

that the earliest stars consist only of hydrogen and helium. The prediction of the observed helium abundance is one of the striking successes of the Big Bang theory.

It was crucial, however, that the primordial nucleosynthesis should stop before any more protons (hydrogen nuclei) were converted to helium, otherwise there would have been no stars with long lifetimes to make possible the evolution of intelligent life. Fusion (or nucleosynthesis) goes very well at high temperatures but its onset is delayed just long enough by the photons (radiation) which at high temperatures break up a deuteron as soon as it is formed. A deuteron (or heavy hydrogen nucleus) consists of a proton and a neutron and is the first stage in the fusion of hydrogen to helium (whose nucleus contains two protons

and two neutrons). Observation of the microwave background radiation tells us there are at least 108 (one hundred million) photons to every nucleon. It is extremely important that there are so many of them and that at high temperature (or high energy) they can so readily break up a deuteron, otherwise we would not be here. There are other factors which help, for example, there is no stable element of mass number 5 which makes it difficult for fusion to proceed beyond helium with mass number 4.

I could give many more examples of quantities which have to be much more precise than the ratio of photons to nucleons. But the most incredible thing of all, to my mind, is a statement by Stephen Hawking who is probably the leading theorist in this field (and whom many people regard as the greatest genius since Einstein). Hawking has calculated that at the time when the universe was one second old (and the temperature was then something like ten thousand million degrees), if it were not expanding at precisely the rate at which it was in order to produce the present universe, if in fact the rate of expansion had differed by one part in 10¹² (i.e. one part in a million million), then either the whole expansion would have gone so rapidly that there would have been no opportunity for galaxies

and stars to form; alternatively, if it had been going that tiny fraction slower then the universe would have expanded and re-collapsed long before galaxies had a chance to form.

The Central Role of Human Consciousness

The idea that so many factors had to be just right in order for human life to exist has come to be known as the anthropic cosmological principle and you will no doubt come to hear much more of this idea. Barrow and Silk end a recent article in *The Scientific American* by stating:

Whatever the scientific status of the anthropic cosmological principle may be, its impact on the history of ideas may be significant. The principle overcomes the traditional barrier between the observer and the observed. It makes the observer an indispensable part of the macrophysical world.

This is just what quantum physics has said about microphysics so the study of both sub-atomic particles and of the universe lead to the recognition of the central role of human consciousness. Scientists find it rather unpalatable to make what seems the obvious induction that the universe was created according to plan and that human existence is part of the plan (or to put it another way,

Brahma got it right – very exactly). The scientists, however, try to escape by such devices as assuming many different co-existing worlds with only this one known to us. Astronomer Robert Jastrow takes his fellow astronomers to task when he says:

Theologians generally are delighted with the proof that the universe had a beginning, but astronomers are curiously upset. Their reactions provide an interesting demonstration of the response of the scientific mind – supposedly a very objective mind – when evidence uncovered by science itself leads to a conflict with the articles of faith of our profession. It turns out the scientist behaves the way the rest of us do when our beliefs are in conflict with the evidence. We become irritated, we pretend the conflict does not exist, or we paper it over with meaningless phrases.

The scientific theory is clearly of a universe coming into existence at a very specific time since it can be rationally described at a time only a fraction of a second after creation. Time (cosmic time) obviously starts from creation. Before that, time did not exist.

The current scientific theory of the creation of the universe does not resemble the book of Genesis, nor does it resemble what you have probably read in Theosophy yet I want to quote some extracts from the first three



One of a set of paintings by Roma Scott, inspired by the *Stanzas of Dzyan*

‘Time was not ...’

stanzas in the *Book of Dzyan* from *The Secret Doctrine*. The first two stanzas deal with the end of a Pralaya and the third with the beginning of a new Manvantara. Although the language is poetic rather than scientific, I believe you will gain the impression of a picture which is consistent with the scientific one. Note particularly phrases in stanza three such as ‘radiant light, which was fire, and heat and motion’ and ‘it expands when the breath of fire is upon it’.

The eternal parent wrapped in her ever-invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities.

Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration.

Universal Mind was not, for there were no Ah-Hi to contain it.

The seven ways to bliss were not. The great causes of misery were not, for there was no one to produce and get ensnared by them.

Darkness alone filled the boundless all, for father, mother and son were once more one, and the son had not awakened yet for the new wheel, and his pilgrimage thereon.

The seven sublime lords and the seven truths had ceased to be, and the Universe, the son of Necessity, was immersed in Paranishpanna, to be outbreathed by that which is and yet is not. Naught was.

