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## MONTHLY LETTER

*Devoted to Spiritual and Philosophical Problems -- by Manly P. Hall*

New York, April 1, 1935.

Dear Friend:

The seventh and last branch of philosophy we have decided to term Theurgy, or Wisdom as Divine Magic. The word Theurgy is of most honorable antiquity and was gradually narrowed from a general sense until, by the Neo-Platonists and Gnostics, it came to have the meaning which we now infer. Theurgy is the "blessed magic" of the Hermetic Egyptians. In our ladder of philosophy, it is the seventh and highest of the rungs that men must climb if they would reach up to truth.

In the old systems of wisdom, intellectual energy manifested through seven philosophical "truths" or, more correctly, six extensions and one central principle from which all the others derive their authority. This is explained in the Sepher Yetzirah in the description of the eternal temple of the ever-living truth. The "directions" are explained in the following manner: There is North, East, South and West, above and below, and in the midst the Immovable Tabernacle of the Ageless One. The first six departments of philosophy correspond to the directions or dimensions of wisdom, and Theurgy,

the consummating part, is the immovable tabernacle, the very axis of rotating intellect.

Thus, Theurgy, or its equivalent, is to be found as the very heart of every great philosophical or mystical system. To the Rosicrucian initiates, Theurgy was the "Silentium Post Clamores" of Michael Maier—the silence which follows after sound—peace after confusion—achievement after effort. To Plato Theurgy was the Unmoved Mover of intellect. To the Oriental mystic it is samadhi or Nirvana which consummates the restlessness of questing. Wherever men have sought for truth they have come to realize that the search ends in a transcendent condition of achievement in suspension, the accomplishment of power which continues as power but ceases to be the cause of lower activity.

Philosophy is a universe in itself. As there is a physical world extending about us in nature, and as nature, so there is an intellectual world extending about us in thought and as thought. As mastery of the physical world brings with it a temporal superiority, so the mastery of the mental world

Men think they work for money or some other momentary need; but they deceive themselves, it being curious to witness how unanimously human beings substitute the shadow for the truth—which truth is, that no other impulse governs us than the necessity of growth. Remember it is not the thing done, but the doing that the gods weigh, and that many have failed to reach their goal who none the less accomplished more than he who, coming to a journey's end, thought that the mere end should justify him.

—Tsiang Samdup.

brings with it a certain intellectual superiority. As physical society consists of numerous strata of diversified merit and unmerit, so the intellectual world has its races, its classes, its castes and its types. As surely as men strive physically for that peace and security which has been the Utopian vision for countless ages, so, in the world of thought, men struggle for intellectual security. Security is sufficiency, and that which is insufficient or inadequate or inconsistent can never enjoy security.

The branches of philosophy are like continents, races, or species in physical nature. They are intellectual environments through which man must evolve mentally as upon earth he evolves physically. As the world is made up of all its races and nations, so the empire of wisdom is made up of all the branches of thinking and knowing. This is the true key to the various obscure references to the "wise man's world" scattered through the writings of initiates and adepts. To the layman whose consciousness is bound closely to the objects of external sense perception, the physical world with its problems seems very real and the world of wisdom remote and indefinite. But as man lives more and more in mind and less and less in matter, the intellectual universe emerges as a magnificent empire and physical concerns in their turn become remote and indefinite.

Wisdom not only brings the human mind gradually up to truth. It also reveals the laws which govern truth, for truth is perfect motion in the universe. By motion we infer what the wise intended by that word—not a running to and fro in confusion but rather a transcendent vibration, a motion within movement, a motion without movement, an indescribable pulsing which supports being.

Through the six directions or branches of philosophy is approached the radiant center of wisdom, therefore these branches correspond to the six conditions of being depicted by the Vhava Chakra of Tibetan Lamaism. According to this system, there are six states of being, and Buddhahood which transcends them all. He who masters the seventh possesses a true knowledge of the other six. But no mind limited by any of the other six can possess a knowledge of the seventh.

It is therefore known to the wise that there is no final satisfaction even in the possession of knowledge, for knowledge is accumulated from the six paths which lead to truth. Thus a man who possesses an accumulation of so-called fact is not necessarily happy. Rather, knowledge depresses the average person unless that knowledge is tinctured and transmuted by a certain understanding and true illumination is achieved. This may be described in terms of alchemy. Within the curious symbolic bottles and vessels of the Hermetic philosophers seven radiations or refinements of base elements must take place before the Wise Man's Stone, or the Ruby Medicine is achieved. The seventh condition of the Medicine or Stone is described as absolutely transcendent. The elements have been transmuted into a pure spiritual substance which contains all power and property within itself. This sublime essence is merely a symbolic term to signify pure consciousness, which possesses the perfect power of transmutation and is the all-sufficient Medicine of the Paracelsian adepts.

