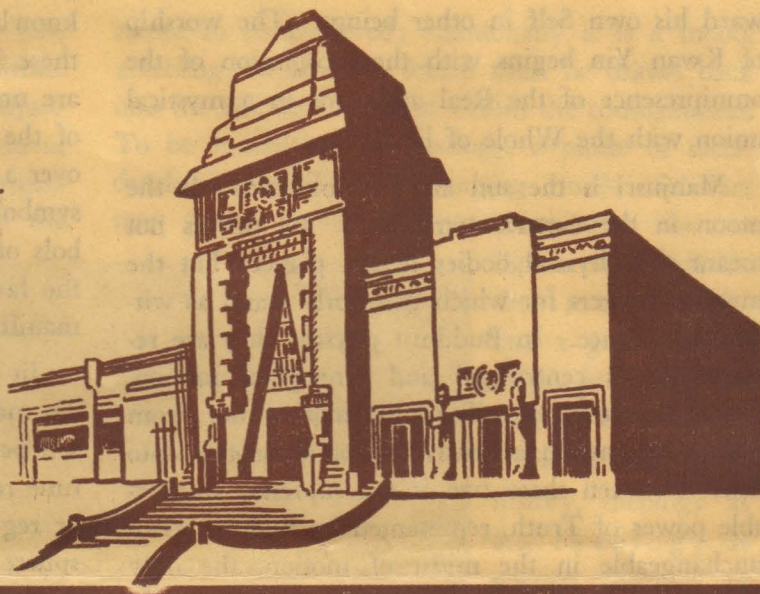


A MONTHLY LETTER

BY MANLY P. HALL



Ninth Letter

DISCIPLINES OF MEDITATION AND REALIZATION

April 1941

Dear Student:

The material personality is composed of the sensory perceptions with their reflexes, the mind, the emotions, the imagination, the generative powers, and the physical body.

The metaphysical personality is an alchemical distillation of these faculties, forces, and members. Through the process of experience or evolution, all of the physical extensions of consciousness are being sublimated into transcendental energies. This is the philosophical explanation of the mystery of the *psyche* or soul.

As the material personality consists of a number of parts coordinated into one functioning unit, so the superphysical personality reflects this same diversity united or bound together by realization in its aspect as understanding.

In the Tibetan symbolism, the figure of the Buddha representing complete realization frequently is depicted as accompanied by two bodhisattvas. This triad symbolizes realization *per se*, and its principal conditions or aspects. The intellectual extension of realization is personified by the bodhi-

sattva Manjusri, and the emotional extension of realization by the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Manjusri usually carries in one hand the flaming sword of detachment, and is accompanied by the peculiar symbol of the intellect, a book supported in the heart of a lotus blossom. Avalokitesvara, the Lord of Compassion, usually is depicted as androgynous and is placed in a devotional posture, sometimes carrying an egg or pomegranate.

Manjusri, realization as mind, ponders the mystery of life. It represents the Self as the seeker, realization moving toward the thing to be realized. This bodhisattva, in the doctrines of Lamaism, is the lord of magic, astrology, oracles, incantations, and charms. It conjures up the worlds, and then with its flaming sword destroys the very phenomenal universe it has engendered.

Avalokitesvara, or Kwan Yin, represents the Self as the thing sought. It is the realization of the identity of the Self and the object of its desire. It is, therefore, the Prince of Compassion, the service of the Self in all else that exists, the performance of right action, the conduct of man to-

ward his own Self in other beings. The worship of Kwan Yin begins with the recognition of the omnipresence of the Real and ends in a mystical union with the Whole of life.

Manjusri is the sun and Avalokitesvara is the moon in the esoteric symbolism. By this is not meant the physical bodies of the planets, but the mystical powers for which these orbs stand as witnesses in Space. In Buddhist physics, they are referred to as centrifugal and centripetal motion. The intellect is centrifugal or motion out from Self. Compassion is centripetal or absorption into Self. Between these two is the supreme, immovable power of Truth, represented by Buddha itself, unchangeable in the midst of motion, the only force known to man in which all motions are held in suspension.

