

# Some Philosophical Fragments

## Supplement to Students Monthly Letter

### Dangers of New Thought -- Metaphysics and Psychology

#### THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF SUPERSCIENCE

BY MANLY HALL

THERE are in nature certain forces capable of molding human consciousness into the directions outlined by one who is capable of becoming master of said forces. There are certain methods outlined by the gods themselves, by following which man may learn to govern the expressions of these subtle and invisible forces of the superphysical worlds and make them active in modern world affairs. A person capable of manifesting these energies and making them work for him to any prescribed extent is called a Magician, or more correctly a Magus, or a juggler of natural law. A person who passes through the school outlined by the powers that be, and who gradually comes into these powers is called first an adept, and later an Initiate, who takes his place among those who dedicate their newly acquired powers to the service of humanity.

The Masters work slowly but those who finally acquire after, not weeks but years and ages, of conscientious application and purification, these great forces, can be trusted with them and seldom fail to make the proper use of them. There is only one way of preventing the misuse of power which is the great danger that confronts one who has recently come into a position of authority, and that is, that with the coming of the power itself there must be also born in man a realization of responsibility, and an understanding of nature's plan equal to the power that is his, so that consciously and willingly the soul will dedicate that force to the service of

good. Power brings egotism to the young and responsibility to the old. Nearly all who spend a few years in modern Metaphysics come out broken in mind and body, self-centered egotists, who do not know where they are mentally, have lost all desire to work and wander from one teacher to another searching for knowledge until at last the insane asylum or the state grave-yard claims them. They no longer have the power of thinking for themselves and follow like little puppies every one who has a peculiar opinion.

#### THE FIRST GREAT DANGER—OPINIONS

Opinions are not facts. But the majority of Metaphysicians express them as such and there is no earthly need for such an attitude. All are students together, the teacher and the follower, and when the instructor dogmatically states that this is so and that is not so, or the Bible meant this, and not that, he speaks with authority on a subject about which he has no information save an opinion, which to him may be reasonable but not to anyone else. The great wisdom of the world is not in the hands of super-opinionated persons. Nor does it come by hunches. It has its representatives in the world but they are not gushy persons or rattlebrains but silent dignified teachers whose message is true because they have lived every line of its rules themselves.

The ancient wisdom does not need to be proven, it proves itself upon application. But the endless contradictions which confront the students of metaphysics can never be proven or accepted by thinking individuals. If metaphysics would admit that it is an open forum for opinions and nothing else the public would be protected, but each of the scores of contradicting philosophers that compose it claim to have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but

the truth, proving this claim by trying to teach their own ideas to others who are sincerely seeking, not for ideas but the base rock of common sense upon which to build a permanent structure. Looking over a series of advertisements put out by teachers along this line during the last few years, I am going to correct some of them for you. The first one says:

"Let me show you how to be a success." It sounds good, but an analysis of the party of the first part will show that the individual DID NOT KNOW HIMSELF but had some ideas on the subject. If his ad had been honestly written, it would have read something like this: "I have some ideas about success. I do not know whether they will help you or not, but you have my permission to come and hear me talk about them."

Another one reads something like this: "The Fourth Dimension Found" by John Doe. "Come and hear this remarkable speaker, etc." Here again fancy is passed off for fact. John hasn't the slightest idea what the fourth dimension is but he claims to have had a vision, the source of authenticity of which he knows nothing. His advertisement should read like this: "I BELIEVE that I know what the fourth dimension is. Come and hear me express my OPINION ON THAT INTERESTING SUBJECT."

Two crimes are committed by these thoughtless persons who would be useful servants of the Masters if they were not so self centered. The first is, that they slander the reality and daily disgrace the spiritual truths that they claim to serve. The second is, they prevent the human soul from attaining the truth by leading him astray into the avenues of personal opinions which they are pawning off as facts.

Day after day individuals and organizations come to me, trying to impress me with the value of their ideas and the divine inspirations behind their cults. They express themselves fluently on subjects they know nothing about and then wonder how it is my soul is so clouded that I cannot see the divine wisdom of their soul or the magnificence of their opinion. Their whole scheme is an idea or maybe their interpretation of someone's else idea. They finally decide that I am wrong. Maybe I am, but out of the hundreds of opposing doctrines it is rath-

er delightful to find a wrong one. None of them will admit that they are in error—that is to the public—but if the public were mind readers they might discover something.

