

“KNOW THYSELF”

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The ruins of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.

Philosophers of all ages, as far back as the Delphian oracle of the Greek mystery schools, have voiced the admonishment: “Know thyself.” One may wonder: What is so profound about these three simple words? I know who I am. Therein lies the fallacy in most people’s thinking and actions throughout the centuries, excluding the immaterial to exult in the material. Not “who I am” but “what I am” is the key to unlocking the mysteries of existence; for, to know “what I am” is to find the greatest inspiration and happiness of which people, in our finite existences, are capable.

Following the superficial interpretation further, one might ask, “Does this mean I should study physiology and anatomy to know myself?” This is the way science has chosen; and after thorough exploration and analysis of the human system, studying in great detail the physical properties of the blood, bones, and tissue, the conclusion is beginning to be reached that what a person is – that is, the unseen essence causing each cell to vibrate with life – cannot be known by objective perception: tasting, feeling,

hearing, seeing, or smelling. Thus knowing only the outer self is not knowing oneself completely; to know the real self and consequently understand the outer self, one must know the Divine, infinite being within. This is the way of the mystic.

To know the inner self is to know the Divine: when the cause of existence is known, the results, or manifestations of existence, are known. She who seeks the cause will simultaneously realize the results of a creation in far greater scope than when she was aware of only the results, the limited finite; for, to know the self within is to know the unlimited infinite. With understanding of the infinite, the limitations of the finite are broadened. Thus the dual nature of being is learned.

How does knowing oneself solve the problems of existence? Mere knowledge is useless if it is not the hinge of action. Knowing oneself is more than possessing knowledge: knowing the inner self is experiencing the Divine, having insight into the Cosmic scheme of existence; knowing what actually exists, and what one

realizes as existing. A view into the Cosmic scheme of the universe is to understand the laws of system and order, of cause and effect – the laws which form the mighty warp upon which the pattern of existence is woven. This warp of existence is perfection, and having once perceived its golden threads, a person is powerfully urged to blend his thoughts and actions, into a sublime design.

In striving to attain perfection, one needs to recognize that which is not perfection, and to discard it. Self-analysis, constantly guided by the infallible directions of the inner being, is the tool to help accomplish the goal of perfection. Thoughts, actions, and emotions which discolor the pure hues in the tapestry of life must be purified and redirected. Habits which retard one's progress in attaining her goal must be disciplined and channeled correctly.

When a person knows his inner self, he recognizes its absolute supremacy and wisely submits the outer self to mastery from within. Limitations imposed by the outer self are dissolved by inner mastery. Material weaknesses diminish as the strength of the Divine within is allowed full expression. In knowing the inner self, one wondrously touches the expanse of the infinity, and realizes at once his own worth and insignificance.

To know oneself is not a selfish aim. The discovery of the inner self reveals that one is an indivisible segment of the whole, and helping others to grow and understand adds to one's own growth. The law of cause and effect is omnipresent. Giving good means an inevitable return of good. The outer self is the vehicle for expressing the inner and manifesting the Divine's laws.



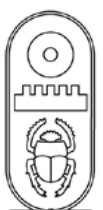
Material knowledge of arts and sciences is valuable, but its use is marred unless brightened by the understanding of the unity of all knowledge which comes from being one with the Divine, the Infinite.

In the self within is found the strength and peace which so many individuals in the world are seeking. She who truly knows herself knows that inner peace is not the inactive, passive state of escape for which it is so often mistaken. She who lives in contact with the Divinity of the inner self sees the whole of things. This realization stirs her to greater actions and to the accomplishment of more good, rather than to appeasing her tendency towards inertia, of living an isolated life useful to none save herself.

The cherished state of freedom will never be wholly possessed by the person who does not know himself. The person who drifts along in the stream of life pushed this way and that by misdirected desires, confused and misunderstood emotions, is a slave to materiality, bound helplessly by inflexible concepts and stunted abilities. To "know thyself" is to lose the fetters of the objective world, and dwell in the mansion of unbounded creation, whose powerful estates of purposefulness and fulfillment have no end.