In philosophy Theurgy is this Medicine. It is the pure spiritual gold extracted from the baser compounds of arts and sciences. It is absolute wisdom which, like an Hermetic medicine, cures the diseases of the mind, its doubts and inconsistencies. All knowledge, therefore, avails not unless it be quickened and rendered alive and perfect by those ageless mysteries by which, as the Greeks have expressed it, men are lifted upward "through the body of the blessed God" (Nature), and are finally mingled with that Divine Consciousness which sustains the world upon the eternal foundations of wisdom alone.

Throughout this series of letters it has been my special purpose to emphasize the Pythagorean viewpoint that philosophy is not only the science of thinking but the science of perfect living. Man's physical body is a chemical compound and the subtler elements of this compound are profoundly affected by thoughts, attitudes, emotions, impulses and actions. Philosophy as a rate of vibration must be set up in the body and in the soul as well as in the mind.

We seldom associate thought and metabolism,

nor do we realize that body and spirit are bound together by certain inseparable sympathies. As Fludd, the Rosicrucian, has shown in his curious diagrams, form is externalized consciousness, and consciousness is internalized form. Consciousness circulates through its seven bodies as a man might wander through the seven rooms of his house. Although the body is the least of the seven apartments, which the poet has termed the "mansions of the soul," it is nevertheless an integral part of man's complete economy. Philosophy flowing into the body brings to the lower man a sense of physical fitness, even as when flowing into the mind it produces the condition of mental sufficiency.

Theurgy is philosophy as that ever-flowing fountain of wisdom, which, springing up from the deep sources of the soul, waters and renders fertile all parts of the nature. Thus, philosophy is that "ever-flowing good" of the Chaldean Oracles—the fountain of everlasting life referred to in the Gospels. Those who drink of it shall thirst no more.

The term thirst should be interpreted to signify the quest for truth which only wisdom can satisfy. The Theurgist, therefore, is one who is satisfied with wisdom, whose quest has ended in achievement, and whose whole being is radiant with a perfected wisdom.

We may well say that knowledge is gathered from contact with external sources of information but that true wisdom comes only from within. Dr. Rowley, chaplain to Lord Bacon, in describing the profundity of his Lordship's wisdom, explained that his knowledge came not from books, though he read much, but rather from some hidden source deep within himself. Wisdom from within is true wisdom and divine magic.

It is said that in ancient times the gods of Nature willingly revealed themselves to the Theurgists, concealing nothing from these perfected men. When inspiration, intuition, imagination and reason are all trained, directed and united in one sublime faculty, he who possesses this faculty possesses the key to all natural mysteries.

We seek to achieve this high and glorious end according to the laws which have descended to us

from those Hierophants of the old Wisdom Teachings, who are rightfully designated "princes of the Royal Secret." The philosopher seeks not worldly knowledge alone nor skill in worldly arts, but rather he aspires, if humbly now, to that greatest wisdom which "surpasseth understanding."

The Taoists, master metaphysicians of China, have curious collections of symbolic pictures which set forth with a peculiar force the mysteries of the Theurgic art. In a series of such paintings, the first shows a man trying to bridle a great black water-buffalo. In the second picture he is leading the animal by a halter, somewhat against its will. In the third picture, the head of the buffalo has turned white. In the fourth, fifth and sixth scenes the color disappears entirely, leaving the animal pure white. In the seventh scene the white buffalo is shown led by the man across the clouds of heaven. In the eighth picture the buffalo has entirely disappeared, and nothing but the man remains, walking in the sky. The series concludes with a ninth diagram. The man, the sky, stars, and all have disappeared and nothing remains but a large circle on a white field—the circle itself a symbol of eternal Tao.

The symbolism is of course evident to students of the ancient wisdom. The great black animal represents the material nature of man, this material nature including not only the physical body but all the materialistic impulses of the mind and the heart. In other words, the whole animal complex or focus which dominates in the unenlightened man.

