The ritual of the second degree enjoins us to extend our researches into the hidden Mysteries of Nature and Science in pursuance of which we are exhorted to study the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The words 'Research' and 'Hidden' hint us that this is not an easy task. We have therefore to dive deep into the Science of Life to unravel these Mysteries. The Word 'Liberal' refers to those Arts and Sciences which tend to liberate the soul from the thralldom of the flesh. The obvious reference is to Brahmavidya (the Knowledge of the self).

Certain special qualities are required of a research scholar in any branch of study. Likewise the subtle qualities required of a diligent student of nature for probing these are

1. A purified heart - purified of every beneful and malignant passion.
2. A chastened intellect acquired by constant study and reflection; and
3. Faith and a relentless pursuit in the path of Truth the Faith required is the faith in the reality of Divine Wisdom and the capacity to attain it.

The Upanishads declare "God willed that the One shall become many" and they Universe came into being from out of Himself. The Mantra portion of the Vedas contains many expressions of wonderment, joy and ecstasy at the vision of beauty in Nature's exuberance and infinite vastness. Our ancient Rishis in their immortal songs sang the dignity of the Mountains, the majesty of the Sunrise, the beauty of the Moon the grandeur of the Ocean, the orchestrar of the forests, the mission of the rivers, the dynamism of the Lightning and the ferocity of the Storms etc.

All these wondrous phenomena compelled them to accept an imperceptible cognition of an elusive Cosmic Power behind these phenomenal creation and happenings. That Authority, Might or Power belongs to and is The Supreme Reality - The Self.

At the vastness of Nature, the little ego should drop down its well of vanity and false strength and come to stand naked meedly surrendering itself to the influence of The Cosmic Power. Further, only when man understands his own individual insignificance in the context of the Total Universe that true Prayer rises up.

The world outside is indeed a great University in which all of us are free students. Nature (which includes not only the physical world but the entire field of experiences at the level of the intellect) is every day, moment to moment, giving us a variety of chances to learn from innumerable experiences. Man provided with a mind and intellect is the only being who can read and understand this unwritten script of Nature's Language. But most of us even after having gained knowledge from Nature unfortunately do not act up to that gained knowledge due to our egocentric stupidity.

Besides the vastness of Nature and the Cosmic Shakti there is, behind this Universe and interpenetrating it, the creative purpose of God. His action in creation was not blind or haphazard; the G.A.O.T.U. has drawn the Plan or Life on His Trestle Board. Despite the presence of turmoil and apparent tendency to chaos, He intends to evolve what our fraternity aims to establish, namely, a
society of enlightened men, ruled by wisdom, working in harmony for the common good, exalting only those things found to be worthy when tested by the Square, the Level and the Plumb and always advancing the cause of strict loyalty to Truth.

With this purpose, He conducts the world according to fixed laws of right action - a Cosmic Dharma and expects us to conform to those laws based on our nature and station in life. We should therefore see that our character, conduct and action in life are guided by love and friendliness and by the ardent desire of contributing and by the ardent desire of contributing to the stability of society, the maintenance of social and the general welfare and prosperity of all mankind. This spirit of Dharma should be woven into the very pattern of our lives.

To know God in His absolute transcendental form is difficult. But it is easy to approach Him through His relation with Nature which is a projection of His unmanifest to the Manifest state. This method is of course more natural. Towards this method of approach Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna this hidden mystery - "the secret of the art of seeing the unseen (unmanifest) through the seen (manifest)". The Lord gives Arjuna some specific examples in Nature and thus provides him with an acid test in knowing what exactly constitutes the Divine presence in the World He proclaims "whatever thing there is endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have spring from me." While all things are supported by God, things of beauty and splendour reveal Him more than others. Every deed of heroism, every life of sacrifice and every work of genius is a revelation of the Divine. It is of course easy to comprehend the Divine in Rama; but we must be able to dive deeper to perceive the same Divinity in the wicked Ravana. Though manifest differently in Rama and Ravana, it is the same Supreme power present in both.

There are two kinds of sciences - the secular and the spiritual. They are not contradictory to each other but are on the other hand, complementary. The growth of the one without the other is not conducive to the good society.

The achievements of Science and Scientific technology in the various fields have been stupendous within the last quarter of century. But this growth has outmatched the necessary spiritual wisdom and enlightened conscience to use them well. Science places in our hands gifts of its labour but the question of ends not its task. It is for us to judge and apply them to just and proper use guided by the principles of ethics and morality. Atomic energy, for example, can be used for peaceful means like production of electric and motive power. It can also be used to efface the whole human race from this world.

Science however has its own limitations. In truths are relative. It grows from less precise to more precise, less perfect to more perfect and less comprehensive to more comprehensibly things. In other words there is no finally scientific knowledge. It is therefore represented as a never resting and never ending march to an ever receding goal. It is also incapable of grasping the Absolute Truth.

Newton regarded space as a fixed entity but when he could not provide a logical proof, he took shelter in God. To him then space represented the omnipresence of God in Nature. The failure of the human intellect to comprehend mystery beyond was humbly acknowledged by him thus. "I do not know what others think of me but for myself I am like a little child picking a few pebbles here and a few she there on the sea shore while the great Ocean of Truth is spread before me." Einsein too when faced with similar situations in his studies sorted to the theme of God. He was converged more than any other about the cosmic intelligence behind the creative mechanism of Nature. Little wonder that most of the great scientists all the world over are intensely religious in their general outlook on life.

The scientist has little light to throw on what we feel and why we feel elated on hearing the melody of a Subbalakshmi, or looking at the frescoes at Ajanta or reading a Kalidasa or a Shakespeare. There are no scientific instruments to measure the depth of a mother's love for her child or that of the husband for
his beloved. Science can only say how the silkworm produces silk but not why it produces. Where Science ends philosophy begins.

Science has given us much comfort and ease but it has not increased the happiness of mankind. A great scientist once remarked: "We have learnt to fly through air at supersonic speed and travel on land and sea with astounding rapidity but we have not learnt how to live on earth in peace. There is everywhere in the world, trouble, tension and turmoil; the spirit of hatred, jealousy and lust has darkened man's horizon individually and in a collective way. For the resolution of these crises, it is therefore necessary to cultivate the higher or spiritual values of life. For man's integral evolution, his natural progress must keep pace with spiritual principles and standards. Albert Einstein the most eminent scientist of the present century said

Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind." By religion he meant of course the Universal Love and Service to mankind.

To conclude, we must comprehend through spiritual practices the Supreme as the G.A.O. T. U. who controls the many sided actions of Nature and dwells in the heart of every being in it. We have to discover our spiritual unity with God and so with all His creation. As the children of Hindu culture who understand this Divine Principle as the source of all beings in the world, we cannot but respect every other member of our society as we respect ourselves.

We should then be able to understand and appreciate this Spiritual Socialism which is the panacea for the ills of the World. As Aurobindo pertinently puts it "We should achieve a synthesis between Science and Spirituality which and harmonious Society." And what then is the Hidden Mystery of Nature and Science? It is TRUTH.

POWER OF PRAYER

There is eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon will be a victim to the powers of darkness.

The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable....

Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts... Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of a square, and the other angles will be automatically right.

MAHATMA GANDHI