True Riches

Rich are the rewards for she who knows herself. She lives harmoniously with natural law, sensing wellbeing in mind and body, with free expansion of potentialities and the reaping of their fruitfulness insured. Her inner strength and its attributes of self-confidence and mental peace are reflected in good health and her adherence to carrying out the laws of righteousness is mirrored in her dealing



with others and the good she accomplishes. The strength of harmonious unity with the Divine within is radiated outward from her; and she is able to give of herself, since she has recognized that she has something she must give; something that is not uniquely “hers” but that she is urged to share because of the very affinity of her inner self with the whole.

In coming to know oneself, one lives life to its fullest and realizes life’s greatest joys. The path he must follow is clear to him, and he humbly exults in being the privileged traveler. His personality is of a refined, tensile strength capable of withstanding the severest of trials and appreciating the beauty in all, including those he feels are his persecutors. The radiance and strength of one’s personality is not found in the stature of the body or its muscles. It is found within. Regardless of the physical equipment with which one is endowed, each individual has equally the greatest gift of life, the infinite consciousness within. The difference among people is the varying extent to which that gift is recognized and utilized. A person’s most intense frustrations, his thwarted motivations are caused by his blindness to this simple truth.

As simple as profound truths are, and as simple as the ultimate realization of them is, a person can tenaciously hold on

to her illusions and false values, making life difficult for herself and standing in her own way, preventing her own happiness. True, she can acquire a degree of happiness even though she may be denying and stilling the Divine urges from within, but such happiness is only a vague shadow compared to the pure knowledge of the Divine, the essence of a person’s own being. Knowing oneself is being true to that which creates, sustains, and IS self. To deny one’s real self may be compared to touching in the dark the base of a magnificent pillar, and accepting the base as the entire object, instead of beholding the column radiantly lighted in all of its splendor and towering height, and realizing that the base was formed for its support.

The sincere seeker will always find that he is seeking for his oneness with the Cosmic – the nearest thing to his consciousness; a consciousness which is an expression of that which he seeks. Travel as he will, through the tangled jungles of finite existence, through the morasses of ignorance, disorder, and desperation, ultimately, he will return to himself and reach his destination. The darkness is without; know thyself and the light within will be allowed to shine through. The impulse to delight in giving magnanimously of infinite love comes from within and must not be stifled. He who knows himself finds



the way to give every smile from a heart filled with absolute love, to speak every word from the fount of genuine kindness, to make every act one of thoughtfulness and consideration. To heed the urges of the Divine within is to be the instrument for fashioning the grandest goals and fulfilling the most cherished desires; for, Divinity, when allowed full expression, is a tremendous force of dynamic, creative power immeasurable by humankind's finite faculties.

To know oneself is to have faith in and trust implicitly in the guidance of the Omniscient. All endeavors are destined to fail when success is presumed without a knowledge of the real self inside of a person. What may be their apparent success from the present, limited, material view is nothing more than a tiny ripple on the Cosmic sea of causes; the effect and final outcome can be foreseen only by those whose contemplations turn inward to view the pure image rather than outward to see partial reflections.

In an old legend from the Talmud, it is said that Solomon was so powerful that whenever he spoke and desired anything, everything in the universe sprang to do his bidding. All the forces and powers above



*Detail of King Solomon and the Iron Worker
by Christian Schussele, 1863.*

and around him responded to the word of this wise man. Although this is but a legend, its wonderful underlying truth is obvious. Solomon, by responding to the admonition "Know thyself," had attained knowledge of the real strength, force, and power, which imbued his being – a power which manifested outwardly from the Divine source within.

Aloneness

Only you can fully know yourself. You, alone, can experience and express the real you, the inner self. Others can only point out the way so that you may profit from their experience. Clinging to the enlightenment of another who may be a great leader or avatar is a fragile substitute for your knowing that part within you which is the Divine. No one can evolve or progress for you any more than another can live your life or breathe for you. The elevation of your consciousness to a higher plane of nobler thought and action can be attained by your efforts alone.

But once the above fact is understood, the wisdom of others which will help to show you the way to know yourself must not be scorned. "The lips of the wise are as the doors of a cabinet; no sooner are they opened, but treasures are poured out before thee." Your search for truth will culminate in knowing yourself, and in this search all fragments which hint at the goal must be carefully studied by the intellect for its satisfaction. In this way, your concepts are transmitted to the court of the inner self, where all-knowing justice can appraise and stamp its seal of approval, and the source of infinite wisdom within can integrate the newly acquired knowledge into the whole. To know thyself is to know the ALL.