Stanza 1

... Where was silence? Where the ears to sense it? No, there was neither silence nor sound; naught save ceaseless, eternal breath, which knows itself not.

The hour had not yet struck; the ray had not yet flashed into the germ; the Mātripadma had not yet swollen.

Stanza 2

... The last vibration of the seventh eternity thrills through infinitude. The mother swells, expanding from within without, like the bud of the lotus.

The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the germ that dwelleth in darkness: the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters of life ...

Darkness radiates light, and light drops one solitary ray into the mother-deep. The ray shoots through the virgin-egg; the ray causes the eternal egg to thrill, and drop the non-eternal germ, which condenses into the world-egg.

The root of life was in every drop of the ocean of immortality, and the ocean was radiant light, which was fire, and heat, and motion. Darkness vanished and was no more; it disappeared in its own essence.

Father-Mother spin a web, whose upper end is fastened to spirit, the light of the one darkness, and the lower one to its shadowy end, matter; and this web is the universe, spun out of the two substances made in one, which is Svabhavat.

It expands when the breath of fire is upon it; it contracts when the breath of the mother touches it. When it is cooling it becomes radiant.

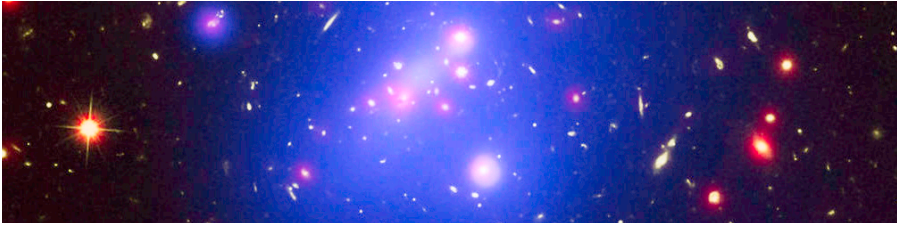
Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the atoms. Each is a part of the web.

Stanza 3

Reprinted from
Theosophy in Australia,
vol. 45, September 1981

Shiftings Towards the Flowering of Unity

Phillipa Rooke



Galaxy cluster Source: NASA

If I were to have a subtitle, then I think it would be ‘optimism’ – an inclination to hopefulness; philosophically meaning ‘The doctrine ... that this world is the best of all possible worlds’, also, ‘the theory that good must ultimately prevail over evil in the universe.’¹ If indeed thoughts are things, then optimism is an important attitude to have to support our thoughts. Perhaps an attitude of optimism can help us to operate less from our individual personality, and more from a place of seeing the bigger picture; that bigger picture with its gaze towards that Soul Wisdom which is the oneness of all things.

I present here some of the trends in science, in society, in spiritual communities and world movements, which may bring about some measure of optimism for the future of human-

kind and for this planet. There is still a long way to go, but such trends are, I think, starting to permeate the minds of the population at large. The very recent technology of mass communication has played a huge part in the dissemination of such ideas. This can carry to the world concepts which many people may otherwise be unlikely to come across.

Some Ideas from the Scientific World

It is interesting to see how modern western physics is coming to ideas of that unity which the sages and saints have propounded since time immemorial. Paul Davies writes in *Superforce*:

There is a unity to the universe and one which goes far deeper than a mere expression of uniformity. It is a unity which says that without everything you can have nothing.²

Scientist Danah Zohar writes:

After the Big Bang in which our present universe was born, there was space, time and the vacuum. The vacuum itself can be conceived as a 'field of fields' or, more poetically as a sea of potential. ... The quantum vacuum is very inappropriately named because it is not empty. Rather it is the basic, fundamental and underlying reality of which everything in this universe – including ourselves – is an expression.³

We can see from these two quotes that the underlying unity of manifestation is now considered by some scientific minds as a reality. In terms of our planet, the biological sciences have been aware of this unity since 1935 when Arthur Tansley coined the term 'ecosystem'. Since then, the ecosystem has become the centralising, organising idea in the science of Ecology. One definition of this central idea is as follows:

An ecosystem is an association of organisms and their physical environment, interconnected by the circulation of energy and nutrients. An ecosystem may be any size, from a drop of water to our entire planet. All creatures live within some kind of ecosystem and relate [to] or influence each other – and their environment – by their behaviour. The idea of an ecosystem is critical to understanding the patterns of life on earth, and points to the inescapable inter-relatedness of all life.⁴

Further to this conception of the world came Deep Ecology, which has taken the ideas of Ecology much further. In this discipline, the move is from an anthropocentric, or human centred approach, to biocentrism, or the eco-centric approach. Here, nature, environment and ecosystems are said to deserve moral protection, not because they can serve human needs (or desires) but purely because they too are part of this earth, just as we are. The ideas of Deep Ecology point towards the true unity of this planet.