The superphysical personality is represented by this triad of Tibetan divinities. The sublimation of all intellectual impulses perfects the principle of mind, and the sublimation of all emotional impulses perfects the principle of emotion. It is taught, therefore, that the celestial bodhisattvas, the *heavenly Selves*, like the gold and silver of alchemy, are the distillations of their corresponding material impulses. As the tides ebb and flow, so realization moves outward and inward. The outward motion is along channels of thought, and the inward motion is along channels of feeling. This is the soul-breath, the control of which is one of the deepest secrets of yoga.

The student must learn to apply these truths to the problems of his daily living. Needless to say, he can not accomplish all that is implied in a few years, or even in a single lifetime. It is possible, however, through right action and right aspiration to live toward the All. If we remain firm and devoted in our allegiance to Truth, and proceed according to right understanding, our growth will be continuous even though actual progress may appear woefully slow.

The centrifugal motion of the intellect manifests materially as the urge to know. This impulse is fulfilled or satisfied through the accumulation of

knowledge on four levels or planes. In the East, these levels are termed directions or corners, and are under the rulership of the *lokapalas* or kings of the hollow square. Each *lokapala* is the ruler over a sphere of essential learning, and in Oriental symbolical art all are accompanied by proper symbols of their qualities. These kings represent also the laws governing the four planes of intellectual manifestation.

In the universe, each world has its own laws. To master a world or sphere means to adjust oneself perfectly to the law of that sphere, at the same time retaining immovable identity. The four *lokas* or regions of the *lokapalas* are (1) the sacerdotal sphere, (2) the administrative sphere, (3) the economic sphere, and (4) the sphere of trades and crafts. The *sacerdotal sphere* includes religion, science, the arts, languages, the learned professions, literature, magic, and philosophy. The *administrative sphere* pertains to leadership, the struggle for physical establishment in a world of competitive ambitions and all that pertains to the right use of possessions, impulses, emotions, attitudes, and the imaginative power. The *economic sphere* corresponds to the industrial estate of the modern world. It is the world of barter and exchange, of buying and selling; more profoundly, it is perception of the responsibilities of the social order, man's place in a world which can sustain him only if he shares with others in the common responsibilities and opportunities of living. The *sphere of the crafts and trades* is that of physical labor. It involves the problem of production, and includes the agriculturalist, the craftsman, the mechanic, and all who labor with their hands in working the basic elements of material life.

Realization must extend through these four worlds, conquer them through adjustment, and participate in their activities, though never for a moment must man be held prisoner within the walls of the hollow square. Through the four gates guarded by their demon kings, realization must flow freely; the consciousness must be in the worlds but not of them. To lose the sense or realization that the Self is superior to its conditions is

to fall into *Maya* or delusion. The Self is the lord of conditions though it must experience condition and remain unconditioned. To fail in this adjustment is to fall prey to the lokapalas. The moment that man through intellectual error loses perspective, and identifies himself with or assumes the reality of any of the four planes, the worlds become hells, and experience changes into suffering, for suffering is experience without realization.

