

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

3910 Los Feliz Blvd. - Los Angeles, Calif. 90027 - 663-2167

MANLY P. HALL
President - Founder



HENRY L. DRAKE
Vice-President

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THE ESOTERIC SCHOOLS

DEAR FRIENDS:

WE FREQUENTLY receive requests from students who wish to make a direct contact with initiated teachers and their schools. As it is difficult to personally answer all these requests, I am taking this opportunity to shed a little light on this subject. A brief historical survey of the Mystery School systems may prove helpful. In Egypt and Greece the sanctuaries of the sacred sciences were never shrouded by obscurity. The temples and their hierarchies of initiated priests were the custodians of all advanced branches of learning, including the esoteric sciences. They may be likened to the great universities of the modern world, with the important difference that instruction always encompassed extraordinary veneration for Deity and the divine laws which govern human conduct.

Contemporary with the Mystery Schools were philosophical academies, such as those presided over by Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle. Young persons wishing to dedicate their lives to the search for and service of the sublime truths of being first associated themselves with venerated teachers, who communicated to them the deeper aspects of mathematics, astronomy, and music. A disciple of such teachers who wished to advance further in spiritual insight might then ask to be accepted as a candidate for further enlightenment in the sacerdotal colleges. If his academic record was adequate and his moral conduct exemplary, he was accepted as a probationer by one of the temples. The period of probationship was usually from two to ten years, and if he made satisfactory progress he would receive initiation into the Lesser Mysteries.

It should also be mentioned that the initiation ceremony was largely ritualistic. The candidate beheld an elaborate theatrical spectacle, concerned with the deities and their participation in human affairs. It is a mistake to assume that secret information in the form of verbal teachings were given by the Hierophant. The newly initiated brother was expected to meditate upon the rites which he had beheld, and in which he had participated. The key to the symbols

must come from within himself, for in all cases, his own inner consciousness was his preceptor. As a result of this type of training, the spiritual keys to life could never come to the unworthy, nor could they be exposed or degraded. Having become inwardly aware, the initiate could instruct his own disciples-- not on the authority of the temple, but according to the release of the soul powers resident within him.

After the decline of the classical Mystery Schools, special systems of symbolism derived from ancient sources were used to perpetuate the communication of secret knowledge. The alchemists were a good example of this procedure. Most of the strange emblems included in their writings came from antiquity, and could be unlocked only through meditation or contemplation. There are many accounts of alchemical adepts or masters appearing to qualified disciples in their laboratories. The identities of these hermetic sages have never been revealed. They went under many names, and perhaps the most famous of such pseudonyms was the title "Elia's, the Artist." When it is understood that the whole mystery of alchemy was human regeneration and the release of those divine powers latent in every human being, it is not difficult to realize that alchemy was another name for the classical Mystery Schools. Various systems used different symbolical systems. The Dionysian Artificers interpreted the secrets of the inner life through architecture; the Orphics selected music to veil their esoteric instruction; and the Pythagoreans chose mathematics as the most perfect way of describing universal processes.

Another interesting group was the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. Their first manifesto was published in 1614, and while taken literally by most of its readers, it was a veiled representation of the Mystery School system. Inspired by the idea that a universal reformation of mankind was imminent, many thoughtful persons attempted to communicate with the Fraternity. So far as is known, no one ever received an answer. In desperation several would-be joiners published short pamphlets or tracts, hoping that these would come to the attention of Rosicrucian initiates. To add further confusion, a group of apologists arose to defend the Fraternity, and their laudatory remarks brought forth a storm of criticisms and condemnations, through all of which the Brothers of the Rosy Cross maintained a dignified silence. It was not long, however, before imposture set in to exploit the aspirations of the gullible. Certain individuals, some of whom may have had more information than they wished to reveal, pointed out the validity of the hermetic axiom, "when the disciple is ready, the master appears." Alchemical writings support this point of view, and even to the present time it is assumed that the genuine spiritual orders have their own ways of discovering suitable candidates.

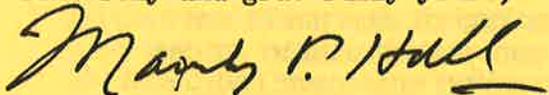
The mystical tradition is not a doctrine that is taught as we might teach biology, jurisprudence, or some other secular system of knowledge. The student does not sit at the feet of an adept who will answer all his questions and share with him the deepest mysteries of life. Each must unfold the latent powers resident in his own soul. He must resolutely and quietly accomplish the transmutation of his own nature. All the legitimate religions of the world are gates leading toward the ennoblement of human character. Such simple guides as the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount refine character and build foundations of integrity. They provide the approved way of probationship. Each

truthseeker must put his own life in order, overcome the common faults which are the impediments to spiritual growth, and free his heart and mind from personal ambitions. Motives become all important factors--even the quest for enlightenment can be an aspect of self-centeredness. Patience and humility are essential to probationship. No one can demand enlightenment--it must be earned through self discipline.

