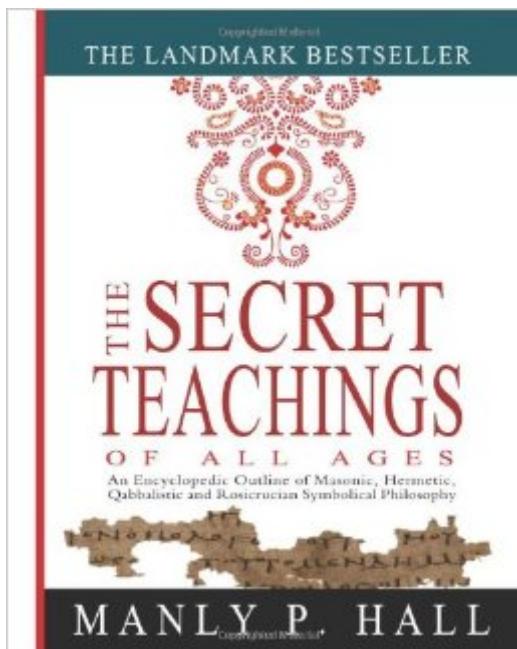


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The Secret Teachings Of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline Of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic And Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy



Synopsis

A dense encyclopedia and a solid starting point from which to dive into subjects such as the Qabbala, Alchemy, Tarot, Ceremonial Magic, Neo-Platonic Philosophy, Mystery Religions, and the theory of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry.

Book Information

Paperback: 214 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; Reprint edition (March 21, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1461013135

ISBN-13: 978-1461013136

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (336 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #39,400 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Freemasonry #22 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Reference #30 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Occult & Paranormal > Occultism

Customer Reviews

If you're reading this review, then you already know about Manly P. Hall, so I won't get into that. The best edition to get is the hardcover University Edition printed in 2008. BUT if you want a cheaper paperback, make sure you get the authorized 2000 reduced facsimile of the 1988 Diamond Jubilee edition from the Philosophical Research Society (PRS). It's the only edition in print that is a true reprint of the original typography and illustrations in their correct places. All other editions are re-typeset, and some cluster all the color illustrations together rather than at the beginning of each chapter where they belong. The Reduced Facsimile is also the only edition that was authorized by Hall when he was still alive, and the only edition that contains ALL the original illustrations. The 2000 edition from PRS is very good quality with a sewn signature binding printed on heavy photo paper. DON'T get the Dover edition or the "Readers" edition!! Much of the value in this text is the beautiful typography and illustrations. It's not worth owning it otherwise. A cheap used copy of the facsimile edition can be easily found for under \$10. I got mine for \$2.99 and it's beautiful.

Manly P Hall was a great scholar. I had the wonderful experience of hearing him lecture at his

Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles shortly before his passing in 1990. Having read classical and comparative philosophy and religion for many years, my impression - shared by my betters and many scholars - is you really cannot do better than this book. There are many editions available, even a paperback edition currently in many bookstores. If you appreciate Joseph Campbell but wish to pursue the more mystical side of religion, Manly P Hall is an excellent resource. Whereas Campbell was a self-proclaimed "maverick" with no particular allegiance to any one form of religion, Manly P Hall was a thirty-third degree Freemason, and clearly sympathetic to the theory that in our ancient past there existed a system of mystery religions in which invocation of deities and angels was practiced and actually achieved. (Classic example, if memory serves, being Plutarch's tale of the invocation of the Neoplatonist Plotinus' guardian angel in the Temple of Isis in Rome by an Egyptian priest.) Hall breaks ranks with Christianity's declaring such entities to have been demons, and views them instead as our good buddies in the spiritual neighborhood. That said, to Hall's credit, he never minimizes the great perils of seeking gratuitous spiritual experiences. If you are sympathetic to "the old religions" and want a sympathetic scholarly accounting, it is hard to imagine how you could do better than purchasing and studying this book. If you are someone who believes in the Bible as the inspired word of God, you will have to come to your own conclusion whether Hall is worth your time, as he inevitably delivers a philosophical interpretation of the Bible. Those seeking a deeper prayer life, consultÂ The Ways of Mental Prayer. Those desiring a Christian schema of virtue, seeÂ The Sinners Guide.