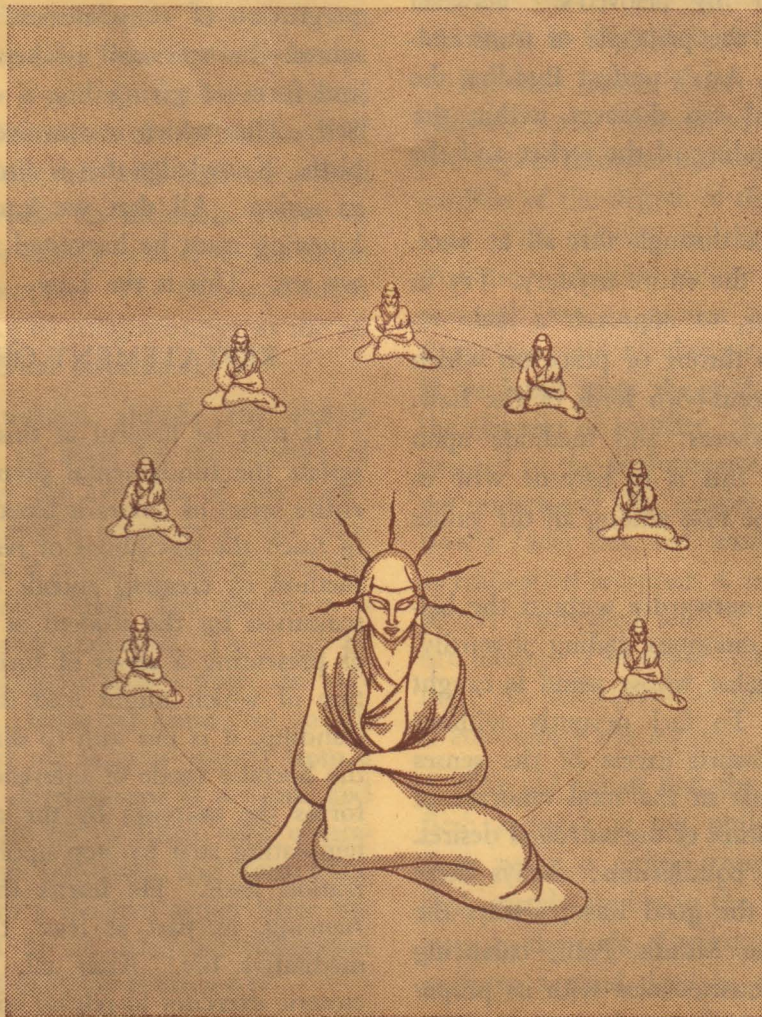
Emotion is part of the centrifugal experience of realization. Through the intellect, man discovers diversity. By discrimination, he recognizes, at least intellectually, the one universal All and the one universal Self which is at the root of diversity. By compassion, which is the transmutation of passion, he draws diversity back again to himself, or, more correctly, he becomes great enough

to enclose or to include diversity in his working realization of unity. Here again

the emotional nature operates through the mystical equivalents of the four *lokas* or worlds. In the Eastern symbolism, the *lokas* or planes have their overtones which are called *talas*. It is usual to define a *loka* as a place and the *tala* as a state or a condition, but these definitions must be understood philosophically. For example, the sacerdotal sphere intellectually is an area of expe-

rience to be mastered; emotionally it is a mood, a feeling, an attitude, which must be drawn back into the Self and included within the consciousness. To be more explicit, theology, a phase of sacerdotalism, may be an absorbing study. Scholars may spend a lifetime pondering over the re-

ligions of the world; they may accumulate a great knowledge concerning the beliefs of men. There is theology as history, theology as art, theology as science, theology as literature, theology as discipline. All of these are considerations within the intellectual grasp, part of the mystery of the mind reaching out to know, yet it is obvious that this is not all of theology. There is theology as devotion, theology as experience, theology as atonement, theology as the inflowing into the Self of spiritual impulses. There is theology as gentleness, kindness, thoughtfulness, veneration, adoration humility.



THE SEVEN PRIMARY LAWS OR MOTIONS OF TAO are emanated as modes of the Transcendental Being. Realization establishes the foundations or polarities of Reality within itself.

All feelings are the polarized shadows of thoughts. Each feeling has its intellectual equivalent; each thought has its emotional overtone. To understand this, to realize it, and to practice it, is called right compassion. It is acceptance into Self of the dominion of the hollow square. It is realization as emotion, and emotion as realization.

Wherever there is a fact, it is an intellectual truth and satisfies the mind; but also it is emotional truth and satisfies the heart. The mind would possess the fact; the heart would be possessed by the fact. In the *Song which is Solomon's*, the mind says; "My beloved is mine." And the heart answers: "I am my beloved's." Between these two sits eternally the principle of transcendent and complete bliss, Asia's perfect Buddha, the power that knows and can discover within the depths of itself the blending of the seeker and the sought-for.

Do not try to think through this all at once. Do not attempt to feel the entire mystery. Try in some measure, however, to approach a little reverently the mysterious throne of peace on which sit together the three lotus-born lords of the Law. See not images but powers; and meditate upon their mystery. To do this is to become wise in those things which come first among all the values of life.

If the intellect fails outwardly without the balancing power of the emotions failing inwardly, the result is the materialist whose mind is caught in the net of Mara. To feel devoutly without thought is to verge toward excess of the senses and passions which ends in the total embrace of Yama, the fantastic creature of uncontrolled desires. Always there must be equilibrium; always there must be realization of the good Law; always the disciple must walk the Middle Path, balancing each extension of the consciousness with its proper *shakti* or consort.

