Truth-Seeker's Legend and Legacy Manly P. Hall at 86
Category : December 1987
Published by Anonymous on Dec. 01, 1987

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Manly P. Hall, 86, has been talking and writing for 67 years about things that interest him: Atlantis, astrology, Plato, the Cabala, Siva, tarot, reincarnation, dreams, karma, liberation, Buddha, the arts, the mystical, the magical, the great Masters and more.

He's witnessed most of the twentieth century and could live to see it all. Hall is what you might call a research investigator of the mystic unknown. He also enjoys sharing what he discovers. Although he entered public life in 1920, he is as active today as he ever was. At a lecture in Los Angeles on November 1, this year, he enchanted an audience of 250 with a talk entitled: "Scientific Dilemmas: What's Lurking Out There in Space?" His amiable style, laced with wit and a slight southern drawl, turned a potentially sober subject into a verbal deliberation of insight and humor. Yet, his message was resolute.

"There are six billion people on earth right now. We've got a big problem-waste! We put it in the water; we put into space. Now, there's a limit-and we're just about there...The problem is not that the mystery can't be solved. The problem is that man's faculties are not developed enough to find the solutions."

Hall's fascination is man's yet-unused potential. His strength is his keen, inquisitive mind. And his motivation is his relentless quest to understand. With a seemingly inexhaustible energy he has delved deeply into a wide variety of realms from occultism to philosophy to religion. Now, having seen four generations come and go, he is a veritable reservoir of arcane knowledge.

His inquisitive eye has fallen upon Hinduism more than once. In his beguiling novel, The Guru, he paints a word-picture so penetrating in its impact and genuine in its presentation that readers are led to wonder if it is fiction or reality.

"His snowy white hair hung about his shoulders to his waist," says the character Nadu in The Guru. "On his forehead was the yellow caste mark with the trident of Shiva. Instantly, I recognized him. It was the Lord of Lords, the sublime rishi, Aqurelama, the Master of my beloved Guru. His great soft eyes were looking straight into mine."

Most of Hall's work is not fiction. Paaracelsus, His Mystical & Medical Philosophy; Sages & Seers; Occultism & Philosophy; Dream Symbolism and Man, Grand Symbol of the Mysteries are some examples of the main stream of his work. His forte is research and scholarship, and his innovative skill is exercised in drawing together the insights of others to form unique conclusions of his own. And he does it well. Even his earliest works have not been forgotten. His knowledge is pertinent, dynamically attuned to the present-and the future. Hall seems intuitively tuned to the important topics of the times.

Yet, from this man who has explained many things, we have heard little about Hall himself. He's a mystery-much like what he himself seeks to understand. His name is behind everything that the Philosophical Research Society (PRS), the Los Angeles institute he founded in 1934, says and does, but Manly P. Hall, the man, is not there. His lectures are on-the-spot monologues and his books are uniquely resourceful. Yet, he mutes his own merits, perpetually disclaiming credit while putting others forward.

For instance, when he writes about the psychic nerve system, he quotes Madame Blavatsky (founder of the Theosophical Society): "The sympathetic [nerve] system is played upon by the Tantrikas, who call it Shiva's vina or Kali's vine."

In describing the pineal gland he quotes Rene Descartes (considered the "father of modern philosophy"): "The peculiar place of the soul's residence is the Conarion, or Glandula Pinealis, a certain kernel resembling a pineapple, placed in the midst of the brain. This kernel is the seat of the soul because this part of the brain is single and one only, whereas all other organs of the senses are double."

Elucidating the miracle of sight, he quotes Swami Vivekananda (Hindu spiritual leader and reformer): "Eyes do not see. Take away the brain center which is in the head, the eyes will still be there, the retina complete, and also the picture, and yet

the eyes will not see. So, the eyes are only a secondary instrument."

Another unique feature of Hall's publications is the uncommon collection of graphics he has assembled through the years. To show the proportions of the brain and the head he chose a rare and exquisite pencil sketch from the personal notes of Leonardo Da Vinci. To depict the kundalini he found a flawlessly crafted woodcut (artist unknown) depicting a man encased in the coils of giant snake. To present the mystery of birth he drew from the art of China. A beautiful pen-and-ink rendering by Kano Hogai shows mother and child connected by a silver cord of life.

PRS is a non-profit organization featuring a regular program of lectures and workshops, a research library with rare source material on ancient philosophy and comparative religion and one of the largest bookstores in Los Angeles which includes, in addition to a wide assortment of publications, over 100 books by Hall himself. PRS also owns a gift shop featuring unusual jewelry, gemstones, crystals, cards, incense, oriental prints and works of art, both originals and reproductions.

Hall enjoys a philosopher's philosophy of life. The inscription on the cornerstone of the auditorium at PRS reads, "Dedicated to the truth seekers of all time." He values an "open mind" suffused with a quality he refers to as "non-specialization."

"It is my opinion that the intense specialization which disfigures modern learning has produced too many specialists," asserts Hall. "A specialist is a person who knows more and more about less and less until he knows all about nothing."

Although he favors an expansive approach to learning, he emphasizes non-abstraction and practical application.

"I learned that it was unwise and impractical to assume that the average person reacts favorably to profound scholarly abstractions," Hall claims. "He wants help on the level of his own problems. He may have already learned that the higher intellectualism has brought him very little spiritual consolation."

Hall delves deeply into a detailed understanding of the world's major religions but asserts that it is also important to contemplate life without a commitment to the restrictions of a single set of religious beliefs. PRS is a reflection of his mind on this.

About PRS Hall says: "We feel that there is a pressing need for a nonaligned institution, without creed or dogma, where persons of all beliefs can seek a better understanding of life's plan. We hold friendship with all sincere persons and organizations."

Hall continues to be active in lectures and writing. His most recent book is entitled Wit and Wisdom of the Immortals. The Secret Teachings of all Ages is generally considered to be his most impressive work.

There is moral strength in the wisdom of Hall's message. His advise is sage-like and worthy of note: "In these troubled limes millions of confused individuals are seeking inner guidance. To these we have taught self-discipline, purity of living, and charily to all beings. We have supported this advice by the testimonies of those teachers of the past most widely venerated and honored. This has been my way for nearly sixty years and it must be my way to the end of life."

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