The over-riding theme of Manly P. Hall's book is that the most basic secret teaching is that one should overcome your animal, lower, inferior nature of lust, hatred, and greed and become more spiritual, realizing that this world is an illusion, which isn't your true home, and your body is not your true self. By following the golden rule instead of the rule of gold, one can become enlightened enough to avoid ever having to come back to this awful world again. Wisdom is to be valued more than gold. If you do not attain such spiritual wisdom, you are doomed to repeat your experiences by reincarnating or you may experience hell or purgatory, according to some faith traditions. Hall criticizes modern times as being too materialistic. The more you focus on earthly desires, the more you become bound to it, the more misery you shall suffer here and after death. You should follow the urges of your higher self, the spirit and soul, which operate above you in the heavenly realms as your body stays upon on this earth while you learn your lessons. But as far as lust goes, Hall does not recommend that everyone become celibate, since if you are not particularly enlightened it would not be appropriate for you and may lead to neurosis. Hall goes over the symbolism of many esoteric

traditions in this mostly interesting, but sometimes boring book. This is a big, long, thick book that is crammed with so much information it's hard to remember it all. A lot of the explanations of symbols gets tedious after awhile and I asked the question occasionally, "Why should this be important to me?" Especially dense was the sections on the Kabala symbolism. Hall also goes over Biblical symbolism as allegorical true, not literally true, and it is based on earlier pagan traditions. I liked the sections on black magic versus white magic and the life of Doctor Faust, who Hall claims was a real person. Hall warns us never to get involved with black magic and make pacts with evil spirits for our own temporal and selfish gain since we will be doomed to serve the spirit for eternity once we break one of the conditions of the contract as Faust did. Such evil comes from selfishness, the source of all evil. Hall is even cautions us against hypnosis and calls high pressure salesmanship a form of black magic. He says that mediums that pretend to be speaking to dead loved ones are actually elemental spirits acting like dead loved ones. It is not good to dabble in black magic just out of curiosity. I was surprised he sounded so much like a fundamentalist preacher on this topic. White magic, however, seems to be okay with him and he has a section in which one is shown how magic can be used by invoking Christ's name and giving him the glory, using it for the expansion of your wisdom, not the fulfillment of your selfish desires. Hall gets into the question of who really wrote Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare himself really did not have the educational background to be able write the plays that had so many erudite references. Hall shows us that Francis Bacon was the one who wrote the plays and the various ways that he gave clues that he actually did write them. Francis Bacon was also a freemason who had the knowledge of how to conceal information through cryptograms, which are contained in his writings. The book covers a myriad of esoteric topics and persuades the reader to take seriously the phenomena of alchemy, the Delphic oracles, and the mysterious Saint Germaine, among other things. The freemasonic origins of the United States is covered some also. Alchemy is the process of turning base metals into gold. Metaphysically, humans are also attempting over several lifetimes to eliminate their base natures and turn to the golden light of virtue. That is what alchemy allegorically represents. Hall gives of us some examples in history in which alchemy was said to have actually occurred. The French and American Revolutions were inspired by the freemasons. This occult group wanted to get rid of the tyranny of monarchy, the ignorance of the general populace, and the superstitions of the church. By electing a philosophical elect, the people would be well served by their governments (in theory). The original seal of the US might actually be the occult symbol of the phoenix, instead of the eagle. The French Revolution was not as successful for the freemasons since a violent reign of terror ensued, perpetrated by fanatics. Why is the occult kept hidden from the general populace? It is hidden

because of the prejudice against certain occult teachings that people aren't ready to accept. The powerful status quo is also threatened by such teachings. There is the prohibition of against throwing your pearls before swine who will only abuse such teachings. One must be worthy to accept the mysteries, which means that you have to be moral enough to receive the teachings. Mystery schools often have initiates go through many trying ordeals before they are considered worthy enough to reach the next level of wisdom. Some occultists have a reputation for being immoral though. Hall explains that occult schools are only as good as the people in control of them. Over the years, a once virtuous group can become corrupted. That is the reason why some occult groups are considered bad.

I perused an older hardcover copy of this book at a lodge brother's house and was so impressed, I ordered it on the spot. It was full of full page color plates and numerous illustrations. I immediately deemed it a necessary component of my library. I received my copy today, and there isn't a single illustration or plate that the version I looked at had. Since it is a book on symbolism, symbols would be a nice addition. My advice would be to try and find an older edition. David George Palo Alto Chapter #93 Los Altos Lodge #712

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