In the religious philosophy of Asia, all of the divinities, with the exception of the Supreme Power, the Absolute itself, are represented as twofold. Each of the masculine divinities has its attendant female energy which is called the *shakti*, or goddess, or consort. This is to remind the disciple that every intellectual impulse must have its equivalent emotional reflex. All that flows out must flow back. All that comes forth must return. All that is learned must be used. All that is believed must be proved. All that is possessed must in time

possess. Everywhere the Law operates through a balanced triad of energies—the Law, its operation, and its reaction.

In the doctrine of realization man first discovers through searching, and then through experiencing, that which he has discovered as an emotional impregnation of consciousness. The ancients represented the spiritual awakening as a quickening and form of giving life, a conception within the Self. That which is conceived must be brought to birth. Knowledge that is discovered must bear fruit in action. All that we know and gain through knowing must be harvested to become that which we are. This is the Law.

RESTATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

It may be helpful at this point to review and restate the fundamental premises upon which this entire series of letters is based. We are attempting to teach the disciplines of realization by the direct method of creating moods or conditions of consciousness for the student as he proceeds. Instead of presenting a series of formulas, the misapplication of which might lead to disastrous misunderstanding, it is our aim to direct the realization by the Socratic mode of inferences. The student performs the exercises by the actual process of contemplating step by step upon the mystery of realization itself. He learns the processes by experiencing, in part at least, the conditions of the meditative life. After all, it is the purpose of esoteric exercises to release consciousness and direct its flow toward Truth.

Most metaphysical schools follow set formulas and attempt to unfold the consciousness of their students by the regular practice of mental exercises. Experience has demonstrated that such procedure is likely to lead to an intellectual acceptance of truths rather than to an actual experiencing of these truths. If a mental acceptance is regarded as sufficient, the disciple already is off of the Path. Man evolves not by memorizing, but by experiencing as inner reality the sacred laws of being. This experiencing is an entirely personal adjustment.

There is no possibility of limiting it by such equations as time, or place, or formula.

Realization is a readjustment of the *whole life* to a new and enlightened understanding of the reason for living. The perfect discipline, therefore, is a continuous flow of understanding, a process of growing by doing, of becoming by being. If you grasp this, you will have the keys to the lesson we are trying to teach. You will find the normal application of these lessons in the adjustments of daily life. We hope that you will find all actions which you perform richer in meaning, deeper in significance, and more closely related to the larger pattern of universal purpose. The true meditation is the continuous living of enlightenment as the result of increasing internal inspiration.

We have recommended already the simple foundation of a time set aside for the practice of experiencing inwardly the beauties of the Law. No other actual discipline is necessary at this time. As realization unfolds, it reveals to the disciple the next step that he should take. The revelation is gradual, gentle, and understandable. There can be no conflict because progress moves upon the current of consciousness. What we know, we do. If, on the other hand, we try to grow merely from a moral sense of duty, development is arduous and difficult, and the inner life is filled with contradictions resulting from inhibition and frustration. To attempt to perform a spiritual action when the will is not sustained by an adequate realization results in discord and internal inharmony.

Many students of esotericism permit the disciplines to become tasks. They perform them from a sense of spiritual responsibility and continuously prod themselves toward virtuous action, while at the same time their impulses are impelling them in a different direction. Take for example a simple virtue such as the control of the temper. Most spiritually minded people realize the need for a placid disposition. When the conditions which arise in the physical environment are trying and irritating, the conscientious disciple attempts to meet the aggravations of the day with the virtue

of self-control; even though the natural impulse is to become irritated, the will restrains any outward display. There is a very human desire to be angry, and then there is a struggle to hold the temper in check. This constant conflict between a high code of ethics and the difficulty of applying that code is detrimental to the nervous system and leads to frustration and neuroses.

For this reason it has seemed inadvisable and philosophically unsound to establish fixed standards and expect disciples to abide by these standards regardless of the degree of their personal understanding. The solution to the problem is essentially Platonic. Human society has established certain material laws to protect man from irrational depredations, and all disciples must obey these laws. If we build from the within outward, we remove the element of conflict. As realization unfolds we proceed to the performance of right action. When we understand life, temper dies within us. Anger slowly fades out, not immediately, but gradually, as realization increases. A right action never is completely performed until it bears witness to the entire nature. *The virtue flows from the understanding. No self-control is necessary because the Self is controlling the action.*

The old axiom that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak is not philosophically sound. The flesh never is either strong or weak. The term flesh merely applies to the impulses which are contrary to the code of spiritual action. We must not perform a good deed in spite of ourselves, or in spite of part of ourselves, but because realization has caused us to be impelled to that good deed because it bears witness to all of ourselves.