It was in 1972 that Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, coined the term 'Deep Ecology'. According to one source, Naess argued that:

... the individual is cut off from others and their surrounding world when the self is seen as a solitary and independent ego among other solitary and independent egos. That separation leads to the pitfalls of anthropocentrism and environmental degradation. He believed that a new understanding of the self (called 'self-realization') was needed.⁵

So Deep Ecology is as yet young, and we must admit, very beautiful. These ideas from the scientific disciplines do, I think, give great cause for optimism.

Society and Ethics

It would seem that many current business practices have been brought

Ethics is about standards promoting 'the good' and overall human welfare. Ethics requires deep thought about how we act as individuals within the structure of an organisation, within the structure of society.

about in great part due to the ease of communications that the Internet, and also the possibility of moving around the world, now allow both physically and financially. The advent of globalisation in the 1990s, fairly recently in the grand scheme of things, has not only enabled the economic world to change dramatically, but it has also brought to the attention of the world such practices as child labour, unfair wages, and environmental degradation resulting in displacement of indigenous peoples, all in the name of the almighty dollar, aided and abetted by increasing consumerism. There is a groundswell of response to these practices by consumers themselves choosing to buy 'Fair-trade' items, and boycotting articles made with child labour, not buying palm oil products, etc. There are also, increasingly, organisations carrying out their businesses globally and locally, which are attempting to do so in an ethical manner.

During the visit last year of Ed and Mary Abdill, we took part in an exercise which Mary takes into the business world where she engages with staff, in her work towards making the world a better place. The result of this exercise was to come to a real and genuine understanding that we all will have different opinions, and that in understanding and accepting that diversity in individuals, we can bring about some degree of unification. There is much work like Mary's being done in the area of ethics in business today, and indeed there are schools of ethics which train people and businesses in ethical thinking.

Ethics is about how we behave in the day-to-day world and is being applied in many spheres of human activity. It is not about following the law – it goes beyond the laws of the land – and it is not about following what everybody else does, i.e., the current social norm. Ethics is about standards promoting 'the good' and overall human welfare. Ethics requires deep thought about how we act as individuals within the structure of an organisation, within the structure of society. Ideally ethical practice demands attention to the following points:

- the greatest good – so a balance is aimed for

- rights, both human rights and duties
- fairness – which sometimes must be decided upon as being equal or proportionate
- virtues – those of honesty, integrity and compassion are valued and encouraged in individuals, and
- the common good – how does it benefit all of humanity? ⁶

A recent article about H.H. the Dalai Lama was entitled ‘Secular ethics is the light of hope’, which was a quote from his talk when addressing the International Conference on Secular Ethics. He was also quoted as saying:

‘true religion is secularism, brotherhood and peace’ – ‘One God, one world and one family, binds all together.’ ‘Secularism is the call of the day and secular ethics, the light of hope.’ ⁷

The investigation of ethics is being undertaken outside what one might consider the usual realm of such thinking, like the TS and other organisations which support people becoming better human beings. This is, I find, great reason for optimism.

Ecumenism and Interfaith Movements

I was recently sitting in my local coffee shop when a woman joined me. She caught my attention straight away

when she said, ‘I can’t go to church any more, because they are all joining together.’ Whilst I found this a very interesting and encouraging trend, my new friend was bemoaning this fact.



During the 1900s there were a number of movements towards ecumenism among Christian faiths. The first meeting of the World Council of Churches took place in 1948, initially to bring Christian Churches together to help those in need after the devastation of the Second World War. The focus of the organisation, now, is on the reconciliation of the various Christian denominations.

The Taize community, established in 1940, is a wonderful and well-known ecumenical monastic order which numbers both Protestants and Catholics among its monks. By the end of the 1970s the community shifted its focus to the world's youth, whose attention it had by then captured. It is still doing just that, and welcomes thousands each year to join in with its study, life and songs which are taken from various traditions, for which Taize has become famous.

Further to the movement within Christianity, there are official committees established within the major religions, formed to encourage and address a coming together of different faiths.

