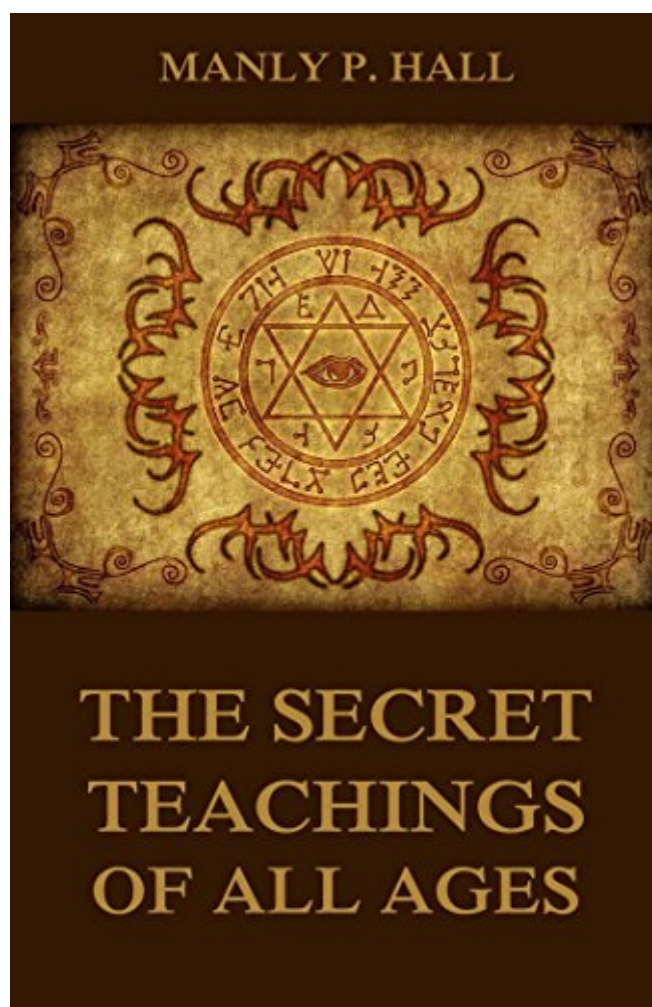


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The Secret Teachings Of All Ages



Synopsis

For once, a book which really lives up to its title. Hall self-published this massive tome in 1928, consisting of about 200 legal-sized pages in 8 point type; it is literally his magnum opus. Each of the nearly 50 chapters is so dense with information that it is the equivalent of an entire short book. If you read this book in its entirety you will be in a good position to dive into subjects such as the Qabbala, Alchemy, Tarot, Ceremonial Magic, Neo-Platonic Philosophy, Mystery Religions, and the theory of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Although there are some questionable and controversial parts of the book, such as the outdated material on Islam, the portion on the Bacon-Shakespeare hypothesis, and Hall's conspiracy theory of history as driven by an elite cabal of roving immortals, they are far out-weighted by the comprehensive information here on other subjects.

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Customer Reviews

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.

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.

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