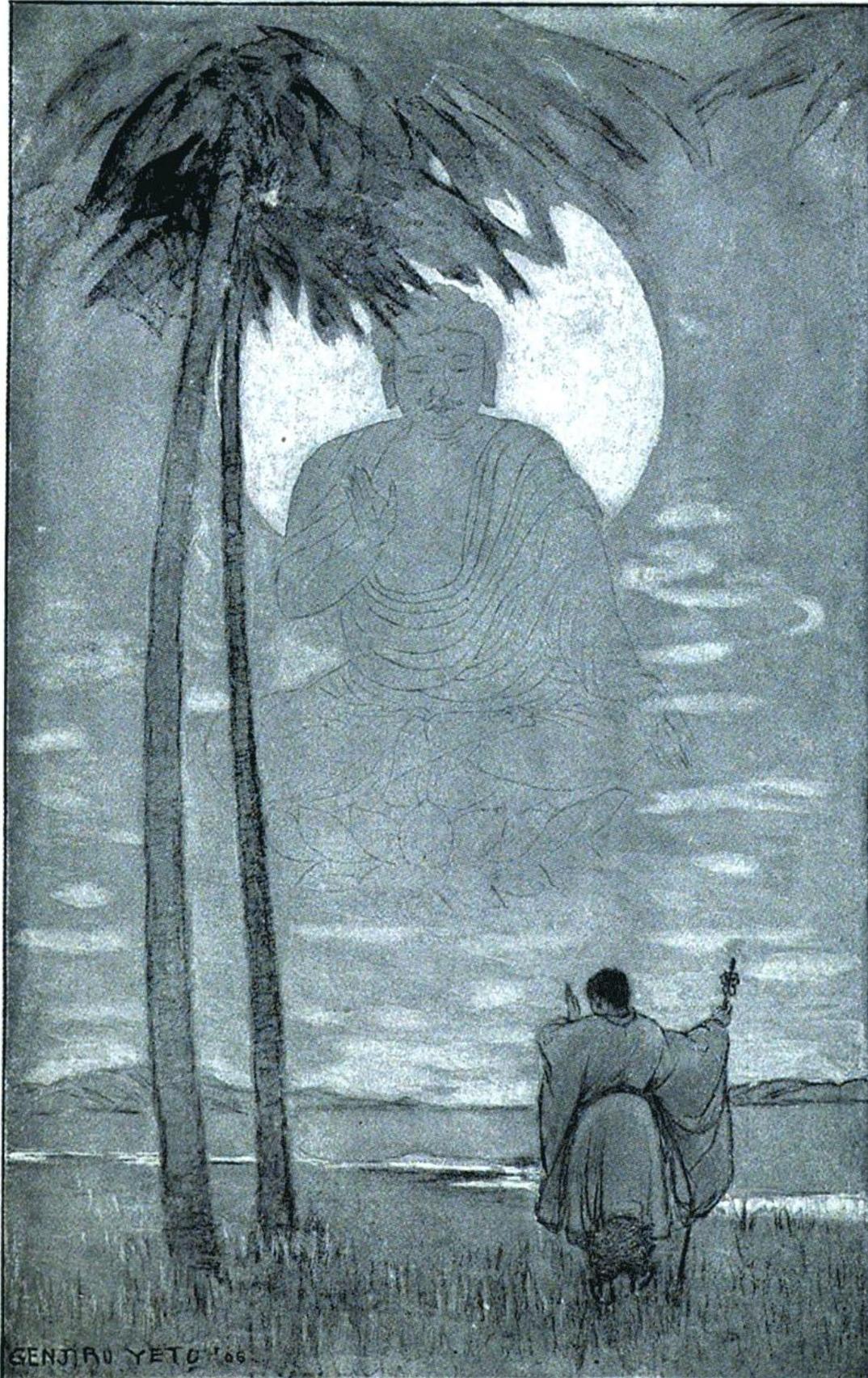




Contact

The members' newsletter of the Brisbane Theosophical Society

2013 Issue 3 SEP - DEC



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Brisbane Theosophical Society

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BOOKSHOP & LIBRARY: (Closed on Public Holidays)
Monday to Thursday 10:30 am to 2:30 pm
Friday..... 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm & 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm
1st & 3rd Saturday each month 9:00 – 10:00 am

The programme of Lodge meetings is enclosed and is also placed on the Lodge website which will always be the most up-to-date source of information. Whenever there are changes to the programme an email circular is sent to all people who have given us their email address.

