

THE WISDOM OF CONTEMPORARY PHYSICS

Dr Ulrich Mohrhoff

(Summary of Theosophy-Science Lecture delivered on 30.12.2013)

Quantum mechanics is the general theoretical framework of contemporary physics. While its stunningly elegant mathematical formalism can be written down on a napkin, attempts to make sense of it fill entire libraries. Not once has a reliable experiment or observation been at odds with its predictions. Its ever-growing range of technological applications border on magic, yet no one seems to know how the magic works. Subatomic particles, atoms, and even molecules behave in ways which are quite unlike what we know how to think about.

The reason this is so is that quantum mechanics does not explain how the world is put together. What it is trying to make us understand is how the world is *manifested* — how a single nameless Reality becomes many without ceasing to be the ‘One without a second’ of the Upanishads. Instead of being interacting constituents of matter, subatomic particles, atoms, and molecules are instrumental in the manifestation

of the material world. They are stages in the transition from the One to the Many. While the familiar explanatory categories of substance and causality allow us to make sense of the manifested world, they are useless when it comes to understanding how the world is manifested. They belong to the rules of this *Leela* but have no part in setting the stage for it.

Yet it is possible to understand why the well-tested laws of physics have the form that they do. For this we need to know what this *Leela* is about. Sri Aurobindo tells us that our world is special in that it is evolutionary. Evolution presupposes involution: the involution of Supermind in Mind, the involution of Mind in Life, and the involution of Life in Matter. When Life — the force that creates and sustains forms — is involved in Matter, the result is a multitude of formless entities, which are none other than the elementary particles of particle physics.

Once it is granted that the purpose of

this manifestation is the evolution of Life, Mind, and eventually Supermind, and also that this evolution begins with a multitude of formless particles, we are in a position to understand why the general theoretical framework of physics has to be quantum mechanics. Life and Mind cannot possibly evolve if there are no stable objects of finite size, and the existence of such objects requires the validity of quantum mechanics. If, moreover, we take into account that the evolution of Life requires habitable environments in which a sufficient variety of chemical elements available, we find that every one of the well-tested laws of physics is necessary for the purpose of this manifestation.

On the face of it, all that quantum

mechanics allows us to calculate is correlations between measurement outcomes. The fact that these correlations cannot be understood in causal terms has aroused much consternation. No physical mechanism, no natural process is able to explain them. Yet if the force at work in the world is an *infinite* force, this should be no cause for concern, for it would be self-contradictory to explain the working of an infinite force in terms of physical mechanisms or natural processes. If this force works under self-imposed constraints, we need to know why it does so, and why the self-imposed constraints have the form that they do. And this we now know. The laws of physics are what they are because they are needed to set the stage for this *Leela* of evolution.

A POWER THAT MAKETH ALL THINGS NEW

Mr Pedro Oliveira

(Public Lecture delivered on 30.12.2013)

History presents abundant evidence that the search for power which originates in personal desire and ambition ends up in failure. It has become a platitude to criticize the visibly selfish politicians but the malady of power can be very subtle and yet also destructive. The Bolsheviks in Russia, for example, were utterly convinced that they had inaugurated a new era for that country. However, in a little more than eighty years the communist regime collapsed for it had created a select class of people which enjoyed privileges that ordinary workers would never see in their lifetime. It also had affirmed itself by

sending thousands of dissidents to the dreaded Gulags or forced labour camps.

The widespread power of our time is information and therefore we see governments investing large sums of money to win the race of espionage and eavesdropping on individuals, companies and governments. The deeply connectedness of information systems around the world creates the stage for the advent of information as power.

What is power? One of the dictionary definitions is 'the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events'. It is almost indistinguishable from control.

Political parties desire to remain in power not necessarily because they have the best platform of policies and ideas to uplift the underprivileged in society and create equality. At the heart of such a desire is the craving for the benefits that power brings. Vaclav Havel marvelled the world when he resigned as President of Czechoslovakia when it was decided to split the country in two. It was not difficult for him to relinquish power. Such men are truly rare. The fact that they are admired indicates that, deep down, some people value unselfishness in political life, while at the same time continuing to exercise to their vote by giving it to sometimes questionable candidates.

The democratic rule of law has become an important institution in the world following the revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Democracy, from Greek *demokratia* (from *demos* 'the people' and *kratia* 'power, rule') is hailed as the government of the people. For those who follow world events and also political processes in their own countries, it is just not possible to ignore the sometimes massive irony of such a definition. Free and fair elections — and responsible and accountable governments — are a reality that has not arrived in many countries in the world yet.

When power is exercised for self-benefit in any form it cannot bring about renewal. An amalgamation of opinions, strong desires and ambition imprisons the mind in a kind of parallel reality, making the awareness of the needs of others — sometimes the needs of

millions — as almost non-existent for all practical purposes. For example, very few countries in the world have an equitable, just and truly accessible healthcare system.

Those who inspired the formation of the Theosophical Society insisted that Universal Brotherhood should be — had to be — its primary purpose. For them Universal Brotherhood was not an ideology, a political platform, or even a belief. They spoke of it as 'the only secure foundation for universal morality'. At levels that none of us can see humanity is one body, one living organism, one power, one life such is the 'power that maketh all things new'. This is also the power of wisdom, as presented in the Old Testament, in the book of Wisdom of Solomon (7:27):

And being but one, she can do all things:
and remaining in herself, she maketh
all things new.

Dr Besant worked very hard for India to be transformed by the power of brotherhood and wisdom. Some say she failed and that the liberation struggle left her behind. But the simple fact that the important issues affecting the country today are essentially the same as during her years of dedicated service shows that she contacted something profoundly true within herself which was also profoundly relevant for the country. It is not without a reason that people around India called her 'Vasanta', which means 'Spring'. In her many activities she brought out an energy of spiritual renewal aimed at the upliftment of the poor and at the growing responsibility of those who

had the benefit of education. Eighty years after her passing India still

yearns for that renewal. And so does the world.

THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

The TOS, its Place and Work in the Theosophical World

(Summaries of Talks delivered on 29.12.2013)

Dr T. Krishnankutty Nair

HPB had stressed the need to practice altruism to become a Theosophist.

In 1908, Annie Besant started the Theosophical Order of Service, 'which shall consist of Fellows of the TS only, and shall have its seat at Adyar and it shall have as its chief officer the President of the TS; or someone appointed by him.'

Our beloved Radhaji observed that TOS is a stronger activity within the larger work of Theosophical Society. The President of the Theosophical Society is ex-officio President of TOS. The National Directors are appointed by the TOS President in consultation with the leader of the TS in the country concerned. The TOS gives utmost importance to a harmonious working relationship with the Theosophical Society. This actually gives the place for the TOS in the Theosophical world. But let us go further.

The motto of the TOS is:

A union of all who love in the service of all that suffers.

The first declared Object of the Theosophical Society is:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

When one accepts brotherhood, one cannot be indifferent to all that suffers. As a Theosophist, how can one make brotherhood real without sparing his wealth, time or energy? And this sparing or sharing of what one already possesses is what is called sacrifice. So the word 'service' also means sacrifice, sacrifice for the benefit of others.

Manifestation began by an act of Divine Sacrifice. It is by an act of sacrifice by the Absolute, the Universe is formed. How does life become manifest? By the taking of forms. How does life continually evolve? By the breaking of forms after forms and assuming new ones. Thus one gets the idea that by taking, by grasping, by holding, the life is preserved. The form cannot continue to exist, without taking in fresh matter.

When one had reached the necessary point of materiality, then he learns that Life is preserved by sacrificing that which had already been appropriated. All living things exist by virtue of mutual exchange, by the recognition of the fact of mutual interdependence.

Just in proportion as we empty ourselves of all that we have, is there room for the divine fullness to flow in, and fill in more than we were ever

filled before. There is another law which we have come across, the law of obligation, the law of duty. Then we come to realize that all acts are binding except the act of sacrifice. When one has learned to perform all his action as duty, then he is led to the *nivrutti marga*, the path of return. Sri Krishna said:

Better than the sacrifice of wealth is the sacrifice of wisdom, O Parantapa.

By the sacrifice of wisdom we shall learn to see all beings in the Self, and thus in God. . . .

Mrs Ananya Sri Ram Rajan

Feed the Light of the World

When the TOS was started by Annie Besant in 1908, the spark was ignited in her heart many years before. In her autobiography, she writes:

Deeper and deeper into my innermost nature are the growing desire to succour, to suffer for, to save. I had long given up my social reputation, I now gave up with ever-increasing surrender ease, comfort, time; the passion of pity grew stronger and stronger, fed by each new sacrifice, and each sacrifice led me nearer and nearer to the threshold of that gateway beyond which stretched a path of renunciation I had never dreamed of, which those might tread who were ready wholly to strip off self for Man's sake, who for Love's sake would surrender Love's return from those they served, and would go out into the darkness for themselves that they might, with their own souls as fuel, feed the Light of the World.

This is the lesson which the evolving man has to learn.

How can we make this real? Only by daily acts of renunciation in the little things of life. We talk of the Great Renunciation. It is not done in one day. Thus it is seen that only by service, by the activity of the TOS in the Theosophical world, can one raise his morality and spirituality, and thereby realize the Truth, that He is in everything and everything is in Him.

Thus Theosophy helps one to see the Path and TOS leads him to Truth.

Such a passion to sacrifice and service seems a rarity today, but it was this intense desire of Annie Besant that enthused members who felt that humanitarian work needed a 'place' in the Theosophical Society. As an organization that provides a foundation for studying the Ancient Wisdom, for learning meditation, and for discussing Theosophical concepts, TS members believed, at the time, that they were serving the world by studying themselves and that by becoming self-aware, they would affect the world. And while this is true, we cannot expect those who suffer to survive on our self-awareness.

Within everything is the hidden light that shines in every creature, every sentient being great and small. And when we connect with that light, we experience the hidden love that embraces us all. For what is this consciousness that we all come from but

the purest form of love.

It is for this reason that the TOS exists and must have a visible place in the Theosophical world. The motto of the TOS, 'A union of those who love in the service of all that suffers' shows that love is the driving force which keeps members wanting to alleviate the suffering of others.

HPB states in *The Key to Theosophy* that members can best help the movement of Theosophy by living it. So what is living Theosophy? It is altru-

ism. When altruism is practised, there is no distinction when caring for another. As in Annie Besant's quote we must not pay heed to social reputations or the scoffing of others when helping those who are judged for who they are. Love sees no difference. Love only sees Love when altruism is practised. This is why the TOS motto is 'a union of those who love in the service of all that suffers' and why it is a great training ground for our spiritual development.

PROPAGATING THEOSOPHY: YOUTH CALLING

(Summaries of Talks delivered on 30.12.2013)

Mrs Upasika Maithreya

Over the years the world has become a complex place and our problems more complex. The one thing that remains unchanged is the Ancient Wisdom which is ageless. Theosophy is the beacon of light that has guided humanity for many years . . . Those who have come in contact with Theosophy, are obliged to spread the message. As mentioned in the Letter of 1881, a Great One said 'we have to popularize a knowledge of Theosophy'.

The youth can play a vital role in popularising Theosophy. The Vasanta Youth Lodge was revived in 2009 and has nearly 50 members. The world is made of different people and so our

Mr Mahesh S. U.

The world as it stands today seems to be totally dependent on technology from booking a train ticket to banking and

approaches are also varied. We have study classes, lectures and discussions for studying Theosophical literature. These sessions leave us in a contemplative mood and this is when we plan our social service projects. We support the TOS, Chennai, with many projects. We try to immortalize eminent Theosophists via exhibitions and social media. We are selling t-shirts to commemorate 125 years of *The Secret Doctrine*. We also stage plays based on the symbology in mythology.

We hope to spread the message of Theosophy. Above all, we are trying to live a Theosophic life and apply the teachings in our daily lives.

medical care. Such revolution-ary technology has not only brought about speed and efficiency of service but also

probably reduced the scope for corruption at various levels.

However, these technological advancements are happening so rapidly, that even the younger generations are under tremendous pressure to keep track of these changes. And adding to that is the vast fluctuation occurring in the social and economic areas as well. Due to selfishness and intolerance the family unit is getting smaller and the cost of living higher.

This is where the Theosophical Society has made a difference. However modern the outlook of our young-sters, their heart never fails to respond to beautiful and noble ideas; however old that idea may be.

The International Order of the Round Table was started for helping the spiritual growth of the young. The table placed at the centre of the ceremony is round in shape, signifying all are equal, nobody higher or lower. The Round Table has many cere-

Mrs Sonal Murali

In the preamble to the By-laws of the TS, it has been said that in considering the qualifications of applicants for membership, it neither knows race, sex, colour, country nor creed. Nowhere is there any mention of any age group. How is it then that the TS has predominantly a certain age group.

The TS essentially provides a forum for a serious seeker, irrespective of any age. So anyone who has come knocking at the doors is a serious seeker.

The questions we must explore are

monies, accompanied by music, for understanding the importance of right values and Nature. The values emphasized are kindness, helpfulness, courageousness and righteousness, thereby getting an opportunity to understand the required qualities. The motto of this Order is 'Live Pure, Speak True, Right Wrong, Follow the King'. The phrase 'Right Wrong' means, to err is human but on realizing that mistake, we must show the courage to correct it.

A spiritual mind never grows old or tired. Its constant search for greater truth, takes the soul from the lower to the higher. Children when introduced to ceremonies like the Round Table at an early age may find it helpful to lead a life based on right values.

Study and practice of Theosophy is a laborious task and requires strenuous and persevering effort, and it would definitely lead to progress, and gradually remove selfish aspirations in us.

what is involved in making Theosophy an integral part of one's life? What living Theosophy implies? What role can one play as an individual or as an institution in facilitating the induction of young people?

How can we utilize the exuberance, the vitality, energy and spirit of young people?

What legacy are we leaving for young people? Soul-searching is required to critically examine ourselves why young seekers are not part of the TS.

Number of delegates registered by Monday, 30 December: 1105

Mrs Sushma Webber

'To propagate' means to promote widely an idea or knowledge. The purpose of the Theosophical Society is to let people know Theosophy exists. Every person who works to keep the organization running smoothly is working for the propagation of Theosophy. Without such effort there can be no Theosophical Society.

A person decides to work for the TS when he or she realizes the value of Theosophy. It is not just a body of literature available for those who are curious, rather it is for those who use this knowledge for the spiritual regeneration of humanity.

In Annie Besant's article, 'The Work of the TS', she writes about HPB:

She would give her last shilling to a starving beggar if he came in her way, but took no part in organizing philanthropic work; and while she would encourage anyone who came to her to carry out any charitable plan he had at heart, she steadily drew her pupils who showed any aptitude for acquiring knowledge, to devote themselves with

single-minded energy to the study and teaching of Theosophy. She knew that the future depended on the success of this teaching on the permeation of the modern mind with Theosophy, and she led them to give themselves wholly to this one work.

My question is 'Have we deserved the privilege to propagate Theosophy?' And, 'How can we deserve this privilege? Are we ready to do anything to accomplish what HPB thought was necessary for propagating Theosophy? A musician has to practice for many hours in a day. How much time do we, who wish to propagate Theosophy, give to absorb, grasp, ponder and internalize the Theosophical doctrines? Do we take the trouble to develop the necessary skills, such as public speaking, refining our language and grammar, going deep into a subject and working with a Theosophical attitude?

We who have come to Theosophy at a young age must seriously think about our responsibility and make a commitment to propagate it.

THE WORLD MOTHER

On 28 December a dance feature choreographed by Mrs Gayathri Balagurunathan depicting the different aspects of the World Mother was performed. It was based on Indian mythological stories about Goddess Parvathi as Himavan Nayaki, Madurai Meenakshi, Abhirami and Chamundeswari. It was a feast for the senses with vibrant colours, music and classical dance movements.



Relative to the population of the world you may be few in numbers, but spiritual strength and power depend not upon numbers. Rather do they depend upon burning sincerity.

— An Elder Brother

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