A refreshing trend now is the establishment of interfaith movements, established outside particular religions, which promote the coming together of peoples of different religions, along with interfaith relationships and understanding. They often take interfaith ideas out into the community in order to break down prejudice and misunderstanding.

World Peace

Further to the interfaith movements within religious communities and

without, there are those groups which stand for a value that all people, religious or not, can relate to and desire.

One particular 'value', which I think is essential to the quest for the Unity of All Things, is that of world peace. The first assembly of the 'World Conference on Religion and Peace' took place in 1970, and the first 'World Day of Prayer for Peace' took place in 1986.

One particular prayer for World Peace was adapted from the Hindu Upanishads by Satish Kumar, a former Jain monk. Mother Teresa first used the prayer publicly in July 1981, in the Anglican Church of St. James' in Piccadilly, London. It is:

Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth;
lead me from despair to hope,
from fear to trust;
lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world,
our universe.⁸

Each day at noon people of all faiths and none use this 'Universal Prayer for Peace'. This forms a wave of prayer and hope rippling around the globe.

Another simple World Peace Prayer is: 'May Peace Prevail On Earth'.

This is the ‘mantra’ of a worldwide organisation, the World Peace Prayer Society, whose Mission Statement is, I think, of great interest. It is:

The Power of Thought

Thought forms create an energetic field strong enough to empower the course of planetary destiny.

The Power of Words

Words carry vibrations strong enough to inspire, heal and transform the human heart as well as the Kingdom of plants, animals and all creation.

The Power of ‘May Peace Prevail on Earth’

‘May Peace Prevail on Earth’ is an all inclusive message and prayer. It is a meeting place of the heart bringing together people of all faiths, backgrounds and culture[s] to embrace the Oneness of our planetary family.

Our Mission is Simple

To spread the Universal Peace Message and Prayer, May Peace Prevail On Earth, far and wide to embrace the lands and people of this Earth. ⁹

This organisation had small beginnings in Japan in 1955, and now has many centres around the world. It encourages the spreading of this simple mantra and associated peace directed activities around the globe.

There would appear to be an increasing willingness by people of disparate



religions, ideologies, and cultures, to come together. In order to do this, I think a movement in consciousness has to occur from that of the insular, to that which is broader, more expansive, open and inclusive.

The Power of Thought and the Power of Words quoted above, would indicate that as more people become involved with the ideas that have been outlined, their behaviour and the thought forms and words so created, will influence others along these lines. Great cause for optimism! You will notice from the dates mentioned that all the trends I have spoken of are relatively young – so, just gathering momentum really; mere little buds with the potential to flower.

I will give the final word to the wonderful world of cinema from which many optimistic ideas are also coming forth. So, from *The Lion King*:

Mufasa: Everything you see exists together in a delicate balance. As king, you need to understand that balance and respect all the creatures, from the crawling ant to the leaping antelope.

Simba: But, Dad, don't we eat the antelope?

Mufasa: Yes, Simba, but let me explain. When we die, our bodies become the grass, and the antelope eat the grass. And so we are all connected in the great Circle of Life. ¹⁰

6. bcn.boulder.co.us/basin

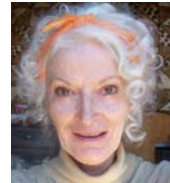
7. www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report

8. <http://liturgy.co.nz/reflection/peace>

9. www.worldpeace.org

(with permission)

10. http://lionking.wikia.com/wiki/The_Circle_of_Life



Phillipa Rooke is the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society in Australia and a former President of Brisbane Lodge. Her interest is in the play of the opposites we deal with in life in relation to the space beyond these, and also meditation and the search for true stillness. This article is adapted from a talk given at the 2015 National Convention.

Endnotes:

1. *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.
2. *The Theosophist*, September 2012, p.4.
3. Danah Zohar, *The Quantum Self*, Flamingo, 1991, p. 207.
4. Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics
<http://www.scu.edu/ethics>
5. www.britannica.com



Here, then, is our central task: the transformation of the mind of man; the transformation or redemption of the world-mind - which is only possible if we have transformed our own consciousness. We can spend all our time rearranging the furniture of the world, in the hope that such a rearrangement will bring about a new world-order, or we can take on the more difficult but essential task of awakening a new kind of consciousness.

Joy Mills, *Living in Wisdom*

Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpāna - sati*)

Lucille Crocker

Those accomplished in integrity,
Dwelling in mindfulness,
Liberated through wisdom,
Fear cannot harm.