WHEN THE TEACHERS DISAGREE, WHAT SHALL THE PUPILS DO? If someone would find an answer to this question, the Metaphysical problem would be solved, and several other occult problems with it. Joseph's coat of many colors must have had something to do with New Thought. But what is the poor student to do when each teacher that comes along is inspired by the same God, or at least claims so, each teaching a different message, each claiming theirs to be better than any of the others, no two agreeing even on fundamentals and each claiming to teach the truth. When he does make a choice, he has nothing to guide him but speculation and some inducement of the most questionable spiritual nature. Is there any wonder that mere men's heads go round and round and that they finally go insane while trying to unravel the mystic maze that claims to lead to heaven but is much more often a blind alley leading into someone's pocket.

The world is filled with these wanderers, who do not know which way to turn. They have taken the only possible course, they have cut away from all these dissenting factions and are stumbling along as best they can. Their lives have been absolutely ruined and they are far worse off than they were in the days when they were still in the orthodox churches. They wander around like lost souls waiting for a God who never existed, save in someone's opinion, to care for them and protect them. And society as a mass must play the part of a God of another man's mind and care for these poor souls who have been robbed of their earthly possessions and individual minds.

(To be continued)

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(Continued from Monthly Letter)

previous letter will be found a more complete exposition of this idea. On at least three occasions Plotinus was "lifted up to union with his God" and in those "blessed moments" the philosopher perceived a measure of truth vastly more satisfying than

*the small knowledge that is our common lot.*

*This will naturally bring up another question. If there is an absolute knowledge in the world, if there is a supreme wisdom locked within the soul of things, what is the intrinsic nature of that knowledge? Is it merely an extension or fullness of our material learning or is it a knowledge entirely apart, distinct from sciences and philosophies?*

*For example, does "cosmic consciousness" infer absolute knowledge of particulars or is it more a realization of the sufficiency of generals? What, in short, is the relation between Universal knowledge and the finite sciences? Would illumination result in the biologist becoming master of every secret of biology? or of the chemist becoming proficient in every mystery of chemistry? Would "cosmic consciousness" bestow technique? Would a man, lifted for a moment into the Universal Reality, be able to play any musical instrument while in that condition if he had never previously practised upon any instrument? How should we interpret the Scriptural promise that if we seek first the kingdom of truth and righteousness, all other things shall be added unto us?*

*This problem is more pertinent than it may at first appear. Many people believe that if they can achieve a mystical extension of consciousness they will become all-knowing and escape from the drudgery of effort.*

*Euclid told the king of Egypt that there was no royal road to learning. Does this statement contradict the Platonic doctrine of an all-wise Divine Self?*

*It has been my experience in meeting people interested in metaphysical subjects to find that "cosmic consciousness" is most usually interpreted as a perfection of knowledge, and that he who possesses it becomes immediately master of all worldly wisdom. Thus we have people searching for "cosmic consciousness" to cure toothaches, lift mortgages, to overcome stuttering, or to gain proficiency in law, medicine, art, literature and music—and even the crafts. We find "cosmic consciousness" also cultivated in the hope that it will remove the sting of suffering and disappointment, so that a person who has lost everything may gain content with nothing*

*—or perhaps the stimulus necessary to retrieve his fortunes. Although thousands of metaphysical students in all parts of the world are striving for "cosmic consciousness," as they please to call it, very few of them have read Plato sufficiently to grasp the significance of the old doctrine.*

*The spirit is not necessarily wise in the things of the body. It is, rather, all-wise in the things which pertain to the spirit. According to the Egyptians, men are lifted up to God through the body of Serapis, and always extensions of consciousness infer the elevation of the individual. He is lifted up to truth. But if a man be lifted up to truth he is not at the same time going to be elevated above the sphere of matter. We cannot accept the idea of "cosmic consciousness" directing the affairs of the material man. We can acknowledge that to an individual, who has been accorded a glimpse of cosmic truth, the concerns of physical existence become comparatively unimportant.*