The Theosophical Society has no official statements of belief. It encourages members to seek the truth by various avenues, but always subject to respect for others. All views expressed in these pages are entirely those of the authors – not of the Society.

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

Greeting to my Fellow Theosophists,

This will be my last letter to you as my three year term as President ends at the next AGM, which is on Sunday 1st December. It would be lovely to see as many members as possible on that date. I am very grateful for these past almost three years as they have taught me much about which I would not have learned otherwise, so thank you!

Maintenance wise around our beautiful building, the several sets of external stairs have required the committee's attention, and many treads have been replaced. Our invaluable volunteers keep the library and bookshop open, have almost completed a list of our library books for the National web site, keep the garden looking lovely, and the building surrounds looking clean and swept. Lodge activities continue on as usual with study groups, meditation groups and Friday night talks.

The committee has been looking at ways of making the presence of the Brisbane Theosophical Society more widely known. To this effect we have recently taken out an advertisement in the locally produced magazine, 'Holistic Bliss', so we shall wait and see if this has an effect. We have just received a new batch of postcards which advertise our library. If you feel that you could place them and maintain their presence in just one venue, that would be very helpful. Local Council libraries are a good option. Our library is such a wonderful resource, with the possibility of leading those who use it closer to that Truth of which our motto speaks and your help is needed to spread the word.

On our front verandah, we have an A4 size display that houses an aphorism which is changed weekly, a simple little gift to passers by. One such thought is from Sri Chinmoy which reads:-

"Yesterday I was clever and I wanted to change the world.

Today I am wise so I want to change myself."

And is this not what being a TS member is about? Self-transformation?

As members of the TS we have access to the wisdom of many traditions available to us in our libraries and activities, from which we may each choose our own path, our own 'religion', and there are as many 'religions' as there are people. It is up to each one of us to undertake a path of self-transformation, moving from the separate ego of self-interest, towards that radical Unity as expressed by H.P.B. in the One Fundamental Law, where all separation ceases and Oneness alone prevails. If we can intellectually accept this idea that all levels of manifestation are in fact One Thing, then it is up to us to undertake the journey towards full realisation of this fact.

This may seem a formidable task, but it is the only worthwhile task in this life.

Phillipa Rooke

Brisbane Theosophical Society Executive Committee for 2013

President: Phillipa Rooke
Vice Presidents: Dennis Armstrong, John Harris
Secretary: Phoebe Williams
Treasurer: Patricia Ossenberg
Committee: Robyn Rizzo, Aldo Donadel, Brian Harding, Marie Bertelle

Sub-Committees for 2013

Library: Patricia, Robyn, Phillipa, Marie
Bookshop: Phoebe, Patricia, Dennis, Aldo
TOS representative: Robyn
Property & Equipment: Phoebe, Phillipa, John, Dennis
Publicity: Phoebe, Phillipa, Brian
'Contact' editor & webmaster: Geoff Harrod

Brisbane Lodge Members-only Library and Reference Library

The Members-only Library and the Reference Library are great resources for TS members looking for deeper theosophical insights. They are upstairs and hold a fine collection of old and new books, They are available for the use of members during library opening hours. Ask for the key at the Reception Desk, for access to these collections. They contain some very old and rare books.

OPAC on-line Theosophical Libraries index

The project to index all the libraries of the TS around Australia on the National Libraries on-line system, OPAC, is now nearly complete. If you find a wanted book is in another Lodge library, it can be obtained on loan for members. To access the on-line index, go to the National TS website <http://www.austheos.org.au> You will find it on the drop down menus.

The Campbell Theosophical Library

This is in the Head Office of the TS in Sydney. An index to its extensive collection of books and periodicals is maintained on the TS National website. You need to visit the library to read the material, but there is a service for providing photocopies.

2014 TS European Federation Congress in Paris “Bridging Science and Spirituality”

30 July to 3 August 2014

Adyar Theatre, 4 Square Rapp, 7th Arrondissement, Paris

The aim of the Congress is to bring together members and sympathizers from Europe and the world, and further to investigate together the connection between science and spirituality today. Special guests are being arranged.

Detailed information will be published on the website of The European Federation of the Theosophical Society – www.ts-efts.org - in mid-September. Registration will begin in Autumn 2013 via the website of EFTS. If any urgent information is needed our email address is congress@ts-efts.org The Adyar theatre has a website: www.theatre-adyar.fr

Registration – TS members 20 euros, non-members 30 euros.