In the Egyptian system there were special rites and ceremonies to mark the transition between childhood and maturity. Only those who passed through these tests successfully could be accepted into full citizenship. Instruction given at this time set forth clearly the obligations of membership in the social structure. The teachings thus imparted were largely moral and ethical but might also include rigid physical disciplines. Because of the religious overtones these ceremonies made a deep and lasting impression and constituted a guide to character which lasted throughout the physical life. Young people with this early training might in later years seek admission into the State Mysteries, fully aware of the responsibilities they would face. They knew that wisdom was not imparted, but experienced. The heart led the mind and moderated all attitudes with compassion and mutual affection. Plato declared that all knowledge was intended to build a foundation under faith, for only deep and sincere believing in Divine Providence and the normal human virtues prepared the truthseeker for internal enlightenment. The passing of ages have not altered or modified the ancient path. We must all advance by growing, and each person must accomplish his own growth. Moderate study may assist, but only to the degree that it leads to the acceptance of the Divine Experience.

It is obvious that among the qualities that each student must develop within himself is discrimination. Normally conscience, which is a soul power, protects us from forming allegiances which are detrimental to personal unfoldment. If, however, our spiritual ambitions are too strong and overwhelm our proper aspirations, we simply fail in a test and must bear the consequences. We can all learn from each other, but each person must interpret what he learns in terms of the needs of his own soul. A simple example may be the case of a doctor whom I know quite well. He frankly admitted that his enlightenment as a physician began after he had graduated from his medical school. He was a sincere and good man who earnestly desired the improvement of his patients and, in the course of time, he developed an extra-sensory awareness far more accurate than laboratory tests. It is much the same with those searching for depth of understanding. If they are faithful in the knowledge that has been given to them and to the needs of those around them, they prepare the proper way for the release of soul powers. The old teaching tells us that the light within ourselves, shining through the lantern of our own hearts reveals our readiness for higher instruction. When the time is right the next level of insight is given to us. Thus searching is actually a process of becoming. If we were alone on a desert island and were worthy, the teacher would be there.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Manly P. Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Manly P. Hall

The following list of books is recommended reading. These books may be ordered from The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on page one). Please add 35¢ for handling. California residents, include sales tax. Note: Prices subject to change without notice.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
Graphic Astrology (Astrological Home Study Course)	Ellen McCaffery	\$ 5.75
Gems & Precious Stones, North America	Geo. F. Kunz (p)	4.50
A Guide to Awareness & Tranquillity	Wm. Samuel	6.95
The Great Pyramid Decoded	E. Raymond Capt (p)	1.50
Galaxies of Life, The Human Aura	Stanley Krippner	6.50
The Great Pyramid, A Miracle in Stone	Joseph A. Seiss (p)	2.50
Gifts of the Lotus, Daily Meditations	Virginia Hanson (p)	1.50
A Guide to Japanese Flower Arrangement	Norman Sparno	4.95
Golden Verses of Pythagoras	Fabre D'Olivet, (p)	3.95
The Gods of Northern Buddhism	Alice Getty	32.50
The Great Pyramid	Tom Valentine (p)	1.50
The Great Seal of the U.S.	Paul Foster Case (p)	2.00
The Great Mantrams of the New-Age	H. Saraydarian (p)	4.95
Golden Zephr	Leslie Kawamura (p)	4.95
The Glory of the Stars	E. Raymond Capt (p)	3.00
Gesture of Balance	Tarthang Tulku (p)	4.95
The Great White Brotherhood, in the Culture, History & Religion of America	Elizabeth Prophet (p)	5.95
Godman	Kirpal Singh (p)	2.00
Guru, Psychotherapist, & Self	Peter Coukoulis (p)	2.95
Games People Play	Eric Berne, M.D. (p)	1.95
Heaven Knows What	Grant Lewi	10.00
Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible, Vol. I	G. Hodson (p)	1.95
" " II	" (p)	2.95
" " III	" (p)	2.75
Hindu Mysticism	Dasgupta	3.00

BOOKS BY MANLY P. HALL

The Guru	\$ 5.50	Most Holy Trinosophia	
Pathways of Philosophy	6.50	(St. Germain)	10.00
Self-Unfoldment	6.50	Words to the Wise	6.50
Way of Heaven	5.00	Collected Writings, Vol. II	6.50

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