- Lord Buddha ¹

A blessing, a gift, a tool, a mirror for our emotions, an indicator of our health and wellbeing, a bridge to our higher Self and higher states of consciousness

...

What is this? The magic of our breath! No wonder in one of his discourses, in the 'Foundations of Mindfulness' sutra, the Buddha begins by taking our awareness to the mindfulness of breathing. And we breathe approximately thirteen times per minute!

Mindfulness of breathing takes the highest place among the various subjects of Buddhist meditation. It has been recommended and praised by the Enlightened One thus:

This concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practised much, is both peaceful and



sublime, it is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise.

Herein, monks, a monk, having gone to the forest or the root of a tree or to an empty place, sits down with his legs crossed, keeps his body erect and his mindfulness alert. Ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, he knows, 'I am breathing in a long breath'; breathing out a long breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a long breath.' Breathing in a short breath, he knows 'I am breathing in a short breath', breathing out a short breath, he knows 'I am breathing out a short breath'. 'Experiencing the whole (breath) body, I shall breathe in', thus he trains himself. 'Experiencing the whole (breath) body, I shall breathe out' thus he trains himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath) body I shall breathe in' thus he trains

himself. 'Calming the activity of the (breath) body I shall breathe out' thus he trains himself. ²

We are blessed to have our breath as a tool with us until the very moment we die! Anywhere, anytime, always with us, is our breath. It brings us back to the present moment, which is all we have. The eternal NOW. That is the joy of practising mindfulness starting with the breath – Living in the eternal NOW.

To finish, here are two more quotes from the Buddha:

When things are going well,
be mindful
of adversity.

When prosperous,
be mindful
of poverty.

When loved,
be mindful
of thoughtfulness.

When respected,
be mindful
of humility. ³

When eating,
be mindful of eating.
When walking,
of walking.

When smiling,
of smiling. ⁴

Endnotes

1. From the book *Heart of a Buddha*, © Amitabha Publications, Taiwan.
2. *Discourses of the Buddha 'The Foundations of Mindfulness' - Satipatthana Sutta*, Nyanasatta Thera (transl), Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, First edition 1960. *The Wheel*, No.19.
3. Quotations from *Heart of a Buddha*, see 1.
4. Quotations from *Heart of a Buddha*, see 1.



Lucille Crocker is a member of Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney. She gave this talk at the 2015 School of Theosophy, Springbrook.

National Calendar of Events



**Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road,
Springbrook, QLD**

Wednesday 20 - Tuesday 26 April 2016

2016 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY

**Theme: 'The Spiritual Path in Daily Life:
Exploring *The Mahatma Letters*'**



For TS members

Guest Presenter: John Vorstermans, President of the Indo-Pacific Federation and National President of the New Zealand Section

John Vorstermans is an experienced student of Theosophy and facilitator, one of his special interests being *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*.

Cost: \$250 includes registration (non-refundable \$10 registration fee), accommodation, meals and all sessions

Enquiries to: National President, pres@austheos.org.au or 02 9264 7056

Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House

Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh,

Friday 10 - Sunday 12 June 2016

**Theme: 'Theosophy Raw and Unfiltered:
the Vedas Past and Present'**



For TS members and non-members

Presenter: Dara Tatrav, National Secretary, TS in Australia

Find out what Divine Wisdom, the one life, meditation and liberation must have meant to the authors of *The Mahatma Letters*. With reference to the Rig Veda, the Upanishad-s, the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, and key twentieth century exponents.

Cost: members \$135 (twin share)/\$160 (single room)

non-members \$160 (twin share)/\$220 (single room)

All meals provided, from brunch on Friday at 11am

Enquiries to: National Secretary, natsec@austheos.org.au or 02 9264 6404

**Registration forms and further information about all events organised
by the National Headquarters are at: [www.austheos.org.au/what's on](http://www.austheos.org.au/what's%20on)**

Education



A member of the public sent the following query to the Education Coordinator, Pedro Oliveira. His reply to the questioner appears below:

Are Theosophists required to believe in reincarnation?

The Theosophical Society has a long-standing policy of Freedom of Thought. Part of this policy states that ‘there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership.’ There are a number of reasons why this policy is a good one for the Theosophical Society.

As we all know through our observation of the world, beliefs tend to become a source of division among human beings. One of the possible reasons for this is that peoples’ identification with a belief system tends to generate in them, almost automatically, a reaction towards those who do not share those particular beliefs or who oppose them. As the first and primary Object of the

TS is to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without any distinctions, any imposition of a belief or teaching would be counterproductive to the realisation of that Object. The Society thus leaves each and every member completely free in matters of belief or adherence to any philosophy or system of thought, while requesting him or her to show courtesy and consideration to other members.