Accommodation –

Participants will need to arrange their own accommodation. Please note that the Congress is during the high season in Paris and the venue is in central Paris, so early booking is very advisable.

We hope this early notice will be useful to Queensland members who might like to go to it. Details of speakers and programme etc will be available later.



DAVID BOHM – THE MAN AND HIS SCIENCE

Based on a talk by

David Allen and Brian Harding

Given at Brisbane Lodge Friday 31 May 2013

Many theosophists will know of David Bohm through his philosophical ideas and especially his association with Jiddu Krishnamurti. However, he is known more generally as a quantum physicist. This talk is divided into two sections, and while the title puts Bohm the Man ahead of his science, I thought it would be as well to give you an idea of his importance as a scientist first. David Allen will then tell us something of the nature of the man and his interesting life – he died in 1992.

I. The Science of David Bohm

1. Some General Remarks

In an article in the *TS Science Newsletter* issue No. 64 (Nov 2008), Dr Hugh Murdoch, wrote that David Bohm “had a unique **realistic** [Hugh’s emphasis] interpretation of quantum physics which was either rejected or ignored by virtually the entire physics community.” With the appearance of an article on Bohm in *New Scientist* earlier that year (22 Mar, 2008), Hugh suggests: “there has been a revival of what is now being referred to as Bohmian Mechanics, including an emphasis on **reality** as distinct from the **unreality** of the traditional approach of Bohr.”

The Bohr theory is fantastically successful in its predictions – in spite of the so-called “measurement problem” (or “collapse of the wave function”), which the majority of scientists have been content to ignore. The mathematics worked and they left it at that. But Bohm was unhappy about the probabilistic nature of quantum theory – what he saw as its unreality. He kept asking “What does this mean? “What is the reality underlying the mathematical equations?”

Einstein too was concerned about the probabilistic nature of quantum physics. You may remember that he famously declared “God does not play dice with the universe.” He felt that quantum physics was somehow an incomplete theory, that there must be “hidden variables” (factors) that hadn’t been accounted for. Bohm felt the same way.

Another problem was non-locality (what Einstein called “spooky action at a distance” and is now usually referred to as “entanglement”) in which quantum particles interact with each other instantaneously over large distances in apparent contradiction of relativity. Quantum physics is incompatible with relativity in other ways too.

While Bohm was an assistant professor at Princeton University, he had a number of discussions with Einstein who was at the Institute of Advanced Studies. Bohm and Einstein found they agreed in their disapproval of Bohr’s version of quantum physics, but they disagreed over entanglement. For Bohm, it is not only an essential feature of quantum physics but is also an integral part of his philosophy of universal interconnectedness.

2. Bohm’s Physics

To repeat, the problems that bothered Bohm were: (i) the probabilistic (or unreal) nature of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics (mentioned earlier); (ii) the apparent involvement of human consciousness in the collapse of the wave function; and (iii) the fundamental contradiction between quantum theory and relativity. Taking each of these in turn:

(i) *The probabilistic nature of quantum physics*

Here I quote from Hugh Murdoch. He writes: “... a sizable minority of physicists ... remain unconvinced that quantum theory depends on pure chance and they shun the philosophical contortions of quantum weirdness. The world is not inherently random they say. It only appears that way. Sheldon Goldstein of Rutgers University in New Jersey and other like minded physicists has been pursuing an alternative quantum theory now known as Bohmian Mechanics...”

The fundamentals of quantum physics are usually discussed in terms of the well-known double slit experiment. In his article, Hugh continues “While mainstream quantum theory insists that you can’t give **any** account of how each particle moves, Bohmian mechanics can, thus replacing the fuzziness of the standard theory according to Bohr with certainty. The wave function choreographs the motion of the particles.” (Incidentally, the idea of “a pilot wave” was mooted by De Broglie in 1927, but he quickly discarded it following strong opposition.)

The concluding statement of the *New Scientist* article says that “according to the Bohm theory, uncertainty arises from the interactions between the measuring device and the particle. It is not inherent in the universe.” Hugh explains further that Bohm’s calculations include a modification of the Schrodinger equation. “This produced a term that he called the quantum potential which took account of the instantaneous effect on the particles of the surroundings. It was this work which enabled him to calculate the actual paths of the particles in the double slit experiment, mentioned above, in defiance of the claim ... by Bohr ... of their ‘unreality’” prior to the appearance of the interference pattern.

