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MONTHLY LETTER

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

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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

INTERESTING NEWS ITEMS

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.

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.