However, since its foundation in 1875 the Society has produced a very comprehensive body of literature which explores the teachings of Theosophy or the Wisdom Tradition. And reincarnation, as an expression of the universal law of periodicity or cyclicity, is an integral part of such teachings. It has also been propounded in the teachings of a number of religions and philosophical systems. Even so, reincarnation is not a belief or an official teaching in the TS.

What is the view [of the Theosophical Society] on prayer?

The question of prayer can also be viewed in the light of the above

explanation. We have members who are Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Jains and others who may belong to other denominations. Prayer is an important part of their traditions. At every international Convention at our Headquarters at Adyar, Chennai, India, we have during the opening the Prayers of the Religions, conceived as the unity of

spiritual aspiration expressed in a diversity of approaches.

However, the Theosophical Society as an institution does not have, nor does it inculcate, any form of prayer. In the same spirit of Freedom of Thought, it leaves all of its members free to pursue any spiritual practice they wish.

Report on Theosophy- Science activities in Australia

Victor Gostin, Adelaide

Currently only the Adelaide and the Brisbane Theosophy-Science Groups meet regularly. However the email list for our twice-yearly newsletter has 88 active recipients around Australia. Newsletter #76 [July 2015] was devoted to the life and interests of Dr Hugh Murdoch (astrophysicist), our founding member who passed away on 8 May; and Newsletter #77 [December 2015] focussed on the plant kingdom, with a major article by Tony Fearnside (M.Sc.,OAM) on the question of intelligence and sentience in plants.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Large Hadron Collider

Our last Theosophy-Science Symposium held at Springbrook, from 30 September to 2 October 2014, was a great success with eighteen participants and the overarching topic of 'MIND over MATTER'. It evolved through a spectrum from 'brain activity' and the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, into the concept of the Noosphere (the mental

world), to Menticulture (Aboriginal cosmology), psychic investigators and the modern effects of social/scientific web media. The catering was provided by local Theosophical Order of Service members (Carolyn Harrod and Jean Carroll) who raised over \$900 for the TOS. Heartfelt thanks to them both.

Australia is part of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the Society that plans to hold its next meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, between 14 and 18 October, 2016. Australian Theosophy-Science members look forward to joining our fellow New Zealand members immediately after that meeting.

In Brisbane, Saturday morning meetings were held in June and August and some science-related topics were included in the regular Friday evening talks, one being published in Brisbane Lodge's 'Contact' newsletter, Issue 1, 2016. [Reported by David Allan, Convener]

In Adelaide, regular monthly evening meetings drew ten to twenty members with speakers from Adelaide and Flinders universities, WEA, the Skeptics Society, Buddhists, a medical

hypnotist, and our own members including Kevin Davey (astronomer). This group was convened mainly by Tad Philips.

As our society is moving into the computer-network Web world, one of us, Brian Harding, has created a closed Facebook Group for Theosophy-Science [TS Science], where those interested may participate in sharing ideas, references and discussions within our Group. For those interested please advise Brian Harding: bharding35@optusnet.com.au

Similarly, at the International level a Web page, 'The Theoscience Project', is run by Jacques Mahnich [jacques.mahnich@prajnaquest.fr] under the title: 'A quest toward an understanding of REALITY as described by traditions and science, or building bridges between science and traditions'.

Victor Gostin, Adelaide

Enquiries to:
Dr V.A. Gostin
email: victor.gostin@adelaide.edu.au

Joy Mills

One of the most well-known members of the TS in recent decades has been Joy Mills, who passed peacefully on 29 December 2015 at her home in Ojai, California. Her fame may be due in part to the amount of travel she undertook globally for the TS. Joy mentioned at one stage that, apart from the then International President, Radha Burnier, she had travelled the most extensively throughout the TS world, visiting some fifty countries.

Having joined the Theosophical Society on 15 August 1940, Joy eventually became the acting National President of the American Section of the TS from 1965 to 1966, and served as its elected National President from 1966 to 1974. During that time she founded Quest Books, a line of theosophically inspired books for the commercial, popular market. This finally ceased operations only in November last year. Joy served the TS further, this time as International Vice-President at Adyar from 1974 to 1979 under the then International President, John Coats. From 1980 until 1992 she became the



founding Director of the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California. Later on, she was elected National President of the Australian Section of the Society, serving in that capacity from 1993 to 1996, and finally ‘retiring’ back to Ojai afterwards.