In his article, Hugh notes that the famous “John Bell went on the attack in paper after paper supporting Bohm, inventing some interesting and even amusing analogies, and producing a book entitled *Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics* (1987). Bohm was also supported by researchers at the Pierre and Marie Curie Institute in Paris. Bohm’s work was gathered together in *The Undivided Universe*, written with his collaborator Basil Hiley and published in 1993 after his death.

(ii) *The involvement of consciousness*

Classical physics had been based on the notion of complete objectivity. But as quantum physics developed, this objectivity became unsustainable. The observer was found to be inextricably involved in quantum scale experiments. Most important is the apparent effect observation has on the Schrödinger wave function – the particle apparently isn’t anywhere until it is observed. Observation appears to bring about the collapse of the wave function. This suggests a conscious human observer is needed to bring the many probabilities into one actuality. Another objection from Einstein – “I like to think that the moon is there even when I’m not looking at it” he said.

There has been much written about this apparent involvement of human consciousness in measurements of quantum systems. Bohm was also concerned about the relationship of the quantum world to human consciousness and sought to develop a way of understanding this.

(iii) Quantum theory and relativity

Quantum theory deals successfully with the world of the very small, relativity with the very large, including very high energies. These two worlds usually can be kept apart, but problems arise in cosmology when, close to the Big Bang, we have the very small combined with very high energies.

Bohm writes (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980, p.xv) "In relativity, movement is continuous, causally determinate and well-defined, while in quantum mechanics it is discontinuous, not causally determinate and not well-defined. Each theory is committed to its own notions of static and fragmentary modes of existence (relativity to that of separate events connectible by signals, and quantum mechanics to a well-defined quantum state). One thus sees that a new kind of theory is needed..." if we are to reconcile these two otherwise successful 20th century developments.

3. Bohm's Philosophy

The philosophical implications of quantum theory, most especially entanglement, are momentous. It means that distant objects can be connected instantaneously in subtle ways. Bohm was the first to seize on the wider implications and it permeates both his physics and his philosophy. This subtle interconnection of a pair of distant objects ultimately leads to the interconnection of everything at some deep level. Indeed, Bohm believed that both relativity and quantum theory imply the unbroken wholeness of the universe.

Bohm explains (1980, p.xiv): "In physics the basic order has been for centuries that of the Cartesian rectilinear grid (extended slightly in the theory of relativity to the curvilinear grid)." He continues (1980, p.xv): "The Cartesian order is suitable for the analysis of the world into separately existent parts (eg particles or field elements)...however ... both in relativity and quantum theory the Cartesian order is leading to

serious contradictions and confusion." He concludes there is a need for "a new notion of order that may be appropriate to a universe of unbroken wholeness."

Hugh Murdoch notes: "This is the physical basis of Bohm's concept of the holomovement or the implicate order, a higher level of order than the everyday 'explicate order.' It meshes very well with his interest in Krishnamurti's philosophy. He also suggests the possibility of even higher levels of order – rather like the theosophical concept of higher planes."

Bohm explains further his idea of a new order (*op cit*): "This is the *implicate* or *enfolded* order. In the enfolded order, space and time are no longer the dominant factors determining the relationships of dependence or independence of different elements. Rather, an entirely different sort of basic connection of elements is possible, from which our ordinary notions of space and time, along with those of separately existent material particles, are abstracted as forms derived from the deeper order. These ordinary notions in fact appear in what is called the *explicate* or *unfolded order*, which is a special and distinguished form contained within the general totality of all the implicate orders."

Regarding the so-collapse of the wave function and the role of consciousness, rather than there being some kind of weird "telekinetic" effect of consciousness on the wave function, Bohm believes that quantum physics and consciousness are related in that they both arise from the deeper implicate order.

4. Conclusion

Bohm wrote numerous articles in scientific Journals, in common with his main collaborator, Basil Hiley and others; especially in *Foundations of Physics*, a journal which specializes in fundamental conceptual issues. One of the quotes on the back cover of *The Undivided Universe* is from the prestigious *American Journal of Physics* by prominent physicist, Henry Stapp, who writes "This book will, I believe, change the way quantum physics is taught."

"Unfortunately," says Hugh Murdoch, "Bohm, after all his efforts, did not live to see that day." I wonder if any of us will?

信心銘 Hsin Hsin Ming and the First Fundamental Proposition

From a talk given at Brisbane Theosophical Society by Phillipa Rooke

"The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences.

When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised.

Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart."

