

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Manly P. Hall, President and Founder

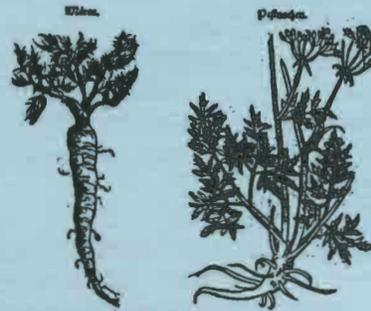
Patricia C. Ervin, Vice President

CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN

June, 1984

WHAT IS A CARROT?

Dear Friends:



Socrates decided nearly twenty-four hundred years ago that a carrot was a word virtually without meaning. It tells nothing whatsoever about the vegetable, its origin, its essential nature, or its ultimate destiny. A person can name every object in the world and know nothing about any one of them or, for that matter, all of them. Year after year, generation after generation, we teach people to identify objects by words and we finally gather these words into dictionaries. These familiar volumes are merely a compendium of usages to identify objects by names mutually agreed upon. Due to this peculiarity, we can get ourselves into all kinds of conflicts which have led on a number of occasions to persecution or bloodshed.

Take the word "God" for example. When it passes over from English into German, it is generally assumed to be the true designation for the Supreme Being. It must never be confused with Allah, Tao, Brahma, Zeus, or Buddha. To many people, the name of the deity in their own language is the true God and all the others are associated with some type of misbelieving. We have always wrangled over words because to give them meaning involves personal conviction not universally accepted. This has led to the concept that to define deity is to defile ultimate divinity.

Probably one of the most troublesome words we have today is philosophy. Pythagoras fashioned the term to mean the love of wisdom. As neither the word "love" nor "wisdom" is beyond debate, we must fall back upon prevailing opinion. To most people, philosophy is an unpleasant word defining intense mental labor and frustrating most of the natural inclinations of average persons. The first way of approaching it probably is a historical survey. We recognize certain intellectuals that have frequently been referred to as philosophers. They are a motley lot, usually deeply involved in arguments and conflicting opinions. Each has a belief which he is striving to press upon those with opposing opinions. There is idealistic philosophy which believes in God; materialistic philosophy which considers deity as an unreasonable hypothesis; there are schools of ancient philosophy which were followed by medieval pedagogy; and modern exponents who may best be described as disappointing.

Philosophy has been so watered down that it is cherished only on an occasional campus, but even there confusion dominates the situation. The person who says, "I believe in philosophy," may have considerable difficulty in defending his position, and the one who denies such a belief does so largely from prejudice. The word "philosophy" has been in use for over twenty-five hundred years, but its meaning changes with each generation rising and falling with the moral and ethical standards of a confused humanity. Due to the moods of the moment, philosophers may be honored, criticized or condemned by a modern peer group which makes a point of rejecting categorically any rational type of mental discipline.

Older generations have held that knowledge is based upon experience, tradition, and contemplation. If these elements are brought together in a compatible arrangement, they should lead to common sense. Each generation should live a little better because the sum of knowledge has been increased. We should all learn something from the mistakes of the past and become aware of the constructive potential of the human being. There can be no growth without thoughtfulness and discrimination. Such mental exercise is too exhausting to be popular in these days when many persons are resolved to avoid any trace of mature cerebration. No philosophy is now the new philosophy, and several schools have arisen to protect the individual from any type of idealism.

To meet this emergency, we are invited to depend entirely upon emotion. Everything depends on how we feel. The time is approaching when all human beings will fall desperately in love with each other. There will be no rules for the game, and action will be governed by instinct and impulse. Of course, it is also assumed that our affections will be noble, unselfish, and enduring. This very resolution brings philosophy back into focus. How must we think, how must we feel, and how must we act to assure the restoration of the Golden Age? If a philosopher comes along who has survived the corruption of the last twenty centuries, it is not likely that he will be generally popular.

To meet this problem, religion emerges, but this is another word which sounds harmless and pleasant, but is really very dangerous and, for the most part, uncomfortable. To love one another without some foundation in morality and ethics is not possible. The moment we think of morality and ethics we are dealing with two of the seven major departments of philosophy. The great teachers of the world have defined practical morality as a code of moral integrity, and ethics as mental morality. Long experience justifies the acceptance of such definitions, but in daily conduct the meanings are adjusted to the policies of time and place.

