

Science of Mind as a Path of Study

by Rev. Arthur W. Chang

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. - Alexander Pope

Knowledge is power. - The Book of Proverbs

Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est, For knowledge itself is power. - The Meditationes Sacrae (1597)

The Science of Mind is a Path of Study. It fosters lifetime learning. Show me a student of the Science of Mind dedicated to study and I will show you a good Science of Mind student.

If you have been around SOM for a while, and have not taken any classes for three years or more, or have never taken them, you should be in our classes to study.

Science of Mind is subject to the same tendency towards fundamentalism that has plagued other spiritual systems before it. This is partly because, sooner or later, many people of a particular system will refuse to go beyond the teachings of the original master, resulting in the movement losing its vitality. "By their fruits you shall know them," says Jesus and the litmus test for knowing if we are part of an outmoded group is to see whether we spend most of our time talking about "the good old days." In the case of the Science of Mind, this is an unhealthy practice that Holmes would not tolerate. Holmes believes in taking truth wherever we find it and making it our own to the extent we understand it. But how did he find that truth in the first place? Holmes studied everything he could and so should we. Truth is not a slogan we repeat as if we are attending a college football rally. Sayings are, at best, our exciting attempts to express our understanding of truth. Sometimes, especially in science, our understanding of truth will change. Faithful to the path of study, or truth, a good SOM approach is to change with the deeper understanding.

An aspect of this was brought out recently when Rod Carter, assistant editor of The Word and editor of The Burning Bush, our online Journal of Process Spirituality, was contacted by a Religious Science International minister. The minister expressed interest in knowing more about Process Science of Mind that both Rod and I promote as part of Founder's contribution to the movement at large. This minister wanted to know more about our new approach to Science of Mind (SOM). He also said that a man in his congregation expressed concern about the philosophy of Thomas Troward, upon which the Science of Mind is partly based. The man felt that Troward's work leaned too heavily on the now archaic Newtonian world view (the world seen as a great machine) which has

been largely replaced by the Einsteinian world view (the world seen more quantumly).

With continuous and intelligent study, revolutions can settle down and give rise to evolutions. Once lit, study is the way to keep the fires of truth burning.

The path of study is as good as the willingness of each person to continue to further his knowledge. Founder's provides a razor's edge approach to this challenge. Our Tuesday morning class of students has continued to study a variety of works ranging from mysticism, to the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, to modern science, mythology, and cosmology, and much more. This offering is unprecedented in our movement. Some of these offerings could be made available at nights if we have sufficient students to make the classes viable.

We also offer the standard SOM courses where students may receive a deeper understanding of the classical SOM that Dr. Holmes taught-especially as it affects spiritual laws that they can use to change their lives. SOM classes are not taught as mere academic exercise, but experientially and transformationally. Profound changes occur in our students when they are taking classes, whether they are new or repeating.

Is a Little Knowledge a Dangerous Thing?

If a little knowledge is dangerous, then, is a lot of knowledge safe? Perhaps before we can answer that question we should examine the context within which a little knowledge is dangerous.

A little knowledge is dangerous when it leads to assumptions that are erroneous. Errors or deficiencies in knowledge will, more frequently than not, lead to errors in judgment and action than if we are more fully informed. This is true both in personal and public affairs.

Excellence of achievement in human life is characterized by knowledge. This is true even for our personal lives. What is achieved is based primarily upon what we know and the spiritual attitude we exude in using our knowledge. Without knowledge we would still be foraging for food as cave dwellers and scattered around the world in small groups. It is knowledge that fuels the up-thrust of human civilization into the vast skies of infinite possibilities.

A little knowledge is also a dangerous thing because, as a species, we are more powerful than we have ever been. Without knowledge and its corollary, wisdom, we will become self-destructive or provocateurs of chaos. Long are we past the milestone of time when we can afford to live in blissful ignorance in a world immensely beautiful and profoundly dangerous. By forever increasing our knowledge-base we are granted a passport to order, in a world teeming with unprecedented mega-problems. These problems may range from toxic wastes,

to weapons of mass destruction, to social upheavals. These are the daily Armageddons warded off by the incense of knowledge. When our personal knowledge is inadequate to cope with our problems, we may plead ignorance and point blame, via law suits, for what we won't take the responsibility to know. After all, we may argue, what can one person do?

Many of us escape into the sand of entertainment, where, like ostriches, we bury our heads. Come Monday morning, we run the freeway gauntlet and head for the office, and to the chain-link fence of relationships we have built up there with the connecting wires of reality television-as if to admit to others that there isn't enough reality in our own lives. After all, for most of us we don't ever read, we just watch when our thumbs get too tired or bored with flipping channels.

In case you have forgotten, I am attempting to answer the question of why a little knowledge is dangerous. The problem is, none of us want to hear that it is, for it puts more responsibility on us than we wish to have. Biblically, it is like having to listen to the Hebrew prophet, Jeremiah, considered to be the Bible's loneliest and saddest figure. Jeremiah reminded people of their responsibility to God when they least wished to hear it.

The attitude people exhibited towards Jeremiah makes us understand clearly, why there was a tradition of killing the bearer of bad news, and further, why today, people who do bring bad news are quick to add, "Don't blame me; I am just the messenger!" So well was this understood in ancient times there is an old Yiddish curse that says, "May you be the only wise man in a world of fools." Even the prophet Elijah was not immune to the backlash of being the bearer of bad news. His prayer to God was, "Enough . . . Now, O Lord, take my life!" (1 Kings 19:4).

Knowledge is Power

When is knowledge Power? Knowledge is power when it is sufficient and used rightly and well for all concerned-people and environment. Knowledge is power when it allows us to see more clearly the spiritual dimensions of our values in respect to the time and place of our lives.

Knowledge is power when it is open-ended, as Dr. Holmes intended it for the Science of Mind which he said is, "open at the top."

Knowledge is the executive dimension of our creative power. Spiritual knowledge is the knowledge of wholeness, holiness because it leaves nothing out. Spiritual knowledge acts out of love and is unity in action. Unity is the successful resolution of contending opposites into complementary ones. Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The Bible also tells us that "God is truth." God is the source of all knowledge, and

knowledge rises up to acts of goodness as power when it is inspired by our greater spiritual impulses.

Knowledge, when it grows our consciousness to greater degrees of wholeness, is faith with intelligence. Since we attract not what we ask for, but who we are, then self-knowledge is the active faith that God is finding an open channel in us for the good we are willing to express. The more we truly know this, the more miraculously we will demonstrate the life that we ought to be living in this wondrous world of ours.

Every year we should devote time and resources to study. If we are not to attempt to cut down the timber of our forest of action with a dull saw, we must take time to sharpen the saw. In the end we will cut much more effectively. Knowledge is that cutting edge we need to make in life. Ask anyone in our classes how the Science of Mind, as the path of study, has changed their lives and before they speak you will see his face light up. And that will tell you all you need to know.

Knowledge is like that. Science of Mind is a Path of Study, so study.