Thus starts the 'Hsin Hsin Ming', Verses on the Faith Mind, by Chien-chih Seng-ts'an who was the third Zen Patriarch in Japan in the year 606AD. He is also known as Sosan in some places. These verses come from the mind of a Zen master, or perhaps the term 'no-mind' would be more appropriate. They point to a place beyond words, and beyond the thinking rational mind. They come from a place of no words because they come from a mind that has gone beyond words. The authenticity and consistency of these words would indicate that they do not derive from speculation, but from direct experience. They are not knowledge, but wisdom.

The next six verses read:-

"If you wish to see the truth then hold no opinions for or against anything.

To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.

When the deep meaning of things is not understood, the mind's essential peace is disturbed to no avail.

The Way is perfect like vast space where nothing is lacking and nothing in excess.
Indeed, it is due to our choosing to accept or reject that we do not see the true nature of things.

Live neither in the entanglements of outer things, nor in inner feelings of emptiness.
Be serene in the oneness of things and such erroneous views will disappear by themselves.

When you try to stop activity by passivity your very effort fills you with activity.
As long as you remain in one extreme or the other you will never know Oneness.

Those who do not live in the single Way fail in both activity and passivity, assertion and denial.
To deny the reality of things is to miss their reality;
To assert the emptiness of things is to miss their reality.

The more you talk and think about it, the further astray you wander from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking, and there is nothing you will not be able to know.”

THE BIG PICTURE

Speaking of things which are unthinkable and unspeakable, this I think, is where the First Fundamental Proposition comes in to the picture. A co-founder of the Theosophical Society, Madame Helena Blavatsky, puts forward this proposition in the Proem of the first Volume of her great work *The Secret Doctrine*, which is on Cosmogogenesis, the origins of the Universe. Big picture stuff! It reads:-

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought – in the words of Mandukya, ‘unthinkable and unspeakable’.

The seventh verse of the Hsin Hsin Ming says just this does it not?

“The more you talk and think about it, the further away you wander from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking, and there is nothing you will not be able to know.”

So there is a link here between what the Hsin Hsin Ming is pointing to, and the profundity of the First Fundamental Proposition – unthinkable, unspeakable.

This proposition is about ONENESS, the one absolute reality which underlies all of existence, from which all of manifested creation, be it a person, an animal, a star, a starfish, a galaxy, a tree, a so-called inanimate object, a rock; ALL have proceeded from only one source. Or rather, this Principle of Oneness is that which precedes that one source, the be-ness from which being emerges.

This proposition is one of the fundamental ideas of the Theosophical tradition. It is the basis of “the deep meaning of things” of the Hsin Hsin Ming.

How can one even attempt to speak of the unspeakable, the causeless cause. I guess it is a matter of faith. Faith not in the sense of “yes you tell me that and I am going to believe it no matter what”. Not faith in the fundamentalist sense of taking on board fixed ideas and notions because someone tells me it is so. This faith is more like hearing about a fascinating place and setting out on a journey to discover it, and seeing what happens on the way, being prepared to alter your course, and having faith that whatever the outcome, you’ve had an amazing journey. In a different context it is more like hearing an idea which excites and fascinates the intellect, so you start out with certain pre-conceptions about things, and on the way you discover different aspects which cause you to change tack and one must be prepared to be open to modifications to one’s thinking, but always with an eye on that fascinating idea, if and until it has been proved to be false. So far, this “Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE” remains sacrosanct, and furthermore confirmed by modern findings if anything. Let us take our minds back to when humanity believed the earth to be flat, and not so long ago, the atom was considered to be the smallest particle of matter. We must always allow that our ideas are not the final word, and they may need to change when irrefutable proof is before us.

One way in which we might make an analogy in human terms in an attempt to grasp this mighty concept, is if we take an idea for example. The idea comes into the mind, you take notice of it, you work out how to implement it, and then you do it. So if we now transfer the scenario from the human mind to the vastness of the cosmos with its millions of light years (what mind can really grasp even that), this One Absolute Reality is just like that idea BEFORE it comes into the mind. **IT IS** – before anything comes into being. We therefore, cannot conceive of it until it is stepped down so-to-speak, and becomes manifest.

When we see something which a person has made, the original idea of it, and the intelligence required to make it is assumed. I think that the underlying Unity of all things, which today is being posited as fact, in that all matter is made up of the same building blocks, is where we can start relating to the One Absolute Reality behind creation, behind that Unity, and from which all manifestation has emanated.