In the case of philosophy, it should not be assumed that the meaning should be limited to any one system of belief. To reject a school of mental discipline does not mean that man's search for wisdom has been invalidated. The Chinese made much of inflection and we do the same. A tone of voice may be skeptical, cynical, antagonistic, hopeful, or appreciative. Today, the tendency is to assume that sophistication involves extreme skepticism. Most abstract terms are seldom used off the university campus. A clear exchange of ideas and a well informed statement of convictions are rare. There is also a considerable group that likes to assume that serious efforts to understand life are a waste of time. The thinker is an endangered species and, by contemporary standards, is expendable.

Most persons interested in comparative religion, idealistic philosophy, and the arts and cultures of antiquity are valuable assets in the advancement of human civilization. It is most useful in attempting to spread mystical and metaphysical truths. Those most likely to benefit from advanced thinking like to discover that teachers are informed, practical, and exact in the presentation of their instruction. Unless there is a solid foundation under a belief, it will not attract and hold the attention of thoughtful persons. To reject the wisdom of the ancients, to ignore the great systems of thought that have inspired the most virtuous of mortals is a tragic mistake. The attainment of enlightenment is serious business. We need all the assistance possible and we must depend heavily upon the wisdom of the past.

Psychic experiences may have value if we can subject them to the laws of logic and reason. Platitudinous psychic revelations are not sufficient to support the complications of modern existence. We must get back to some kind of fundamentals and restore the dignity of the wisdom of the folk. When we aspire to a nobler destiny, we must first of all build a solid foundation under our dreams. If we just let them float around without proper discipline, we are simply avoiding the very reason for our existence. Names as words cannot save us and we are not learned because we memorize them, but proper terms stand for eternal values and summarize ages of struggle and dedication. Never deny a meaning because you disagree with the name with which it has been burdened.

Have a happy summer vacation!

Most sincerely yours,

Manly P. Hall

MANLY P. HALL

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Carrots.

The tame carrot (*Dolken*) has red, yellow or white roots and is used for food for the human family and for cattle. It contains a large proportion of saccharine matter and attempts have been made to extract sugar from it. Used also in distillation.

The wild carrot (*Pestnachen*) is called birds-nests and blooms yellow. Its seed is rough and resembles a body louse. It has a small, tapering, strong-flavored root, white in color.

Frankfurt/Main, Christian Egenolph's Erben - 1582.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Barnstone, Willis (editor)	Other Bible	(P)	\$14.95
Budge, E. A. Wallis	Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary - Vol. 1	(P)	12.95
Budge, E. A. Wallis	Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary - Vol. 2	(P)	12.95
Campbell, Joseph (editor)	Myths, Dreams & Religion	(P)	6.50
Campbell, Joseph	Way of the Animal Powers	(C)	75.00
Clifford, Terry	Tibetan Buddhist Medicine & Psychiatry	(C)	15.95
Crowell, Thomas	Bulfinch's Mythology	(C)	14.95
Dael	Crystal Book	(P)	8.95
Herner, Russell A.	Stonehenge: An Ancient Masonic Temple	(C)	15.95
Hunt, Roland	Seven Keys to Color Healing	(P)	7.95
Jampolsky, Gerald G.	Teach Only Love	(P)	5.95
Juergensmeyer, Mark	Fighting With Gandhi	(C)	12.95
Kandinsky, Wassily	Point and Line to Plane	(P)	4.50
Krochmal, Arnold & Connie	Field Guide to Medicinal Plants	(P)	7.95
McDermott, Robert (editor)	Essential Steiner	(P)	10.95

All of the above books are available at the Arts of the World Gift Shop at PRS or order by mail by adding 6% of the total cost of the order (\$.75 minimum) for shipping and handling for 4th class book rate. Orders may be shipped by UPS, the fastest way, by adding 10% of the total cost of the order (\$1.50 minimum). California residents, please add appropriate sales tax. All prices subject to change without notice. Checks or money orders should be made payable to:

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