The Subba Row Medal, instituted in 1883, is awarded to members of the Society who have made outstanding contributions to Theosophical literature and understanding. One of the first recipients of the Medal was H.P. Blavatsky. Joy Mills was a devoted student of HPB’s teachings and expounded on them for many years through her books and lectures. In recognition of her valuable literary contributions, the General Council

awarded her this prestigious Medal in 2010.

Through her books, Joy explored fundamental questions of existence in the light of the Wisdom Tradition. Her works included *Living in Wisdom: Lectures on The Secret Doctrine, From Inner to Outer Transformation: Lectures on The Voice of the Silence, One Hundred Years of Theosophy, Entering on the Sacred Way: A Psychological Commentary on Light on the Path, The Human Journey: Quest for Self-Transformation*, and *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom: A Commentary on The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. At the time she was awarded the Subba Row medal, Joy also had to her credit twenty-two DVDs and seventy-three CDs containing her Theosophical presentations over a period of many years. Numerous articles of hers have appeared in *The Theosophist* and other journals around the world. A recent online search of her name in the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals* on this Section's website brought up a remarkable 663 records.

Apart from her achievements – and they were many – Joy was a great Theosophical lecturer and teacher, and at these times she seemed to be in her element. Possessed of an infectious passion for the study of modern

Theosophical classics, she had a deep understanding of them, accompanied by an open-minded spirit of enquiry. Her *Secret Doctrine* classes demonstrated this. For example, once during a class at Springbrook she represented an abstruse aspect of Cosmogogenesis in the form of a diagram. One other student suggested a different kind of diagram for the same concept and she immediately said something to the effect of, 'Yes, you could look at it that way too.' Her view of Theosophy seemed to be always expanding, always reaching out more widely and more deeply. Whenever she taught, she would take those who had the good fortune to be in her classes on that journey for a while. At the same time, she was well acquainted with many contemporary publications of relevance to her explorations.

On a personal note, I benefited greatly in 1981 from an invitation by Joy to study and live at Krotona for the best part of a year while she was the School's Director. This early opportunity, along with Joy's encouragement, were two of the pivotal factors which resulted in my long-term commitment to the TS and the study of Theosophy. May she have a well-deserved rest.

Linda Oliveira

News and Notes



National Council Appointments

The annual appointments made by the National Council and the national Executive Committee for 2016 were as follows:

National Vice-President: Phillipa Rooke;

National Treasurer: Beatrice Malka;

National Executive Committee: three ex-officio members (the National President, National Secretary and National Treasurer), Marlene Bell (from Adelaide), Denise Frost (from Devonport), Dianne Kynaston, Dai Trandang and Marie McArdle.

Passing of Long-Time Members

Within the period of one month at the beginning of this year, three long-time members of the Section passed to peace:

Dr Geoffrey Miller

A medical and natural medicine specialist, Geoffrey, along with his wife Shirley, sold to the TS in Australia the property which is now our Education and Retreat Centre at Springbrook. Geoffrey was particularly interested in the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti in his later years, and was remembered at the Springbrook Centre on 10 February.

Yvonne Malykke

Yvonne was at one time President of the Young Theosophists in Sydney. A serious student of Vedanta, she also edited *Cosmos* magazine, a significant publication on alternative spirituality. In her later years, Yvonne lived in Brisbane where she gave some talks to the Brisbane Lodge.

Ernest Wagner

Ernest was a long-standing member of Melbourne Lodge. A former Lodge President, he was a student of astrology and led study classes on metaphysics. He also gave time generously in helping to maintain the Percy Bona homes, affordable housing owned and operated by the Lodge.

The unique contribution of these three members to the TS was significant.

Trees have Social Networks

The *New York Times* online reported recently that a German forest ranger, Peter Wohlleben, finds that trees have social networks too. He published *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries from a Secret World* which topped best-seller lists last year and has made a case

for a popular reimagination of trees. The journalist concerned comments that he presents scientific research and his own observations in highly anthropomorphic terms, delighting people with the news that forest trees are social beings:

They can count, learn and remember, nurse sick neighbours, warn each other of danger by sending electrical signals across a fungal network ... and, for reasons unknown, keep the stumps of long-felled companions alive for centuries by feeding them a sugar solution through their roots.