It is interesting to see how modern western physics is coming to ideas of this Oneness which the sages and saints of the east 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.” (The Theosophist Sept 2012 p 4)

The biological sciences have been aware of this unity since 1935 when Arthur Tansley coined the term ‘ecosystem’. It has since become the central organizing idea in ecology. As a model of interrelatedness in nature, it presents both biological and non biological aspects of the environment as one entity, with strong emphasis on measuring the cycling of nutrients and the flow of energy in the system – whether it be a pond, a forest, or the earth as a whole. (Google ‘Interrelatedness in Nature’ Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas P 471 <books.google.com.au/books?esbn=0521468345>) And are we not an integral part of this earth? Without it we cannot survive.

Scientist Dana 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.” She also explains “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.” (“The Quantum Self” Flamingo 1991 p207)

There we have science corroborating and making fact the basic reality from which all manifestation proceeds, that underlying Oneness of things.

If we look at these first few verses in more detail there are certain qualities which the sage tells us are present when we no longer have preferences and opinions. These qualities are – clarity, truth, peace, serenity, oneness, reality.

All these qualities point to that which lies behind the appearance of things. I think that these are qualities of the Oneness which we can come to know.

It is proposed that we are in fact that one thing in a sort of stepped down way, as evolution started with that one absolute reality, and evolved and expanded into the many forms, the ten thousand things, that we see about us on this earth and in the cosmos, and also that which we cannot see with our physical eyes, those forces which operate in nature. I think that for us as humanity, if we have indeed proceeded from that One thing, the one source of all manifested being, then it could follow that this one source is also the nature of each one of us clothed by our body, that essential nature to which the sage is pointing in these verses. The above qualities are associated with that Oneness, and that Oneness goes beyond dualities of preference, opinions, accepting and rejecting. So how are we going to relate this extraordinary principle which is beyond our limited capacities to understand, to our world of dualities where thinking and speaking are what we do! Why can we not see that oneness and live it in our daily lives? Why can’t we just not have any opinions for or against anything? Just like that!

THE HUMAN APPROACH

This great sage is pointing to that underlying Unity which pervades all of creation, and he is saying that these qualities of Oneness can be known in some way, when the conditioned mind is not in charge, as it is the conditioned mind which ‘prefers, has opinions, accepts and rejects, denies and asserts’. Our minds are conditioned by past events stored in memory which have been either painful or pleasurable, and while we remain in the state of allowing the workings of the mind to remain unexamined, we will be subject to its natural predilections, which of course, is seeking that which is pleasurable to us, that which we enjoy and which does not cause psychological discomfort.

Manly P Hall says, “The heart and mind of the individual are like open doors through which life may enter. Every prejudice locks not only our attitudes but also our lives, and wherever we build false walls around attitudes or ideas, we simply cut off the energy supply which must nourish consciousness.” (Medicine of the Sun and Moon Philosophical Research Society 1975 p 26)

i.e. if we maintain our prejudices we don’t get anywhere, no matter how much we may wish to be ‘serene in the oneness of things’.

If we are alert and aware of the influences which cause us to react with prejudice and opinions, denials and assertions, I suggest that everything revolves around the personality. You could call it the ‘lower self’ or the personal ego. It is that part of ourselves which is essentially selfish – not intentionally so necessarily, as that so-called selfish quality in us has been essential for our survival, IN THE PAST.

We have now evolved to the point of being able to be aware of our thoughts. Not all of humanity has necessarily reached this point fully, and we are all still enmeshed in the reactive mind. However, that ability to be aware of our own thoughts is important for our further evolution.

EVOLUTIONAL INTENTIONALITY

I believe that we must now enter into a new phase of consciousness that does not include the selfish personal ego. The continuing evolution of consciousness requires the assistance of us all, because we are the embodiment of that consciousness, we are its vehicle, the matter which consciousness needs in order to evolve. Evolutional intentionality must necessarily come from within us. The ball is in our court so-to-speak. We could of course, just allow the force of evolution to drag us along whilst we go about life allowing it to happen as it will, with no thought as to our part in it all. We must now be prepared to do the work!

So perhaps that leaves us operating out of the personal ego, and needing another ‘space’ from which to operate which no longer entangles us in reactions, prejudices, and opinions. A space where the personal ego has no influence.

