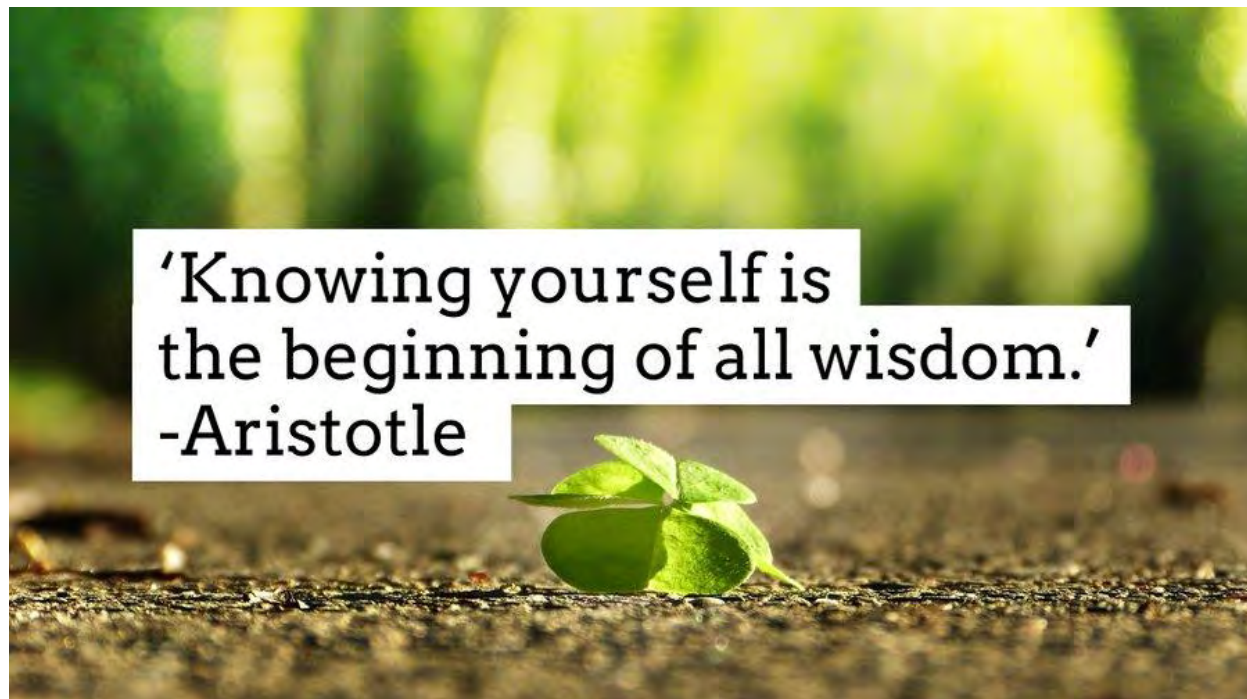


My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 57

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According to Aristotle, "Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." It would seem an easy proposition to achieve, to know one's self. Yet, many go through their lives suppressing the flashes of insight that amount to self-revelation. The discomfort can prove too much and panicked psyches often retreat back into a distracted and anesthetized oblivion. A favorite retreat of these times, maybe of all times going back to the Fall, can be found in the accusations leveled against others. After all, Adam claimed to be a victim of Eve, and Eve a victim of Lucifer. Yes, the Devil made me do it.

The antidote for this kind of escapism is an unrelenting sense of personal responsibility, and no spiritual course in history provided this antidote like MFT, with the possible exception of the Israelites in the Wilderness of Zin. Each day, each week, each month MFT brothers and sisters set their goals and took responsibility for them. Though we often were "victimized," by circumstance, police, negative people, sketchy product, and even our own Team Captains and Commanders, we were not victims. We owned our goals, which we pledged to achieve, and set the spiritual conditions necessary to accomplish them. And always, our efforts occurred within the greater context of the providential moment: Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, Washington Monument, events for which we also felt profound responsibility.

Our days unfolded in all climates. Extreme heat or extreme cold never stood in the way of the mission. We didn't take snow days or escape to the beach in the heat, except to fundraise the boardwalks. We would rise early and work until the last bar closed, and begin fresh the next day after a few hours of sleep. Our fatigue was simply another obstacle to overcome, not an excuse. If thrown out the front door, we would find the back door. If kicked off one light, we moved to another. If arrested in one town, we found another. We owned our goals and had faith that, if we took responsibility, God would work through us.

As we fought through our day, we encountered our limitations, and grew in self-knowledge. We could not escape the experience of extremes, and in those moments, we saw our frailties, the weakness in our characters, the lack of resolve in our spirits.

And in turn, these insights into ourselves, taught us empathy and compassion. Our personal encounters with suffering, opened the way for us to understand our Heavenly Parent, our True Parents, and our brothers and sisters. As we struggled, our hearts were opened to a new way of knowing. Our prayer naturally deepened. Our sense of history became multidimensional as we understood the suffering hearts of those who had preceded us on this path of restoration. From the outside, we were poorly dressed Moonies selling hackneyed product in burned out area. But the inside was radically different. Our work had been freighted with providential meaning, our efforts with restorative effect, and the simple act of selling roses in bars transformed us into God's champions for a New Age. As we converted product into cash for the American Providence, we converted our leaden selves into gold.

Such was the alchemy True Parents performed by allowing us to run the MFT course and inherit the merit of the age. Absolute spiritual genius.