Wohlleben studied forestry. He used to fell old trees and sprayed logs with pesticides, but did not feel good about this. Learning more about the behaviour of trees he found that, in nature, trees operate 'less like individuals and more as communal beings'. Working together in networks and sharing resources, they increase their resistance. Furthermore, creating too much space between trees can disconnect them from their networks. Although some German biologists question his use of words, such as 'talk' rather than 'communicate', Wohlleben maintains that scientific language removes the emotion. He attributes the popularity of this book to modern life, observing that people who spend most of their time in front of computers want to read more about nature.

(www.nytimes.com, accessed 29 January)

Diary Dates, Toowoomba Group – Springbrook

The Toowoomba Group wishes to inform members who may be interested that its annual event at the Springbrook Centre will be held from 11-14 August this year. More information will be available at a later date.

Further enquiries:

Gayle Thomas, Coordinator
email: gaylethomas8@gmail.com
mob. 0438 331 885.

Thinking Ahead to the 2017 Convention

During the recent Convention in Perth one of our enthusiastic, regular Convention-goers suggested that members be reminded about the benefits of saving a little each month, which will make it easy to attend the next Convention. Sound advice. We hope to see you in Hobart!

The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
www.austheos.org.au
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
campbell@austheos.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:
Postal Address: c/- 27 Reveley Crescent,
Stirling ACT 2611
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent
& Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month (Feb - May, Sep - Dec)
2.00pm 1st Saturday of month, Emeritus Faculty ANU
(Please confirm by email or telephone)
President: Dr Grahame Crookham
Tel: 0490147020
Email: tificrook@tpg.com.au
Secretary: Tony Fearnside
Telephone: 02 6288 7656
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 2065
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)
Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Howard Gregg
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,
Mayfield NSW 2304
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month from March 2016
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>
President: Melanie Ball
Secretary: Dianne Kynaston

Tel: 02 4948 1733 - please leave message
Email: gnlodgetheos@gmail.com

Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Senior Citizens Meeting Rooms
Upper level, Central Arcade
81-83 Katoomba street, Katoomba
Meetings every Monday, 2.00pm
1st Monday of month - Public Meeting
Subsequent Mondays - *Secret Doctrine* Study Group
Coordinator: Donald Fern
Tel: 02 4757 1910

Gosford Group:

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser
Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273
Email: marifraser256@gmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/- 22 Laitoki Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dai Trandang
Tel: 0438 357 522

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:
Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.
President: Max Brandenberger
Secretary: Chris Pang Way
Tel: 07 4091 5156

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:
355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Brian Harding
Secretary: Phoebe Williams

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004
 Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
 Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
 7.00pm Thursdays
 RSL/CWA Hall, 123 Poinciana Drive, Tewantin
 7.00pm Fridays
 President: Janet Blake
 Tel: 0416 442962
 Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com
 Secretary: Joyce Thompson

Toowoomba Group:
 Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba
 1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday
 at 2:30pm each month
 (Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)
 Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter
 Coordinator: Gayle Thomas
 Tel: 0438 331 885

South Australia

Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:
 310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
 Tel: 08 8223 1129
 Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
<http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide>
 Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of every
 month. Please contact Lodge for additional meeting
 dates.
 President: Kevin Davey
 Secretary: position vacant

Tasmania

Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:
 13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
 Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au
 Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
 President: Helen Steven
 Secretary: position vacant
 Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:
 Until further notice meetings are being held at:
 The Harry Abbott Scout Centre,
 1 St George's Square,
 East Launceston (off High Street)
 email: rmholt@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
 Meet: Wednesday — for timings
 please see programme at above url

President: Jenny Haslem
 Secretary: Denise Frost
 Tel: 0448 397 246

Victoria

Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:
 126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
 Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
 email: meltheos@bigpond.com.au
 Meet: Saturdays
 President: Ken Edwards
 Secretary: Edward Sinclair

Mornington Peninsula Group:
 Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
 Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
 of the month 11.00am - 3.30pm
 (meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
 Coordinator: Daphne Standish
 Tel: 03 9589 5439
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

Wodonga-Albury Group:
 Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,
 Wodonga VIC 3690
 1st Tuesday each month
 Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm
 Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs
 Tel: 02 6024 2905

Western Australia

Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:
 21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
 Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
 Email: tsp Perth@inet.net.au
<http://www.tsp Perth.com.au>
 Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
 President: Harry Bayens
 Acting Secretary: Anne Bower

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:
 1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082
 All enquiries to Perth Branch
 Tel: 08 9328 8104

Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld

2184 Springbrook Road,
 Springbrook QLD 4213
 Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
 email: info@tsretreat.com.au
 Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*



Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, ‘The Theosophical Society’.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

