

## **Mystics and Scientists 1999**

### **The Science and Symbolism of the Sun April 9th-11th**

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Like other Mystics and Scientists Conferences, this weekend meeting was notable for the very wide range of aspects of the main theme that were covered. We had a feast of ideas and experiences all the way from the mystical, through the science of cosmology, to the practicalities of our present and future human situation.

DAVID LORIMER opened the first session by showing how the Sun emerged as a symbol of the Centre during the last two and a half millennia. Appollon was not only the ancient Greek god of the sun but also a god of music and geometry. The ancient Greek idea of the Logos was taken further in the first chapter of St John's Gospel, and also interpreted as the Christ as a symbol of the Sun. In the 15th century, the Copernican Revolution began to shift human perception away from the Earth as centre of the universe, and viewed the Sun as the centre of the solar system. Kepler and Galileo developed this approach further. David also brought out the relationship to solar symbolism of the Bulgarian mystical tradition, culminating in the work of the modern mystic Peter Dounov. The later part of the session was a panel discussion, with audience participation, to explore the theme of the conference.

After briefly outlining how ancient Greek cosmology had evolved into the world view of contemporary astronomy and cosmology, BERNARD CARR gave pictures of how the Sun and the galaxies are viewed by scientists today. He then addressed the fundamental theme of how far the physical universe arose by chance and how far it was the product of some great intelligence. He discussed this in relation to various 'weak' and 'strong' versions of the Anthropic Principle that some scientists have introduced to address this issue. He went on to consider life and complexity, and life and consciousness in relation to the universe. This was a broad sweep of ideas, all the way from hard science to the frontiers of mysticism!

The mystical aspects of the solar theme were well explored by JOHN MORIARTY, JANE RIDDER-PATRICK, and RAVI RAVINDRA, speaking from very different, partly complementary, viewpoints. John addressed the shadow side by taking us through an archetypal journey through the 'underworld' into 'Paradise Regained'. This can be viewed in several ways, for example in terms of a journey through our own inner nature - we all live with imperfection - or in terms of contemporary human conflicts of many different kinds. The next stage in human relationships will be to integrate all previous stages. It will be the 'harrowing of hell', but there is a new heroism in the world, brought in by Jesus Christ, that will support us through this stage. Jane began by outlining Robert Assaggioli's map of the human self, which is general, then described the astrological map (birth chart), which applies to the individual. Our birth chart is our drama, where the 'planets' are the actors, with common themes; for example, the Sun represents the personal self and corresponds to the 'element' Fire. Jane then gave some details of the following aspects of the person in relation to the Sun: the physical body, the person's roles, the qualities of Fire, and mythology, including common features of the hero's journey, which represents symbolically the development of consciousness and individuality. In speaking about the mystical significance of the Sun, Ravi discussed the Hindu concept of 'Shiva's dance'. All meditation and all relaxation are really about letting go. What is really essential is Dance. It is important to have the whole spiritual

vision. At any moment in the history of time, a person can come to a deep sense of the mystery of the Sun. The mystical significance of the Sun does not depend on what time we are in, and will require a certain type of dance, into which both love and delight will enter. Between the first and the last two of these mystical presentations, three workshops were held, by these three speakers, in which we explored various mystical aspects experientially.

The sessions on the last morning of the conference brought us sharply back to Earth! Ecologist PETER BUNYARD discussed the interaction between the Sun and the earth as a living planet. He drew attention to the ways in which excessive human impacts on the environment were bringing about increased global warming and other climate changes, together with serious damage to biodiversity and to forests and other ecosystems. Copies of the April 1999 issue of *The Ecologist* on the Climate Crisis were available at the conference; this issue included several articles by Peter. Futurist HAZEL HENDERSON spoke about "The Politics of the Solar Age", which would be required to bring humanity out of its present crises. This new form of politics would be holistic, interact with many aspects of human affairs, and be able to handle different aspects of the global interdependence that is rapidly emerging. The strands of its new thinking would include: new forms of economics and business attempting to provide win-win situations for all and use the planet's resources wisely, the development of alternative, renewable forms of energy including solar energy especially, a post-Cartesian scientific world view which would use a systems approach and draw many ideas from cybernetics and nonlinear mathematics, the setting of global standards, and the development of partnerships for social innovation.

The final session was an Open Forum which began with a meditation and tuning-in on Kosovo; those present sent out a concentrated wave of good will to that troubled province, which now at last seems to be returning to the path of peace. BERNARD CARR made a brief addition to his earlier presentation, to illustrate graphically the different scales of magnitude in the physical universe, and to introduce the four fundamental forces recognised by contemporary physics. ERIC GOLDWIN and PATRICK HUDDIE read some of their short poems. Several stimulating questions from the audience were discussed by our panel of speakers, and several interesting points of discussion were made from the floor. Votes of thanks were given to all those who had helped to make this weekend such a great success.

*Alan Mayne is a freelance author and lecturer. His latest book is From Politics Past to Politics Future*