

Two Views of Atlantis – The Rise and Fall of Atlantis and the Mysterious Origins of Human Civilisation

Counter response to John Gordon – Network Review Spring 2011

From: Edi D. Bilimoria, edibil@btinternet.com

Before we let further discussions about Atlantis to sink below the waves let me state that in allowing himself to become emotional about my commentary on Joscelyn Godwin's extremely pertinent critique of the general attitude of (some) theosophists, John Gordon seems, quite uncharacteristically, to have missed the essence of my appraisal, which had nothing to do with his book, which I have not read.

We talk a lot and freely about good science as opposed to bad science. It may now be apposite to introduce the terms 'good theosophy' and 'bad theosophy'. The proponents of good science and good theosophy will both, in their different ways, heed C. S. Lewis's advice to Bede Griffiths: always to argue *towards* the truth and not assume that you know and have the truth to start with – I was reminded of this by one of the guest lecturers at a recent theosophy-science conference in Melbourne. This underscores the difference between a closed mind of conclusions compared to an attitude of ever questing for 'truth wherever it leads,' (the SMN mission statement), or 'no religion higher than truth,' (the motto of The Theosophical Society). Conversely, bad science and bad theosophy seem to adopt an I-know-it-all stance of omniscience and castigate the other side willy-nilly, with few qualifications in, or understanding of, the subject of their criticisms. (It makes sense for scientists to know something about the perennial wisdom before rubbishing it; and for theosophists to be qualified in science before criticising it.) Bad science invariably takes the form of an invincible materialism whereby anything that cannot be explained mechanistically, like telepathy and spirituality, is nonsensical in principle; all hard data and evidence that contradict the paradigm are flawed by definition, so they are selectively filtered out and trashed. In bad theosophy we find an attitude that in any disagreement between science and theosophy, science loses out automatically by default, since Blavatsky's monumental work *The Secret Doctrine* (SD) is arbitrarily taken as the ultimate gold standard, so there is no need for recourse to other scientific or spiritual sources. This is a tendency, particularly amongst theosophists without a scientific background, that I have consistently observed for many decades.

Godwin writes of his admiration for the SD. I myself can count on some 40 years of continuous, unbounded veneration for Blavatsky and her stupendous tomes. But the

essence of Godwin's criticism, reinforced by my commentary, is an absolutely high-time clarion wake up warning against fundamentalism – that of treating the SD in the manner that creationists do with the Bible, to use his terms; a bias that is completely incompatible with the non-dogmatic approach and freedom of thought enshrined in the core ethos of the TS. (Fundamentalism amongst many scientists is not hard to discern, but that is another issue not germane to our discussion.) It must be placed on record that it was this kind of take over attitude that the SD had the ultimate dictate over all matters scientific by a some members of the prestigious Theosophy Research Centre¹ that left the Chairman, Dr. Lester Smith, Fellow of the Royal Society, with no option than to dissolve the Centre in the 1980s and transfer the initiative from England to America, after which the impulse moved to Australia (I have seen the correspondence). Subsequently, top scientists within the TS in England, while maintaining their allegiance to the latter, gravitated towards the SMN, for example, Arthur Ellison, Head of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at City University, Visiting Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, President (twice) of the Society for Psychical Research and Chairman of the Science Group and Editorial Committee of the Theosophical Research Centre.

So if Newton at the end of his long life would liken his achievements to that of a 'boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell, whilst the great Ocean of Truth lay undiscovered before me'; if Einstein could say 'all these fifty years of conscious brooding have brought me no nearer to the answer to the question, 'What are light quanta?''; if modern scientific heavyweights like Richard Feynman and Freeman Dyson would declare words to the effect that 'we truly know next to nothing', then is not a deep humility – equally from scientists and theosophists – the surest means of opening the portal to reach towards the truth? The following example is indelibly imprinted on my memory from a lecture on reincarnation by Peter Leggett, Vice Chancellor of Surrey University, a founding member of the SMN and a great supporter of the TS. He opened with the words: 'I speak from no real knowledge'. He then delivered a scholarly account of his considerable researches and his own convictions. But he never claimed any personal authority based on a book, either scientific or spiritual.

1. This Centre was formed in the 1920s and worked actively for over sixty years. It comprised a group of eminent scientists who were also senior members of The Theosophical Society. They met and performed experiments in order to forge links between science and Theosophy, and investigate whether some of the occult doctrines in Theosophical literature could be supported by modern science. Their declared attitude purported to be in the same *exploratory* spirit as that advocated by the Founders of the modern theosophical movement towards the teachings they promulgated, namely, that the latter should not be taken as authority, but rather investigated with openness, impartiality and without dogma. Topics covered by the Research Centre included occult chemistry, the etheric plane, clairvoyance, psychical research, cosmology, geology, medicine and the nature of consciousness – the latter achieving its acme in *Intelligence Came First* (TPH, Wheaton, 2nd edition, 1990), a book of composite authorship by eminent scientists with Lester Smith, FRS, as editor.

Activating Compassion

From: Florence Meyer: fmfmeyer@gmail.com

'The greatest formal talent is worthless if it does not serve a creativity which is capable of shaping a cosmos'

Einstein

The Conference on Compassion was one of the most inspiring conferences. Compassion – a most emotive word, and it was important to actually hold the world with compassion for a few moments, with the synergy of all of us together, at this critical time for humanity and the planet. We have the facts, and there is immense commitment within SMN, borne out by presentation and articles on global problems, the New Renaissance Conferences and the book recently published, all of which show dedication to honour Gaia. SMN has considerable power. How best can this power be harnessed towards *actually* helping humanity and the planet?

Iain McGilchrist, in his book *The Master and His Emissary* and his contribution at the Conference, outlined left, right, left brain approach. The left presents the problem, the right responds with the higher faculties of Mind – the wholeness of overview, imagination, inspiration, intuition and vision, then the left brain implements it. To stay in the rational mind is inhibiting. Why succumb to limitation at this critical time?

Acknowledging the Power of Intention, could we give some time at the end of meetings to hold the world within us focusing on World Harmony? After all, we are cosmic beings, interconnected with all that exists. Working from a higher dimension opens to meaningful, purposeful action '*capable of shaping the cosmos (world)*'. Can anything justify not using all the faculties at our disposal when there is so much at stake?

Backing off from backing up

From: Clive Hicks, clive@chix.demon.co.uk

My sister-in-law is compiling a family history, and I was urging her to keep backups of everything, to which she responded that in the long run she did not trust electronic backups, and would keep paper copies. She said that as technology evolved, past systems became out of date, so she would not be able read her electronic records. This has already happened for me. My architectural practice, and I, used to use a Mac word processor, but they were forced to change, for intercommunication with other professionals, to Word, and now even Mac computers cannot read the old documents, although programmes are available supposed to be able to read them. (I have an old computer with both

programmes, so I am converting them.) Even Word gets changed, and will probably continue to be changed.

I wonder what the scientific/academic community is doing about this? They also have material they will want to be permanently accessible, not just transiently available for a few years. Doubtless it would also be useful for it to be in the same 'language', not just readable with a special programme.

What about Network files? Have you thought about this issue?

Yes this has prompted some reflection in the Board, especially as we approach our 40th Anniversary in 2013.



Elephants in Amboseli, Kenya

Echo the female herd leader

Observed by Cynthia Moss and team for 40 years



Birth of Ely

He had weak legs due to compression in Utero. **Echo** looked after him until he could walk

