

# HORIZON

**The magazine  
of useful and  
intelligent living**

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**Articles by MANLY PALMER HALL Philosopher**

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● *The obligation to ancient arts of healing*

## A Background For Modern Psychology

MODERN psychology is somewhat in the doldrums. Only when you try to work with it do you realize this. It is brought home to you especially when you begin looking for assistance by psychological technic for some definite problem in suffering.

An ancient metaphysical branch of learning has been entrusted to the keeping of utter materialists. That is what is the matter. They are trying to use it without benefit of the great philosophic background from which the subject was built up.

To Plato and Socrates, psychology was a noble branch of learning. Today, academic materialists would reduce it to a mathematical formula. Its practical assistance has been reduced as the spirit behind psychology has been lost.

Consider treatment after diagnosis. If the problems that afflict individuals can be reduced to a mathematical formula, then comes the equation of the interpretation of these patterns, and the recommendation of a suitable remedy. The problems of people are the problems of life, and life's relationships. Each individual reacts differently to his environment. Each is subject to a different type of life patterns and problems. There is

no such thing as a general formula that will apply appropriately to the problems of all men.

The psychologist has to thoughtfully consider the pattern of his patient, then attempt to put himself in that other person's place, apply then a general knowledge to a particular problem. This requires judgment. Also breadth of thinking, deepness of understanding, broadness of perspective, and most of all, a thoughtful and gentle realization of the mystical factors in human life. With any of these qualities lacking, one of the most promising branches of learning can become sterile in diagnosis and treatment, lose its power to do practical good in a time of practical need.

In a general sense, learning is adapted to the time in which it comes. Frameworks of time and place must be kept in mind. An incident separated from its date or time ceases to be factual. This is something to think through; it gives us a very important key to the extension of values. A famous writer said not long ago that a book without a date is not a document, but an opinion. Only by dating do we achieve the perspective which gives us the relationship of the incident to the circumstances which