*Cosmic consciousness did not remove the hemlock cup from Socrates, but it removed the concern over death. Cosmic consciousness did not prevent Pythagoras from being burned to death with his disciples—a martyr to the highest cause of truth. But it conferred upon the great Samian sage a power to transcend all the limitations of the flesh by the magnificence of inward realization. Cosmic consciousness did not prevent Buddha from lying down by the Indian road at last to die, but it enabled this great Arhat to release his conscious soul from the Wheel of the Law. Although Plotinus was consciously united to his God, he died of the infirmities of the flesh as do all men. Cosmic consciousness did not prevent a long and languishing illness but it gave him the fortitude to bear all things and to face eternity with a good hope. Cosmic consciousness did not spare St. Francis of Assisi the sufferings which are the lot of mortal men. The infirmities of his frail and insufficient body gained their victory over the flesh, but the soul of the Seer had found its peace in the universal concord within and beyond.*

*If we acknowledge, then, that all these great, good and noble men, who accomplished the realization of the Great Plan, possessed this "cosmic consciousness" of truth, we must also acknowledge that*

in every case this consciousness was used entirely to enrich the inward spiritual existence and never to profit the outer life. Realization gave strength to bear, courage to endure, but never implied immunity from physical disaster.

Considering the lives and writings of numerous mystics in every civilization, past and present, it becomes evident that the inner wisdom which is possessed by the soul and is derived from the Universal Good should not be regarded as pertaining to human institutions but purely to the concerns of the inner life. The spiritual part of man is of undetermined age. For billions of years the spiritual germ has evolved through incalculable conditions, until at last it has emerged to its present state. Before man extends an infinite horizon; the whole spiritual existence of man must be measured in terms of the Infinite, even as the physical existence is measured in terms of the finite.

It must naturally follow that the divine consciousness of man must be directed to the vast problems of real existence. Cosmic consciousness existed long before the discovery of arts and sciences. These noble institutions which have stood in society for several thousands of years are merely passing incidents in the vast panorama of divine purpose. Whether a man lives or dies is of very little importance. Whether he masters a language, which at most will only be spoken for a few hundred years, is even less important. His community standing is nil from a cosmic standpoint. In fact, nearly everything we are interested in is unimportant except for that passing moment during which it transpires.

How irreconcilable, therefore, are the small purposes of our daily existence and the vast purposes of our spiritual being! Cosmic consciousness infers these vast purposes. In the realm of It, "you" and "I" cease. Our gains and losses are absurdities. The cosmic vista stretches out through a thousand millennia of activity. Any form of knowledge which is satisfying to our present state is convicted of insufficiency, merely because it satisfies.

This does not mean that we should not continue to improve ourselves, but it does distinctly mean that we should recognize ourselves as existing in two distinct conditions of being. The first of

these conditions we shall call our present material state which is terribly important for three-score years and ten, and completely absorbs the attention of the average individual. Our second condition is an immeasurable cosmic existence, extending infinitely throughout time and space. It is very difficult to reconcile these two conditions. The greater can never be brought down to the lower; and the ascent to the greater is rendered difficult by many misunderstandings and illusions.

From the standpoint of Epistemology, we must therefore distinguish between knowledge in its Universal and particular aspects. Universal knowledge is the realization of cosmic identity. It is man's knowledge of the at-one-ment of himself and life. It is real knowledge, transcending statistics and classified data. This universal knowledge is released through the heart, as supreme conviction, under certain circumstances which are called "mystical experiences."

The second form of knowledge is particular and is limited to the matters of this life. It is conditioned and circumscribed. The achievement of it is an arduous experiment in remembering. There can be no absolute physical knowledge because all physical conditions are relative and impermanent; all material things change and are conditioned by circumstance.

The material man, devoted to the quest for knowledge, grasps at the fleeting form of fact, seeking to hold some exactness upon which he can found dogma and doctrine. But facts are ever elusive. The great spiritual facts of life which belong to the sphere of Absolute truth are meaningless and useless to a mind and consciousness unprepared to receive them. Thus, from our small and inadequate point of view, we accept material superstitions as truths and ardently defend our own attitudes. At the same time we reject as superstitions the cosmic truths of life and call men visionary and impractical who seek the inner mysteries of existence.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall