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The Phoenix  
Press



Los Angeles  
Calif.

## MONTHLY LETTER

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

Jan. 1st 1935.

Dear Friend:

**D**URING the last few years a great wave of mysticism has swept over the world. The heart of mankind is hungry for greater knowledge, the soul yearning for fuller understanding, has sought to tear away the veil which forever drapes the figure of Wisdom. Man has sought to learn those mystic truths so long lost to the world, and in his study and search he has found that there are strange and mysterious beings known to the world as Initiates. Among the ancient works and the mystery schools of those peoples now dead, strange ceremonies called initiations were given in some mysterious way and the popular mind has come to believe that there is a mystic rite, an initiative ceremonial, which makes man one with the immortals, and in the name of this wonderful and mystic concept terrible crimes have been committed against the spiritual and occult teachings. There is probably no word in the English language that has been so abused, so misused, so often used and so little understood, as the word "Initiation." Every dream, every phantom form, every unusual happening, has been called the initiation and all over the world temples have sprung up in the name of the Mystery Schools to initiate candidates into the Wisdom teachings, some of them without cost but in the majority of cases

a heavy fee accompanies the initiation in which for, say, \$25.00 the candidate is dubbed "Sir Somebody" or made a leading luminary in some mystic shrine.

The result of this perversion is that the sacredness, the beauty, and the true realization of the meaning of initiation has been lost to the world, for it is very true that there are none who can so damage a religion or an idea as those who claim to be its followers. How long it will take the world to learn that initiations are not ceremonials it is difficult to say, but sometime each individual must realize that swinging robes and incense burners and other trimmings do not constitute initiation, and that no one on the face of the earth could buy it for the fortune of Croesus nor in any way receive it until he himself by his life has become worthy of its mystic blessing.

There are few in this world who know what real initiation is, and there are fewer still who having discovered it really want to so live that this mystic rite may be unfolded within their souls. The true initiate is a very wondrous and mysterious being and any words that we can say concerning such a one are very poor, indeed. Those who have not already walked the path can have but a feeble idea of what an initiate really is, for such a one has unfolded within himself or herself, as the case may

To him who truly seeks the Middle Way, the Middle Way will open. One step forward is enough.

———Tsiang Samdup.



be, certain principles of which the average layman knows nothing. The powers of life and death, the powers of destruction and construction, the mystic principles of integration and disintegration, all these are in the hands of the Great Ones of God. The knowledge of life is the mystic power of the Initiate, for only those who have walked the ways of many can ever know what the laurels of initiation mean. Only when his heart is filled with love for humanity and with the great suffering and great peace of those who know, can he so express the powers within himself that he is of use in so great a plan.

The Initiate has the mindless mind of spirit which thinks only the thoughts of life, to the source of which he each day draws nearer; he is filled with the understanding of nature's plan for her children and only this knowledge holds in check a heart that would otherwise break with sorrow. He knows that strange, sweet melancholy, that mystic feeling few have ever realized, such as must have filled the soul of Jesus as He wept over Jerusalem. The true initiate is initiated by God and not by man and he will give his life, his soul, his very being, to lift suffering in the name of the Father.

It is only those who have a heart great enough to enfold all creation, a consciousness as great and broad as life itself, who are even on the road to initiation, those whose very being is a mirror of the Divine, whose every thought is to save, whose every power is expanded to raise, whose every action is a blessing, who reach out with hands ever stronger to aid suffering humanity. Those and those alone know the true meaning of initiation. Those whose eyes have never seen suffering, those whose hearts have never been broken, those who are tied by earthly ambitions, can never receive that celestial influx of life which comes to those who have prepared their vehicles in the way of the law and the great love.

The Initiate is slowly reaching out into the Great Unknown, lighting each corner of chaos with his own glory, bathing all life in the warmth of his own soul, limited only by his own unfoldment. On through the ages he is dispelling ignorance and darkness by the ever broadening sphere of his own light. It is those who have dedicated their lives

and being to feed the flame of the Eternal One that its light may shine more brightly whom we call the Initiates and, oh, how few they are! How few have given up the kingdoms of the earth! How few are ready to give up earthly desires to walk the path that leads to Divinity, holding out the little alms-dish of the Buddha for the words of wisdom and love that are given to those who seek for help that they in turn may serve. To those who seek it in any other way than this, initiation is only a terrible demon. The student may gain growth, the wisdom or so-called power of the Adept may come to him, but still if selfishness is his motive he is cursed to suffer and to go without the things of this world as well as the other, for he is cursed with knowledge, and knowledge brings with it a weight that few shoulders are strong enough to bear.

It is only when that mystic thing comes, the strange, spiritual power of initiation, that to man is given the strength to carry knowledge in the way of light. There are only a few who are ready to take up the cross and follow in the footsteps of those who have consecrated their lives to their fellowmen. There are only a few with strength enough to see the veil of the future lifted and remain sane. There are few who could see the veil of their own destiny raised and still have strength enough to walk the way, and even to those who can stand this great light there comes the still greater test of standing alone in the high places of the world without even the staff of comradeship, for the initiate is ever alone but when truly ordained of the spirit is never lonely.

For with this knowledge that no tongue can speak, no coin of man can buy, there comes something else, a still whisper, the word of eternal life that passes eternally through the soul of the saved. While the Initiate sees the bleeding hearts of his fellowman and the breaking and tearing of living things, he still sees the eternal justice of all things, to him there comes the realization that all is working for good. He sees the divine hand working through the apparent chaos of things and that behind the human discord there is the divine reason.

Can we face this Great Unknown as the Great Ones have faced it? Can we pass through with the glorious vision of Nirvana forever before us? If we can we are on the path upward that leads to



*the feet of the Great Ones who look down on man with never-changing eyes of love. Very few are there in the world today who are ready to make the great renunciation which the world knows as initiation.*

*There comes a time to every soul when there is a parting of the ways, and there are few who will take the stony path, give up the kingdoms of earth, and ascend the rocky crags to the feet of the Liberator. Those who take that path are the true essence of the life we live. Eventually, all will take the path as the light dawns upon them.*

*If we would take that silent way we must renounce the selfishness of materiality and slowly and painfully meet bravely the buffets of the world and go on and on in the endless paths that leads into the Unknown. It is those who have done this, sacrificing all without a murmur, whom we know as the Initiates, and we owe them respect and love for they are in truth our Elder Brothers who have gone a little ways before, that they may come back and show us the path to tread.*

*A time comes when each soul after having passed the first degrees of initiation receives the greatest test of all. It is when he reaches the veil that divides him from the world. Nirvana with all its blessings shines before him while those wandering in the wilderness cry out for help from the darkness below. He stands at the parting of the ways—which path will he choose? The path of initiation is forever the path of sacrifice. No glory, no power, just a selfless willingness to serve the highest. In the robes of the mendicant the Initiate returns to wander the earth and serve others. While they are apparently imperfect and torn and slandered by the world, yet the hosts of heaven look down and bless them. Those who give up all, even the paradise well earned and the rest that is theirs and come back to walk in the muck and mire,—they are the Initiates. It is at that moment the Star of Bethlehem shines out to tell that another Son of God is born among men.*

*There are many on earth who have made this great renunciation. They have given up peace to walk the streets in rags, to be laughed at and ridiculed, to teach the few who would listen. They have gained great knowledge and great intellect but*

*still they live and speak of simple things. We only see them occasionally and we say that these great ones have been blessed but we do not know the price that they have paid, how they have bathed their souls in tears, how they have been garbed only in their own blood and crucified by their own disciples. This is the price of initiation and it is through these things great souls are born.*

*We have grown to think that there is only one Son of God but we are all his children, and when one really takes the path that leads to Light, the voice of the Father speaks spiritually within his soul, saying, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It is only then that the candidate climbs the steps that lead to immortality.*

*It is sad to think how few who seek the powers of the masters are willing to pay for them with love and thought. With a few paltry dollars and a few fine robes they honestly believe they can receive that for which Gods have died, which great souls have been crucified to attain and martyrs met their death in the arena. It is a pitiful thing, man's concept of the road to God. "It is sharper than a serpent's tooth to have a thankless child," and how many of them the gods have today!*

*What is the path that leads to the Initiates? It is the lifting of consciousness through this strange drama which we call life. Along the great road all beings are plodding slowly, old and young alike, all walking the same path, the road that leads to the feet of the Masters. There are many shrines along the way, many religions, many creeds, many little chapels where the seeker stops to pray and the weary to rest. But ever onward all must go until they reach the temple on the top of the lofty crags. In daily life we have our tests; the thought comes to our mind that we hate someone, but what have we to hate? Then thoughts of fear haunt us and sorrow bows us down. Then through the ages comes the realization that all things lead to good. Slowly we gain the great compassion, the great balance, the heart that is free of pain and pleasure. We have the vision of the great Truth and seek to enfold all living things within the cape of our love. When thoughts like these come to the student, he is learning. It is that feeling of glory that brings with it the touch of pain. Everything we do carries*



with it a great responsibility. Those who wish to wear the robe of the Initiate must be willing to wear it over a broken heart.

With many people their greatest desire is to escape responsibility or to gain the glory of a great reward but so long as these thoughts fill the soul initiation is impossible. Until the aspirant is living the ritual he can never learn its mystery; until he can see in his own spiritual being the dying Christ on the cross he can never truly learn of initiation. It is bought with the gold of spirit and service. When he has so lived as to be worthy of it, then comes the Light. In the darkness of his own closet, far from his brother man, in the silence of his own soul the great mystery unfolds.

Thousands of figures gather round him and the Grand Master is there in his robe of Blue and Gold, the teachers of the ages gather round him; he is in the great hall of his own body through which he must pass to enter the inner room. There alone he passes through things no mortal tongue can speak; there he sees the reason for his being; the things that he must do; the greater works he is privileged to accomplish. And having learned much, his new responsibility is likewise great; having seen the work to be done he can no longer rest but must wander the world like a lost soul to labor in the endless cause. He lives for one brief moment with those things which are eternal and having glimpsed those wondrous beings, service means everything. He must help all living things to find the light that he has found. Just a silent soul alone, unfolding its wondrous mystery to its own being,—that is Initiation.

Having gone through these tests and removed the love of materiality he is given the privilege of knowing and realizing the true reason for at least part of the Plan. He goes on now, step by step, coming into the powers which were always his, not in heaven but in hell, for the place of the Initiate is not in the worlds above but in the worlds of darkness for he has consecrated his soul to the redemption of man.

We have among us today those who claim to have passed through great initiations, but do their lives show it? Are they willing to work unseen and unknown with the powers that never shine be-

fore the eyes of men? Do they work with the humility and simplicity which is the divine expression of the soul? All true Initiates point out the way by their own beings that others may follow the path to which they have dedicated their lives.

Everyone wants to be an Initiate but if they were the sun would soon go out forever from their lives. Like children, man is always wanting something and weeping for it like a child. The soul filled with uncertainty, selfishness, and materiality can never have the strength of purpose and the unity of balance, to carry the burdens of Initiation. It is a blessing then that many are not what they want to be. If it were not so, hearts would be broken that have not the strength to mend. If we could be initiated now it would do us no good, for each true, upward step must be hewn out of the solid rock of experience that each may take the path by removing from his life the personal things that stand between him and that which he seeks. We must take each cruel word and change it into a dove before we send it on its way.

When we go hence to enter into our Father's house, the greatest reward that can come to us is the privilege of laboring there. Not our will but the Master's should regulate the expression of our life.

If those who seek Initiation today could only know what it really means they would realize how false their concepts have been. What have we done that we have the right to join that little throng of God's chosen ones? If we would labor with them we must take upon our shoulders their burdens and be one of those who are responsible for the lives of men, and when we have raised our consciousness, our lives, our actions and our thoughts to this point, then we are Initiates in spirit and in truth, for the light of God's plan for man shines forth and envelops us in its glory and its first gleam shining upon our souls show us the end to which all Initiation leads,—a lonely cross upon a hill.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall