

## OUR WORLD

### Part 1 Introduction

We need scarcely add that the contemplation in natural science of a wider domain than the actual leads to a far better understanding of the actual. A S Eddington

Quantum physics helped me to realise that I was creating this destructive reality and that all I needed to do to change it was change the way I perceived the world. Jonny Wilkinson

If we are to make use of teachings about the world on a wider scale from our usual human scale, we have to make practical connections between that bigger world and our own.

Someone said at a meeting last week that when she was young she had the burning question “Why am I here?” The question was answered for her by the Ray of Creation, which shows the position of mankind in the universe. But it is a question at many levels, and in this paper we look at the very unexpected findings of 20<sup>th</sup> century science, trying to answer the same question, ‘Why are human beings here?’ It seems to turn out that we are here because the universe is just as it is, but also the universe is just as it is because we are here.

Questions of this sort started with the British theoretical physicist Arthur Eddington – surely among the wisest scientists ever and one who tried to marry science and philosophy with a strong personal mystical sense. In the latter part of his career (he died in 1944) he worked on the numerology of the universe, trying to produce a grand unification of everything through studying the important numbers in the universe – the gravitational constant, the masses of particles, the charge carried by particles and their relationships. He failed, and though this approach rumbled on over the years, it was not until the 1970’s that it came to a head again, largely through the work of an Australian theoretical physicist Brandon Carter.

This area of physics is referred to as the Anthropic Principle. It has got rather complicated now, but basically it points out that the existence of intelligent life, able to observe the universe, puts constraints on the nature of the universe. That is, many things had to be exactly right during the formation of the universe and the evolution of life in order that intelligent life should come into being. For example, if the gravitational constant which determines the amount of force between things – such as the force of gravity that keeps us on the planet – if this were much weaker then galaxies would not have formed; no galaxies, then no stars and no planets and no us. One interpretation is that the universe is ‘fine-tuned’ so that we – or life-forms like us can exist. Another interpretation is that there are many universes, all with different properties and we are on one of the few universes (out of billions of others) which can give rise to intelligent life.

There is a good summary of this area in *Goldilocks Enigma* by Paul Davies, and perhaps we should all try to read it.

When we come to look at the System teaching on the Ray of Creation we shall find that we human beings occupy a fairly lowly place in the universe, at a low level of energy, subject to

too many laws. Paradoxically, science suggests we are special and though no scientist would admit to it, there is something in the saying: 'And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.'

We are part of a universe that has a particular plan and we have that plan within us. The big question is whether in some way we communicate with it. Does our consciousness really include anything outside what we habitually see and feel?

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### **Practical work**

Please choose a saying, aphorism or short quotation that means something to you and has some depth beyond ordinary understanding and commit it to memory. The idea is to help us to bear in mind the real self, the Param-Atman at all times. If you did this exercise years ago you might want to revive what you did then. Here are some examples – a list of sayings by the Shankaracharya used in this way by Dr Roles in the New Year Programme for 1972.

(a) The first four couplets refer to the Inner life:-

1. In the Soul (Antahkarana) of each person, there lives the Universal (Param-Atman) along with the individual Self (Jiva-Atman) for the purpose of guidance.

2. Therefore we get a guiding Voice from time to time when we are in difficulties.

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3. In order to hear that inner Voice, we should pray to the All-Knowing Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind.

4. Then an answer, to bring us face to face with success, is sure to come forth.

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5. Therefore what we have to do is to take guidance in our Soul from that immense source of energy, the Param-Atman, with fullest concentration of mind and in all humility.

6. This body (physical, subtle and causal) is the vehicle, and Param-Atman is the rider; regard the rider as separate from the vehicle.

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7. Our mind has the property of thinking of something or other all the time; it cannot remain idle.

8. Thinking of the Param-Atman leads to happiness, but thinking of worldly things leads only to unhappiness in the end.

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(b) The following four couplets can bring this same idea into one's daily activities in the outside world:-

1. The states of consciousness which we experience are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas - in people, places, situations and events.

2. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a passing show, always remains the same.

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3. What to ordinary people are different shapes and forms, are to a Realized person, all manifestations of one and the same Param-Atman.

4. What he sees then, around and within himself, is Param-Atman, and not the transient mirage which we call "the world".

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5. Once you win over the Param-Atman by love, only then do you get all you need for a happy and profitable life.

6. But Love is unconditional, and there is no place in the kingdom of Love for demands and rewards.

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7. A strong and deep affection lives in our own heart for wife or son or parents; yet we go about our normal business without reciting their names all the time.

8. Each of us should try to serve the Param-Atman with that attribute chiefly in which we excel.

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(c) Sometimes we feel the need for love of Param-Atman with no intervening mental argument. This is the path of Bhakti or Union by Devotion - here outlined by the Shankaracharya:-

1. Though your own capacity for love may seem feeble, you should not let your attention turn away from Param-Atman to worry on that account.

2. Rather you should recall that the path of love is that very path on which Param-Atman is pouring his favours and blessing all the time.

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3. Love is not an action but a feeling; moreover Love and True Knowledge are just two names for one and the same thing.

4. This Unity is a natural property of the Self, and it comes to the surface inevitably when the soul concentrates upon it.

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5. Through your beneficial and holy endeavour, let your fulness perceive the fulness of Param-Atman,

6. And let the Yoga of Love, the lover, and the object of love, merge together to form one single identity.

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7. Then the mirage of time and change vanishes, and Param-Atman appears in its place.

8. This summarizes the practice of Bhakti through love.

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