TS member Brian Parry has recently posited what I think is a great way forward, which is “Genuine, Disinterested Interest”. (TinA March 2013 p17) He says:-

“An attitude that is not based on desire or revulsion, but on a genuine disinterested interest, would dissolve that whole swag of assumptions I usually bring to experiences and allow me to see a situation as it really is.

What would it be like to live with interest but no attachment or revulsion;

To face life without preconceptions?”

I suggest that we would then be able to respond to the ‘nitty gritty’, to the truth of each situation we face, rather than getting caught up in surface reactions.

He does acknowledge that this can happen for fleeting moments only in our everyday experience, but I think that this ‘Genuine Disinterested Interest’ is worthy of encouraging in our everyday interactions. It is going some way towards that Evolutional intentionality which we must surely try to take on board.

Just give a little thought as to how it might work in our lives. If we think of some situation in which we have reacted badly to someone, can we see that it is because our precious ego was dented perhaps? Or perhaps when we see someone else

reacting badly, which is a little bit easier being somewhat removed, can we not see that they (and we) are locked in by attitudes and prejudices that are fixed in the mind, and we go about fiercely protecting these attitudes and prejudices. While we are thus occupied, we cannot then see a person or situation as it really is. We are instead constantly swinging between attraction and repulsion. We are no longer 'in control'. We are but slaves to the conditioned mind, as it is in control, not our real self. If we can see that happening, then perhaps, we can start to see life in a different way, because until we do see our own desires and repulsions, we can go no further. Tagore puts this very poetically when he says "The desire at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath". (Gitanjali, Dover publications 2000, p4) I think that this self observation has to be a precursor to that 'Genuine Disinterested Interest', which then allows us to see "what is" without the mind's projections. If we can operate from the impersonal, rather than the self-centred aspect of ourselves, then I think a different quality can come about; a quality of compassion that emerges when we see how our lives are so entangled in and impoverished by that locking in of our attitudes and ideas; how we are virtual slaves to the conditioned mind. When this is seen, we can then have compassion both for ourselves and others, and then start to act differently, and with effort and awareness, come to see the truth behind appearances.

Hugh Shearman speaks of this when he says, "A little consideration will show that it is only when we are impersonal that we can be truly compassionate. An outlook that is impersonal, in the sense of being free from selfish calculation, fear, agitation, self-pity or anger, is the only outlook that can accurately know a situation and know what to do in that situation. Such an attitude is never merely coldly mental. One quality which is needed for an accurate and impersonal assessment of any situation is reverence. This is a true recognition of the greatness or littleness of anything, and it is an essential element in the truly impersonal outlook. It is in the universal, the impersonal, that the largeness, richness, warmth and colour of life are to be found, the true lyrical intensity of feeling." ('Desire and Fulfilment' TPH Adyar 2004 p54)

With this quote, we see some new qualities emerging out of that capacity for impersonal assessment. Reverence as true recognition, richness, warmth and colour of life. Here I think we are approaching those qualities spoken of in the verses of the Hsin Hsin Ming. He also equates the impersonal with the universal. We are perhaps getting closer to the essence of each one of us, that reality of our being which resides in the Oneness of all things. If we can act in an impersonal way to life, with Genuine Disinterested Interest, we then embrace all things, psychological and material in an attitude of compassion, and allow all the 10,000 things to be just as they are.

The deep compassion which arises and embraces all, arises automatically when the truth of things is perceived. It comes from within. We do of course experience compassion in our lives when we hear of tragic circumstances, and of the suffering of others, seemingly through no fault of their own. But this all-embracing compassion has a different quality, a great depth, in that it encompasses all and everything.

Robert Browning speaks of truth thus:-

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whatever you may believe
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception – which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error: and to *know*
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

('Mysticism' by F.C. Happold, Penguin Books 1967 Pp59/60)

Does that 'opening out a way' not start with freeing ourselves from our conditioning, from opinions, accepting and rejecting, desire and repulsion, then from there to the impersonal, the universal, through truth to compassion.

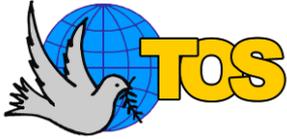
UNTHINKABLE AND UNSPEAKABLE

We are still however, left with that which is unthinkable and unspeakable!

It seems to me that the things which cannot be thought about, should perhaps be allowed to sit lightly in our consciousness, awaiting a time when the busy-ness of the rational brain abates and that aspect of ourselves which is not thought but could perhaps be called Mind can be contacted through intuition. This Mind, being Universal Mind, is common to us all, and able to be accessed by us all when thought abates. It is possibly in this state that we find the space for those things which cannot be 'thought' about, and from there they can influence and sweeten our lives. And is that not the space to which meditators aspire?

It is important to investigate in a meditative way I think, because the quieter the mind, the more deep can be the experience of going into the silence – the stillness – the Oneness.

The state of mind, our consciousness, that which we work through intellectually, feeds the meditative experience, which in turn enhances our consciousness, our potential to come to know Truth, peace, reality, and in doing so, will enable us to walk The Great Way being 'serene in the Oneness of Things'.



T.O.S. news

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Annual General Meeting

Our next business meeting is the Brisbane TOS Annual General Meeting on **Saturday 30 November**, 2013. It will be held from 10.00 to 11:30 am in the T.S. rooms and will be followed by a brief business meeting and a celebratory Christmas morning tea. All interested people are invited to attend.

Christmas sale table

Bring your gold coins along to the TS meeting on **Friday 6 December** to spend on Christmas goodies. There will be home-made jam, pickles and baked goods, cards, gifts and second hand books on sale. Money raised from this sale table will be used for our homeless women project.

Report from the 3rd International TOS Conference

Two of our members, Carolyn Harrod and Dianne Manning, together with the Coordinator of the TOS in Australia, Jean Carroll, and Dorothy Bell from the Mornington Peninsula Group, represented Australia at the 3rd International TOS Conference held in late July at *Olcott* in Wheaton, IL, the home of the TS in America. They were about 60 participants from 13 countries – Australia, England, France, Hungary, India, Italy, Kenya, New Zealand, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Tanzania, USA and Zambia.



We were honoured by the presence of the International Vice-President of the TS, Brother Mahendra P. Singhal and his friendly wife, Shashi. Tim Boyd, the President of the TS in America was also a keen participant in the conference.

Both Tim and Mahendra gave addresses of welcome and during the conference we came to appreciate the depth of commitment that both have to the work of the TOS. In the many informal moments during the conference we also enjoyed their sense

of humour.

It was a thrill to meet four of the people leading projects that the Brisbane TOS Group supports: Usha Shah (Kenyan village self-sufficiency project), Jatindra Patowary (mobility aids project); Deepa Padhi (project to combat violence against women) and Vic Hao Chin (Golden Link College). All four project leaders asked that their deep appreciation be conveyed to the members of the Brisbane TOS Group for their generosity and willingness to support international projects.

The principal theme of this working conference was *The TOS into the Future*. To set the direction and tone for our discussions, Vic Hao Chin, Jr delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the topic, *The TOS 100 Years from Now* and Maria Parisen addressed us on *Creative Meditation: Balancing Inner and Outer Action*.

These keynote talks were supported by three short talks on the topic, *Service as Sacred Labour*, given by Birendra L. Bhattacharyya (India), Cynthia Trasi (England) and Dorothy Bell (Australia). Our delegates have brought back DVDs of these presentations to share with interested members.

Participants also had opportunities to participate in workshops, to learn about the service activities being undertaken in each other's countries and to share ideas about theosophical service.



One of the main items of work during the conference was the joint development of a Plan of Action for the TOS for the next five years – 2014-2018. This work was undertaken in three plenary sessions. The first session consisted of a report on progress in implementing the existing 2008-2013 Plan of Action. In the second plenary session, participants worked in small groups to share ideas and plan actions for the next five years.

The third plenary session provided TOS workers with the opportunity to discuss the ideas generated in session two with fellow members from their own country. They collectively identified priority actions for their country and planned strategies to implement them during the next five years. We can look forward to hearing from Jean Carroll about the ideas the Australian contingent discussed.

When members reflected on the conference and identified the things that were highlights for them, there were several common themes.

Many people commented on:

- the beautiful atmosphere at Olcott
- the joy of meeting and being inspired by fellow TOS workers
- the high quality of the program and organisation of the conference
- the benefits of sharing ideas and learning from each other.

You can find a photographic report of the conference on the International TOS website: <http://international.theoservice.org>

The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society is a worldwide body whose primary object is to promote Universal Brotherhood. The Society imposes no beliefs upon its members, who are united by a common search for truth. Its constitution declares three objects:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.

The Theosophical Society has no official doctrine. All philosophies, religions and methods of spiritual practice are within its scope of interest but not endorsed. Material published in this journal therefore does not carry any endorsement or represent any official viewpoint of the organisation.

The Motto of the Society is ***There is no religion higher than Truth.***

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