

ACQUIRE POWER THROUGH SELF DEVELOPMENT.

It is the natural right of every human being to be happy to escape all the miseries of life. Happiness is the normal condition, as natural as the landscapes and the seasons. It is unnatural to suffer and it is only because of our ignorance that we do suffer. Happiness is the product of wisdom. To attain perfect wisdom, to comprehend fully the purpose of life, to realize completely the relationship of human beings to each other, is to put an end to all suffering, to escape every ill and evil that afflicts us. Perfect wisdom is unshadowed joy.

Why do we suffer in life? Because in the scheme of nature we are being forced forward in evolution and we lack the spiritual illumination that alone can light the way and enable us to move safely among the obstacles that lie before us. Usually we do not even see or suspect the presence of trouble until it suddenly leaps upon us like a concealed tiger. One day our family circle is complete and happy. A week later death has come and gone and joy is replaced with agony. Today we have a friend. Tomorrow he will be an enemy and we do not know why. A little while ago we had wealth and all material luxuries. There was a sudden change and now we have only poverty and misery and yet we seek in vain for a reason why this should be. There was a time when we had health and strength; but they have both departed and no trace of a reason appears. Aside from these greater tragedies of life innumerable things of lesser consequence continually bring to us little miseries and minor heartaches. We most earnestly desire to avoid them but we never see them until they strike us, until in the darkness of our ignorance we blunder upon them. The thing we lack is the spiritual illumination that will enable us to look far and wide, finding the hidden causes of human suffering and revealing the method by which they may be avoided; and if we can but reach illumination the evolutionary journey can be made both comfortably and swiftly. It is as though we must pass through a long, dark room filled with furniture promiscuously scattered about. In the darkness our progress would be slow and painful and our bruises many. But if we could press a button that would turn on the electric light we could then make the same journey quickly and with perfect safety and comfort.

The old method of education was to store the mind with as many facts, or supposed facts, as could be accumulated and to give a certain exterior polish to the personality. The theory was that when a man was born he was a completed human being and that all that could be done for him was to load him up with information that would be used with more or less skill, according to the native ability he happened to be born with. The theosophical idea is that the physical man, and all that constitutes his life in the physical world, is but a very partial expression of the self; that in the ego of each there is practically

unlimited power and wisdom; that these may be brought through into expression in the physical world as the physical body and its invisible counterparts, which together constitute the complex vehicle of the ego's manifestation, are evolved and adapted to the purpose; and that in exact proportion that conscious effort is given to such self-development will spiritual illumination be achieved and wisdom attained. Thus the light that leads to happiness is kindled from within and the evolutionary journey that all are making may be robbed of its suffering.

Why does death bring misery? Chiefly because it separates us from those we love. The only other reason why death brings grief or fear is because we do not understand it and comprehend the part it plays in human evolution. But the moment our ignorance gives way to comprehension such fear vanishes and a serene happiness takes its place.

Why do we have enemies from whose words or acts we suffer? Because in our limited physical consciousness we do not perceive the unity of all life and realize that our wrong thinking and doing must react upon us through other people a situation from which there is no possible escape except through ceasing to think evil and then patiently awaiting the time when the causes we have already generated are fully exhausted. When spiritual illumination comes, and we no longer stumble in the night of ignorance, the last enemy will disappear and we shall make no more forever.

Why do people suffer from poverty and disease? Only because of our blundering ignorance that makes their existence possible for us, and because we do not comprehend their meaning and their lessons, nor know the attitude to assume toward them. Had we but the wisdom to understand why they come to people, why they are necessary factors in their evolution, they would trouble us no longer. When nature's lesson is fully learned these mute teachers will vanish.

And so it is with all forms of suffering we experience. They are at once reactions from our ignorant blunderings and instructors that point out the better way. When we have comprehended the lessons they teach they are no longer necessary and disappear. It is not by the outward acquirement of facts that men become wise and great. It is by developing the soul from within until it illuminates the brain with that flood of light called genius.