This is what the ancients meant by the study of esthetics. The *beautiful* is the proper way of performing the *good*. Realization is the basis of beautiful action. All ulterior motives such as spiritual ambition and the desire to be good have ceased. Then, and then only, is virtue normal. Right action, in turn, reveals the future of itself. Each right action that is performed establishes the foundation for future right action and reveals the di-

rection in which this action should proceed. Thus realization is said to flow. It moves upon and within itself, and is its own impulse. Realize this and you can not fail in the accomplishment of any good thing.

MULTIPLICATION OF THE METAPHYSICAL PERSONALITY

In our Taoist symbolism we have considered the method by which the Transcendental Being has been formed, and also how this being emerges from the material personality during contemplation. Also, we have learned that the Transcendental Being energizes its *chhayas* or shadows so that seven conditions, called by the Buddhists *Dhyana Buddhas*, have been projected from itself. Each of these, in turn, has released its subordinate powers or *genii*, resulting in the establishment of a transcendental, mirror-like overshadowing of the material personality. If we meditate upon this mystery we shall realize that it corresponds exactly with the esoteric systems of cosmogony, preserving the integrity of the great law of analogy.

The disciple now must continue with the mystery of experiencing the multiplications which take place within the structure of the Transcendental Being. Realization unfolds like the body of the lotus. The body swells and expands from within itself; gradually the petals open until the perfect flowering is accomplished—there is one flower with many petals. In the magical doctrines of Shingon Buddhism, each of the petals is ornamented with the proper character and Sanskrit letter representing the power and mode of the Law. The thousand-petaled lotus of esoteric symbolism represents the magnificent diversity which bears witness to the absolute unity of life. All living creatures are like petals on the great flower of the Law. The golden heart of the lotus, the pure Law itself, is inconceivable and unapproachable by mortal consciousness. Yet as the life of the flower is revealed through the symbol of its blossom, so the perfection of the Law is made knowable through its radiant extensions which permeate all time and space.

As realization increases within the disciple, his consciousness unfolds like the sacred flower; innumerable petals open and realization must contemplate all of these extensions and yet preserve in the midst of them its own steadfastness. Placed in the thronelike heart of the lotus, the meditating Buddha is "seated" in the midst of its own powers. When this state has been achieved, the disciple has become an arhat.

This, then, is a problem in the realization of right administration. It has been written that when a man is faithful in small things, he shall be given dominion over greater things. As we put our smaller lives in order, a greater life unfolds to challenge us. When we have realized a few of the aspects of Reality, we become aware of more numerous aspects. Realization must rise to meet the challenge of the unknown. Therefore, realization eternally must increase. Everything that we learn reveals more to be learned. Every virtue practiced reveals more virtues to be attained. Every truth comprehended becomes the starting point for the apprehension of greater truths.

How foolish, then, are those little mortals who believe that they can possess all knowledge by some magical formula. As Sir Edwin Arnold has so beautifully written: "As veil upon veil we lift, we find veil upon veil behind." Each new problem to be realized releases a new principle of realization within ourselves. The Transcendental Being, for this reason, is represented as emanating innumerable specialized energies, each of which is appropriate to the realization of one of the extensions of universal Law. These specialized personalities are variously symbolized among the religions of the world.

In Buddhism they are the *lohans*, the five hundred singing priests who went forth to chant the Law. The lohans traveled to all parts of the world to carry the doctrine, that is realization, to all the creatures that abide in the directions of space.