Self-control is the first halter by which the animal is brought under the dominion of the true man. Through the disciplines of philosophy the black buffalo gradually turns white, that is body becomes purified or regenerated, beginning with the head, for the mind is the first to perceive the task to be accomplished. The last parts to be redeemed are the chakras at the base of the spine which have control over the appetites and animalistic impulses. When this is finally accomplished, the white buffalo—the purified body—is transported to the Olympian spheres above the clouds. In other words, the body walks with God as described in the translation of Enoch.

Finally the whole body is absorbed into consciousness. The animal disappears entirely and nothing remains but the meditating man, and the sky. Then comes the moment of the supreme Theurgy—the Nirvana of philosophy. The man, the sky, and all disappear, and nothing but absolute Truth remains. The Great Work has been completed.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall

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—INTERESTING NEWS ITEMS—

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While in Paris I made a careful examination of the celebrated Zodiac of Denderah. This famous stone planisphere was originally the ceiling of a small Egyptian temple at Denderah. The stone was for many years at Marseilles and was then brought to the Bibliotheque National. Recently, due to its great size, it was transferred to the hall of Egyptian monoliths at the Louvre. The planisphere of Denderah is the oldest example of a circular zodiac known. It is carved in shallow relief and includes not only the 12 zodiacal constellations but representations of the numerous constellations of the northern and southern hemispheres. According to the Egyptian authorities at the Louvre the Denderah zodiac was cut during the Ptolemaic period. The zodiac is of a brownish red stone about eight and a half feet square and eight to ten inches thick. It is exhibited horizontally on a low platform in the center of the gallery and has been examined and written about by many of the most celebrated authors on occult philosophy in the modern world. We have made arrangements with the authorities at the Louvre to have an exact replica of this zodiac cast from the original for the use of students in America. The transaction will be completed as soon as we have a proper place in which to display it.

The Bibliotheque National of France is one of the most important libraries of the world. The manuscript collection alone comprises over a hundred thousand items, in every language of the ancient and modern world. In addition, the reading room of the manuscript section contains notes and catalogs classifying the contents of nearly all the important museums and libraries of Europe. This reading room is indeed a quaint spot. Due to incomplete indexing, the wealth of material which it contains is much of it comparatively inaccessible. This section of the library is profoundly influenced by the weather. There is no adequate electric lighting and on dull days it is impossible to find books in the stacks. Many of the best galleries and collections in Paris cannot be seen in the winter months. Even the great galleries of the Louvre are in constant twilight on an overcast day.

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Something very interesting is taking place at the British Museum. The authorities of this institution are attempting to purchase the celebrated Codex Sinaiticus from the Russian government. This manuscript, which is the earliest known copy of the Gospels of the New Testament, was written in the fourth century of the Christian era. The Russian government has placed upon it the price of five hundred thousand dollars. The manuscript is on vellum in two-colored Greek characters, written four columns to the page. The work is of folio size, apparently about 12x15 inches to the leaf. The British Government has agreed to put up one-half of the purchase price, under the condition that the public will subscribe the other half. The manuscript is now being exhibited in a small case in the lobby of the museum, and beside it is a box in which those interested may drop their contributions "no matter how small." By this means some ten thousand dollars have already been raised and the fund is constantly increasing. Of importance to students of occultism is the fact that the Codex Sinaiticus contains many passages suppressed from the published Gospels. These passages in many cases greatly alter the significance of the text.

# Some Philosophical Fragments

## Supplement to Students Monthly Letter

### NOTICE

THOSE interested in this work will be glad to know that we recently held a very successful exhibition of rare and curious occult books and manuscripts in the British Empire Building in Rockefeller Center, Radio City, New York City. In connection with this exhibit, which attracted wide interest, we delivered the following talk over radio station WMCA, New York City:

## The Destruction Of The Alexandrian Library

BY MANLY HALL

It is generally acknowledged that the ancient Egyptians possessed an extraordinary knowledge of the arts and sciences. Their earliest Pharaohs were patrons of learning in all its branches. Their priests and philosophers were the most scholarly of men. The architecture of the Egyptians has awed the world for fifty centuries, and their wisdom in chemistry, anatomy, medicine and astronomy was no less amazing.

Under the dynasty of the Ptolemies the city of Alexandria became a mecca for scholars. The studios of all nations congregated there to enjoy unparalleled opportunities for mental self-improvement. Poets, historians, philosophers and dramatists assembled in the city of the Ptolemies largely to consult the vast libraries which had been accumulated by the Pharaohs of this illustrious line.

