

The Secret Gateway- Introduction

From: *The Secret Gateway: Modern Theosophy and the Ancient Wisdom Tradition*
by Edward Abdill

Have you ever wondered *why*? Why is there so much sorrow and apparent injustice in the world? Why can we not find permanent happiness? Perhaps such questions have caused you to question whether or not life has any meaning. Perhaps, like most, you have decided that such questions can never be answered. Perhaps you are right—but then again, perhaps not.

Scientists have discovered that the objective world is governed by natural law. As a result, we know a great deal about matter and energy. Yet we know very little about the subjective side of our nature. Could it be that our emotions, thoughts, and spiritual nature are also governed by natural law? Current scientific method has been able to measure physical responses to emotion, but it cannot measure our hopes and dreams. It cannot measure consciousness.

There is a timeless tradition that illuminates some of the laws of the subjective nature and also addresses the question of why. It is found in human cultures all over the world from the earliest recorded history to the present. That tradition has been called by various names, such as the ancient wisdom and the perennial philosophy.

In the late nineteenth century, a remarkable woman named Helena Petrovna Blavatsky formulated a modern statement of the ancient wisdom tradition. She called it Theosophy. Blavatsky emphasized that she taught nothing new. Rather, she gathered together much of the wisdom of the past and presented it in modern language.

Here is one summation of Theosophy, adapted from a statement published in each issue of the international journal *The Theosophist*:

Theosophy is not a religion. Rather, it is the body of truths that forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching us to know the Spirit as our self and the mind and body as our servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition. You need not reject your faith in order to become a Theosophist. Rather, you are asked to probe more deeply into your own faith, especially into its mystical traditions, and to try to live an altruistic life.

The ancient wisdom tradition could never be the exclusive property of any organization. To spread its teachings, however, it was necessary to form an organization. Therefore, in 1875 Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, and others formed the Theosophical Society in New York City. At its founding the Society had only one object. It was “to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.” In a very real sense, that is still the only objective of the Theosophical Society, but it is now stated as three “objects” or objectives:

- To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.
- To encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science.
- To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity.

Implementing the second and third objectives is likely to lead to the discovery of natural laws that govern our mind and feelings. Moreover, we may discover that we are all made of the same stuff and that everything we do, think, and feel will affect the whole. We may realize that we are part of a universal brotherhood, and that may change the way we live.

We already know that despite the superficial cultural and genetic differences that divide us, we are remarkably homogeneous—physically, psychologically, intellectually, and spiritually. Biologically, we are a single human gene pool, with only minor local variations. Psychologically, we respond to pleasure and pain in the same way. Intellectually, we have the same curiosity about our place in the universe and the same power to discover truth. Spiritually, we have a common origin and a common destiny.

We are part and parcel of the totality of existence stretching from earth to the farthest reaches of the cosmos in every conceivable dimension. When we realize our integral connection with all other human beings, with all other life forms, with the most distant reaches of space, we will realize that we cannot either harm or help another without harming or helping ourselves. If we know this not only intellectually, but deep within the core of our being, then our whole lives will be transformed. Responding to others with violence will become unthinkable. Our lives will become harmonious, and our lost paradise will be restored.¹

¹ The last two paragraphs are adapted from the pamphlet *Theosophy: What Is It?*, published by the Theosophical Society in America.

While yet in a small minority, there are those in every culture who have realized ultimate unity. They are the saints and holy ones of humanity. They have shown us that such a realization is possible and that it leads to a life of active altruism. In time, and with a deep longing to understand our place in the world, we may become like them. The aspiration of the true Theosophist may be summed up in the following words of Annie Besant, the second international president of the Theosophical Society:

O hidden life, vibrant in every atom.
O hidden light, shining in every creature.
O hidden love, embracing all in oneness,
May all who feel themselves as one with thee
Know they are therefore one with every other.²

To the few, that aspiration is no dream but a reality. To the majority, it may be just a dream, but if so, it is a noble dream worthy of pursuit.

² Modified to remove gender-specific language.