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ARE YOU CONNECTED?

The statement known as The Theosophical World View contains these words: “The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and interdependent whole.” These are potent words and worthy of prolonged meditation. To the extent that we realize this sublime truth, our lives become increasingly grounded in a deeper reality. But any good idea taken to excess becomes problematic. As one of the masters of wisdom once wrote: “Evil is the exaggeration of the good . . .” (Mahatma Letter 88).

Being connected is a big part of today’s popular culture. Communication technology allows people to interact in new and exciting ways that could hardly have been imagined by earlier generations. This is all to the good, but sometimes a good thing taken to excess turns out being not so good after all.

An article from the archives of the *Christian Science Monitor* (August 1, 2007) points to a disturbing and growing phenomenon of the information age. David Shenk, author of *Data Smog*, was quoted as saying that people are suffering from “a nonstop orgy of connectedness that can sometimes crowd out tenderness and meaning.” Modern technology has brought us many marvels for which we can be thankful, yet there is a fine line between *using* technology versus *being used* by technology. If you feel compelled to log on to Facebook or MySpace twenty times a day, you may need to ask yourself if you are connected or just plain distracted.

Obviously, the statement of interconnectedness as expressed in The Theosophical World View is referring to something very different. It is all about establishing deep communion with the divine Source through a sustained program of contemplation and meditation. To be in touch with the outer world is obviously necessary in order to function, but dwelling too much on the peripherals of life weakens our spiritual foundations. It’s a matter of balance. There is a striking passage in the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, which speaks to the current issue of information overload in our society. In that chapter, Lord Krishna is speaking to the warrior Arjuna about “that which ought to be known.” In today’s increasingly plugged-in world, the spiritual aspirant might do well to occasionally stop and reflect on what is really worth knowing.

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