Knowledge, like a magnet, draws more knowledge to itself, and by the second century, before the

Christian era the city of Alexandria became a veritable metropolis of books. Its libraries are referred to in ancient documents as the glory of the world—the axis of the intellectual universe. In addition to numerous private libraries collected by specialists in various departments of learning, and the secret collections written in the hieratic glyphs of the priests, there were two immense public collections. The largest of these was the BRUCHEIUM which formed a branch of the national Museum of Antiquities, and contained some 490,000 papyri, vellums, tablets and inscriptions, magnificently arranged in the niches and wings of a great rotunda-like gallery. The second and smaller public collection, devoted almost exclusively to obscure forms of knowledge and therefore probably of greater practical value, was contained in the Temple of Serapis, the patron deity of the Ptolemies. This building called the Serapeum housed 42,800 rolls, preserved in fire-proof containers shaped somewhat like buckets with tightly fitted lids. The various private collections brought the total number of priceless literary treasures in Alexandria to a figure exceeding ONE MILLION DOCUMENTS.

It is difficult to compare this ancient collection with any modern library. Many institutions of the present day contain a larger number of books, as for example the British Museum which has over 70 miles of bookshelves. But modern collections are mostly printed books of which there are numerous copies, comparatively inexpensive and easily secured. The Alexandrian collection was made up entirely of hand-written works, for the most part unique copies of the greatest antiquity, each of which today would be worth a king's ransom. There is not enough money in the world to buy the Alexandrian library if it existed today. When we realize

that one fourth-century Greek manuscript, the *Codex Sinaiticus*, is now being purchased by the British Museum for half a million dollars, we get some idea of the values.

The fate of the Alexandrian libraries is one of the greatest tragedies of history. In the first century B. C. Cleopatra contested with her brother for the throne of Egypt. Caesar ordered the burning of the fleet in the harbor of Alexandria. A strong wind rose, the fire reached the docks and spread. Before the conflagration could be checked it destroyed the BRUCHEIUM and the greater part of the city. When Cleopatra entered Alexandria under the favor of Caesar, she ordered herself carried to the ruins of the great library. The old accounts tell that she beheld a veritable mountain of charred manuscripts and rolls, and the Queen of the Sun cursed her ancestors that they had not made adequate provision to protect the library from fire. The burning of the Brucheiium was regarded by the Egyptians as a national disaster and by way of atonement Rome presented to Cleopatra several valuable collections of manuscripts which it had accumulated from conquered peoples. Mark Antony was especially active in the restoration of the Brucheiium.

The great Alexandrian libraries were a second time destroyed by Aurelian about 273 A.D. The Serapeum was completely razed by the Christians in A. D. 389 by the Edict of Theodosius. The colossal statue of the weeping god Serapis, which stood in the midst of the Serapeum, was also demolished at this time. Alexandria never entirely recovered from this third catastrophe. The love of learning lingered on however until the last of the great collections was entirely wiped out by Amru the Saracen in A. D. 640. Thus perished the glory of the world, the sanctuary of the arts and sciences, mother of wisdom.

If we were asked to estimate what humanity has lost through the destruction of the Alexandrian libraries, we need only say that after Alexandria came the Dark Ages—the total eclipse of essential learning. Today a hundred branches of art and science, philosophy and religion are laboring patiently and painfully to restore a body of knowledge which perished at the hands of ignorance and van-

dalism. The lost arts and sciences, the secrets of everlasting pigments, the mystery of malleable glass, the ever-burning lamps, and the transmutation of metals are among the minor losses. The greater tragedy is the loss of the histories of the antediluvian world—the beginnings of civilization—the origin of races, philosophies, religions and sciences—the secrets and accumulated knowledge of the lost Atlantis—and the story of its final destruction, when, according to the Troano Codex of the Mayans, it sank some 10 to 12 thousand years ago, carrying 60,000,000 souls to death in a single night!

Thus the most precious secrets of human origin, to which we have recovered only the faintest clues, vanished away in smoke. Serapis, the sorrowful god, had the literature of a thousand generations for a funeral pyre.

But wisdom did not entirely die with the burning of its shrine. According to Theodas, faithful librarians and priests rescued a few of the most priceless of the manuscripts, hiding them in various places, and secreting a considerable number in underground temples in the Sahara desert. Our great libraries and museums probably include among their various collections some mutilated fragments of this old collection that came to light in various excavations. But the important parts, if preserved, have not yet been rediscovered by the modern world.

There is a curious tradition to the effect that the priests and librarians of the Alexandrian institutions remained a group apart even after the destruction of their buildings. They gradually formed a community of their own and attempted to perpetuate orally and to set down from memory a part at least of the great teaching and literature which they had guarded and served for so many centuries. Thus a certain part of the old knowledge is said to have been perpetuated through the centuries. There has always been a certain type of mind that loves to explore into the mysteries of life and nature. In the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries several groups of scholars appeared who attempted to piece together from tradition the lost learning of the ancients. Through the years darkened by religious and scientific bigotry and superstition, these

research scholars worked secretly to restore what they believed to be the elements of essential knowledge. They did not for the most part commit their findings to printed books, but, even after the invention of printing, they circulated their writings only among small groups of sympathetic thinkers.

Thus, manuscripts may be divided into two general periods. The first period, most generally collected and termed medieval, consists mainly of theological writings, illuminated Books of Hours, Psalmsters and sermons. These books are collected mainly for their artistic merit but seldom for their contents. The second type of manuscripts, with the exception of a few isolated examples, belongs to a much later period and flourished most in the three centuries which succeeded the discovery of printing. These manuscripts are seldom collected, and as far as we have been able to discover, there are no important collections of them in America.

These later manuscripts, written between 1450 and 1800, were not intended primarily as artistic or literary productions. Their artistic merit is of the accidents rather than the intention. These books, rolls, et cetera, are only collected by persons who actually desire to make use of their contents. They are not simply to be owned; they are to be studied and interpreted. Within them is to be found much real knowledge and many facts not generally known to even the scholars of the present day. The majority of these early modern manuscripts derived their inspiration from the classical collections of Alexandria. They attempt to bridge the centuries, to interpret the symbols and fables of the Egyptians and Chaldeans, to rediscover the scientific secrets of the Greeks and to render available to the modern world the profound lore of India and Arabia.

For the past fifteen years it has been my purpose to collect for use in America the curious manuscripts and early printed books produced by these secret groups of 16th to 18th century scholars whose findings and rediscoveries constitute the very foundation of modern science. The library was originally intended for private use but it appears that an ever-increasing number of intelligent men and women are becoming interested in the sources of modern thought. For example modern chemistry arose from the speculations of the medieval alchemists, and this collection contains many fine illumined alchemical manuscripts. The Hermetic wisdom of Alexandria gave rise to the biology and physics of today. The 16th century is the pivot between classical and modern learning, and the curious literary productions of this century are far greater in practical and intrinsic value than the theological Missals of the preceding centuries. It seems indeed a lamentable error of judgment that great modern institutions of learning do not concern themselves more specifically with the examination and restoration of these systems of fundamental learning to which they owe their very existence.

Through the courtesy of the British Empire Building of Rockefeller Center, arrangements have been made for an exhibition of some 200 items from my personal collection of these curious books and manuscripts, many of them unique. In the collection are numerous items not to be found even in such libraries as the British Museum and the Bibliotheque National of Paris. We believe the exhibit will be unique not only for the strange documents with their extraordinary figures and diagrams but also in that it represents a valuable working library of source material which it is my intention to make available to the public.

Manly Hall



Publications

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Dear Friend:

With this month's issue the first year of our Student's Monthly Letter is completed. We are happy that so many people have been interested in keeping in touch with our message through these little monthly talks. It has been a great joy to me to feel that through these letters I have been in closer touch with our friends in all parts of the world.

In this first series we have attempted to outline the first principles of philosophy. Already a great number of re-subscriptions have been mailed to us from those who desire that this monthly message shall continue to come to their homes. Therefore beginning next month we shall start a new series of 12 letters to be devoted to specific applications of the principles of occult philosophy to the spiritual problems which confront all students of the higher wisdom. The first section of each letter will be devoted to a fundamental problem of life in its spiritual aspect. We shall derive these problems from the countless questions that have been asked us during the years of our teaching. The second section of each letter will be devoted in part to specific questions sent in by subscribers to the letters, and in part to interesting sidelights on issues vital to our work, news, items, etc.

The first letter of the new series, beginning May 1st, will be devoted to answering the question of how the student shall contact bona fide sources of occult philosophy and spiritual instruction. We shall attempt to answer the questions: How shall I study, what shall I join, and how shall I know whether the claims of various individuals and organizations are true or false?

We hope that through this new series of letters we can answer many of your pressing questions.

If you will fill in the enclosed form, these letters will continue to come to you each month. We are most grateful for your past support and look forward with sincere pleasure to our continued contact with you.

Very truly yours,

Manly P. Hall