The disciple must realize as an inward experience the emanation of the lohans. From the Transcendental Being emerges the procession of

the singing arhats. Visualize, if you can, this mystery taking place within yourself. Conjure up the form of the Transcendental Being. Realize it as polarized above your earth, as the sacred city of Shamballah floating in Space above the northern pole of the earth. Visualize the Transcendental Being seated in meditation and holding the golden pagoda of the heart in its hand. This is a little temple held in the lap of the meditating figure. As you watch with the eye of consciousness, the door of the pagoda opens, and the Transcendental Being by the operation of will and yoga is releasing its arhats. From the open gateway of the golden shrine descends the sacred procession of the singing lohans. Each is depicted in the simple yellow robe of the monk. Slowly the procession moves down the temple steps, and each lohan, in turn, steps off into the air with hands clasped in prayer, floating away like some saffron colored bird, each in a different direction, chanting the Law, until finally the five hundred have gone forth. In the silence of meditation, the chanting sounds ever more distant as the sweet singers journey out to the far places of the world of thought and Truth.

From that time on, the disciple ever is aware that the singing priests are bearing witness to the Law. Whenever he becomes truly silent, the disciple can hear their song, distant like an echo, but always floating on the inner air of the Self. As his realization increases, the disciple can at will unite his consciousness with each of the lohans. They are the centers of himself in Space. As he can send conscious impulses along the nerves of the body, so he can send conscious impulses along the invisible nerves of his soul. Wherever one of the lohans builds his hermitage, there the disciple can experience the Law.

But this is not the end. As time goes on, the student's realization increases until he can experience and realize with all of the lohans at one time. So perfectly does his realization flow that there no longer is any separateness in it. From the one Transcendental Being the many have gone

forth. Through realization, all the many are established again in the One. Thus it is that man has a thousand eyes, the eye of realization within himself. He has five hundred voices—all the lohans are singing his song and he is singing their song. Gradually through realization we achieve union with the song that all life is singing.

In Eastern symbology there are many tales of the adventures of the lohans. They tell of saints that walk upon the waters, and of saints that fly through the air; there are lohans who have learned the language of the trees, and others that have preached their sermons to the birds. Some of the lohans live among the beauties of the forest, and others have built their huts on the sides of rocky hills. Some have preached to the stones so that the stones have lived; and others have gone into the market place to bring the Law to the shopkeeper and the merchant. A few have entered into the presence of kings and have become the councilors of princes. Thus is symbolized the fact that all experience and all life is revealed through realization. Wherever the lohan goes, he teaches. Wherever realization flows, it reveals. This is a mystery of the Law.

An Eastern sage once told his disciple that if he could become still enough, gentle enough, and wise enough, he could hear the chanting of the Law everywhere. As the disciple did not seem to understand, his old master held up his hand and in a few seconds a little bird flew out of the forest and perched on the arhat's finger. As it sat and sang, the master asked: "Do you hear the song?"

The disciple answered: "Yes, I am aware of an exquisite melody."

"Be more silent and listen more intently," commented the master.

The disciple became still and sought to unite his consciousness with the consciousness of the bird. After a little while the master asked: "What do you hear now?"

The disciple replied: "I hear a little fluttering noise, very faint and rhythmic."

REALIZATION

The arhat nodded approval: "You have reached that degree of silence in which you are hearing the beating of the little bird's heart. Now listen even more closely."

The disciple remained silent again until the master asked: "What do you hear now?"

The disciple turned a radiant face to his teacher. "Master, I have heard a miracle."

The arhat replied: "Explain it to me."

"I can not explain it," answered the disciple. "All I know is that as my realization became one with the heart of the bird, the sound of the beats changed into a song, so subtle, so gentle that even the ears of realization scarcely could hear it. But as I listened with my soul and heart, the sound became more and more clear until, at last, the words were distinct."

"What were the words?" asked the master.

"They were the words of our most holy order," replied the disciple, "that the heart of the little bird was singing. *I take my refuge in the Law.*"

This, then, is the realization. The heart of all that lives is singing the Law. We may hear it in the rustle of trees, in the ripple of water. It rises as a chant from the confused sounds of the market place and it floats in the silence over desert and mountain. It is the voice of the singing lohans, the realizations that have taken up their abode in the consciousness of all living things.

To our mortal perceptions there are wars, hates, and crimes; there is self-consciousness, greed, avarice, and ambition. But if realization takes us deeper into life, further into the heart of things, we find beneath all that lives and within all that loves, that the rhythmic beat of the song is there. If we have the consciousness to understand the realization, to unite our lives with other lives, we shall hear the song in the heart of all existing creatures everywhere in Space. And they all sing the same song.

I take my refuge in the Law.

Sincerely Yours,

Manly P. Hall