

# A VITAL CONCEPT OF PERSONAL GROWTH



Manly P. Hall



# A VITAL CONCEPT OF PERSONAL GROWTH



by Manly P. Hall

## **A VITAL CONCEPT OF PERSONAL GROWTH**

*Copyright © 1997 by the Philosophical Research Society, Inc.*

*All Rights Reserved. This book or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.*

**ISBN-10: 0-89314-367-7**

**ISBN-13: 978-0-89314-367-1**

---

*Published by*

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY**

3910 Los Feliz Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90027 USA

*Telephone* 323.663.2167

*Fax* 323.663.9443

*Website* [www.prs.org](http://www.prs.org)

*E-mail* [info@prs.org](mailto:info@prs.org)



*Printed in the United States of America*

## A VITAL CONCEPT OF PERSONAL GROWTH

During the formative years of human life, most of the vital energies of man are directed toward the building and integrating of the bodily structure. Physical growth, therefore, is the orderly unfoldment of the powers, functions, and form of the individual from infancy through childhood and adolescence, and toward ultimate biological maturity. We all observe the phenomenon of growth, and accept it as the normal and natural way by which the state of adulthood is finally attained. The symbolism is so familiar that we accept it without due consideration for its larger implications of meaning. We may go so far as to accept growth as an end in itself, and overlook the more important fact that it is a conspiracy of means toward an end which fully justifies those means.

We observe also that during those long years of transition between childhood and maturity, the growing person is under a sequence of pressures. We recognize, therefore, that children require guidance, patience, and understanding. They are adjusting to an unfamiliar way of life, and are learning to use those potentials with which the race has been endowed. The parent takes comfort in that his boys and girls will come finally to the full control of their powers and resources, and will then be able to unfold their careers and plan their personal destinies with a measure of confidence. In olden days, there was quite a ceremony when a son or daughter reached majority. It

was customary for the elders to accept a new member into the circle of adults. There was talk of new opportunity and also of greater responsibility. The time had come to plan for career and family, to depart from childish ways, and share the burdens of society.

Man is certainly a part of Nature, but the human being is also an individual. The lesser kingdoms respond almost completely to a mysterious guiding principle called instinct. This impels the creature toward the fulfillment of the biological responsibility for which it was created. In the animal world, maturity is fruitfulness, the ability to perpetuate one's kind, and often life ends when fruitfulness ceases. Man is no longer dominated by the basic instincts of his species; he is not merely born to propagate, for he contains within himself emotional and mental overtones which also cry out for fulfillment. He therefore passes from a cycle of biological intensity to one of psychological intensity, finding numerous ways of self-expression suitable to his aptitudes and inclinations.

Because we are highly objective beings, accepting almost without reservation the testimonies of our external sensory perceptions, we consider it an obvious fact that growth ceases when the individual attains his majority. From that time on, he applies his resources to the fulfillment of his ambitions and the satisfaction of his appetites as a perfectly proper procedure. Unfortunately, there is more to this than meets the eye, and it is necessary for us to carefully re-examine the evidence upon which we have passed such superficial judgment. We must come to understand that growth is not merely a biological process measured in terms of years, and we cannot take it for granted that physical maturity bestows all that is necessary for a happy and successful life.

Man is a composite being, and three levels of his own nature become apparent as we study his behavior. Growth as a motion from infancy to maturity takes place on three levels—physical, emotional, and mental. The fact that physical growth is the only part of this three-fold program immediately and inevitably noticeable should never cause us to assume that it evidences the complete story of human unfoldment. For man, physical growth is an inevitable, but emotional and mental maturity must be attained by a conscious and purposed action of his own.

Today we are confronted by an unhappy state of affairs. The body gradually assumes the appearance of adulthood, but the person in the body reveals, through his conduct, that he is not mature, but is in one of the transitional states of childhood or adolescence. In simple words, the person consists of a twenty-one-year-old physical form, an eight-year-old emotional nature, and a thirteen-year-old mental state. It must follow that this inconsistency between the internal and the external levels of the personality results in stress, tension, and a serious waste of vital resources.

Confusion requires more energy than accomplishment, and the so-called normal person is frequently, if not continuously, confused. He does not receive the necessary emotional and mental support to maintain himself properly on the level of physical citizenship.

Emotional maturity is probably the most difficult to attain, and the lack of it, the most troublesome of human deficiencies. The natural signs of emotional infancy include basic lack of control, indifference to the consequences of our conduct upon the lives of others, and complete emotional self-centeredness.

Wherever, therefore, we observe these symptoms in the so-called adult, we must assume that the emotional nature is infantile. At this period in the life of the physical child, it is hopelessly dependent upon parental strength and guidance, not only for its security, but for its very survival. As soon as is feasible, the child is placed in pre-kindergarten association with other children and encouraged to social adjustment with his world. It is equally important that the emotional child within ourselves should be led firmly and wisely from its helplessness, and assisted to make its basic adjustment with the life pattern under which it must live. Such thinking, however, is simply beyond the comprehension of those who need it most. They are bitterly resentful of advice and criticism, convinced that the age of their physical bodies indicates a proper measure of maturity.

The adolescent emotional level is one of broad disorientation. There is lack of appreciation for true values, and a desperate desire to cling to the irresponsibility of childhood. This is a period of gratification, of almost immediate surrender to impulse, and the feeling that whatever we want to do, we must do or else suffer from a sense of frustration. There is lack of deep and sincere and integrated feeling, and this expresses itself outwardly through emotional instability. The person feels himself entitled to devote his life to play and pleasure, and he dedicates the fruits of his material activity to the satisfaction of his appetites. These people develop profound fear of maturity; they do not want to take the responsibility of home and family; they do not want to have their complete personal independence threatened, and they are loath to sacrifice for any common good. They are fretful and incompetent, subject to extreme moods, often awkward and shy, and aware of a constant turmoil within themselves. Vanity and self-indulgence are further evidences

of emotional inadequacy. It is evident that such persons make little constructive use of their vital resources, largely because they have never realized that they were in this world for any reason other than their own code of pleasure.

The symbolism of biological maturity can easily be applied to the development of the emotional and mental natures. The person who is emotionally mature is also emotionally fruitful, creative, and productive. He pays his debt to society by contributing to the enrichment of humankind through religion and the esthetic arts. The excessive pressures of adolescence subside, and a constructive inspirational power takes their place. Imagination moves the individual toward a useful expression of his potential to appreciate, with mature depth of feeling, the privileges and opportunities of his existence. He expresses his fruitfulness through idealism and devotion to those principles of character which give meaning and purpose to his conduct.

Mental maturity brings the mind to a state of parental capacity. Instead of using his intellectual equipment to evade responsibility, the individual accepts the challenge of adulthood as an opportunity to make a positive contribution on the level of his intellectual abilities. He becomes interested in the application of reason and logic to their proper ends, and he strives untiringly to use his faculties for the advancement of his society and the enrichment of his cultural system. The mature mind is ready to cope with the need for self-orientation, with its larger implications. He is impelled to play his proper part in the advancement of learning. He is capable of giving birth out of himself to ideas and ideals useful to all men.

When, in the process of daily living, we fail to observe the symptoms of immaturity within ourselves, we are guilty of a serious offense. Let us assume for a moment that the compound

human personality may be compared to a large corporation that is managed by trustees or directors representing the stockholders. The physical body of man corresponds to the material assets of such a corporation. It owns lands, buildings and equipment, and has a large inventory. It also employs skilled workers and appoints over them foremen and managers. The fate of such a corporation rests in the keeping of its executives, and if these fail in the proper administration of their responsibilities, or are unequipped for leadership, they endanger the entire structure.

By analogy, the outer and objective life of man is controlled by his mental and emotional powers and faculties. They constitute the directorate and are held accountable to the stockholders, who can also symbolize those other persons whose destinies are linked with an individual by the real or artificialities of society. How would we feel about a business in which we might want to invest our life savings, if we learned that the directorate consisted of two small children with complete autocratic power and no adequate supervision or control by either the investors or the employees? Under such conditions, could they exist, we would most certainly seek a safer place for our life savings.

In the case of man himself, however, this ridiculous situation is not uncommon. The up-and-coming citizen, apparently efficient and successful, often permits the important decisions of his career to be largely influenced, if not completely decided, by emotional and mental pressures hopelessly immature. It is not remarkable, therefore, that he involves his objective career in an almost constant cycle of critical situations. The adult who would certainly not permit an eight-year-old child to plan his life, does not hesitate to follow, with few reservations, his own eight-year-old emotions. In a strange way, each individual must

become his own parent. Melchizedek, King of Salem, is described in the Bible as his own father and his own mother. This mysterious priest is a symbol of perfected mankind which must be the guardian and instructor of its own immaturity.

When we discipline children, we expect them to obey, and we exert whatever persuasion is necessary to gain this obedience. We can be no less firm when we discipline the small child or children within ourselves. We can liken our minds to a young son, and our emotions to a daughter. If we give these children good basic training, a secure home, and a proper education, we send them forth with some assurance that they will build good lives for themselves. If we permit them to shift for themselves, catering to their every whim and fancy, and indulging them unwisely, we will seriously handicap their ability to bring happiness either to themselves or to others.

These simple facts we accept on the level of physical relationships, but we ignore them completely on the level of personal psychology. In some cases, a degree of mental and emotional maturity accompanies physical growth, but this cannot be accepted as inevitable. The well-oriented child, who has received wise and loving guidance throughout childhood and adolescence, gains a certain poise, and has learned the rudimentary principles of self-control. Unfortunately, this pattern is usually broken when majority is reached. The individual turns his attention to his economic requirements and strives for physical security at the expense of his internal resources. He trains that part of the mind which is necessary for his business, producing a more or less deformed creature, whose parts and members are not equal.

He also brings into focus only a fragment of his emotional equipment, catering to its ambitions and personal attachments.

Here again, he causes asymmetry by denying what he may term abstract and impractical ideals and impulses. The education of the person in the body presents the same difficulties as does the education of the student in the public schools. Our educational system is far from perfect. We admire the progress that has been made, but regret the lack of vision and purposeful planning.

The emotional education of the young is mostly gained through association with other children and what we like to call adjustment. Mental training stimulates the memory, but does not inspire creativity. The disillusionments which begin in high school are consummated in college. The mind as a potential instrument of progress is sacrificed to a narrow program of utilities. The graduate is therefore not equipped either to govern his mind or to supply it with real incentives for its own growth and improvement. Specialization narrows perspective and further deforms the mental structure. We have learned to survive with the least possible use of our potentials. As a result, our lives are lacking in overtones and incentives.

Many parents find the raising of a family a tremendous spiritual experience. They soon realize also how poorly they have been equipped for the work at hand. This in spite of the fact that the whole world knows that maturity brings with it the problems of parenthood. Even the best-mannered child is a strain upon the patience and insight of its parents. A deep personal affection sustains the program, and makes various and numerous sacrifices possible and acceptable.

We do not feel that way, however, when confronted with the adolescent in ourselves. We are completely overwhelmed with the mere prospect of attempting to bring order out of the internal confusion. It seldom occurs to us to question our own

inclinations or to deal firmly with tendencies to selfishness or extravagance. When parents get in that position, the neighbors shake their heads sadly and observe that the children are out of control. Respectable members of a community cannot allow themselves to merit such reproaches, and usually make a valiant effort to remedy the difficulty. Every adult who has a temper-fit is in the same predicament. He is under the despotism of six-year-old emotional power within himself which has decided to have a tantrum. When the small child is irritable, sulky, or forthrightly belligerent, we are not overly perturbed because we expect such outbursts. Children know no better, but they will learn. The only reason why an adult acts like a child is because some part of his own nature has not grown out of infant ways. So we pause for a moment to consider again Nature's mysterious growth patterns.

The physical body unfolds steadily and consistently until it fulfills its own archetype. Emotions and thoughts also grow, but generally more slowly. For their maturity they require, usually, that the physical body be fully available as an adult structure. The individual must be able to enrich his inner life by experience, reflection, and understanding. Thus, inner growth is most rapid after physical growth ceases. The energies of the person, released from their biological responsibilities, become available for psychological uses. When we neglect our emotional and mental lives, we retard their progress. Unfortunately, we can go still further, for we can lock ourselves so completely with attitudes and feelings, that actual growth becomes negligible. Thus the opinionated person can reject instruction which might enrich his character. Prejudice and intolerance are so detrimental to the psychic self, that they may cause serious sickness in the invisible parts of the human constitution.

Long ago man struggled with the problem of hygiene and sanitation. He realized that if the body were kept in a non-healthful environment, it would sicken and ultimately perish. He therefore drained his swamps, created elaborate systems of aqueducts and sewers, and advocated personal cleanliness. He learned from bitter suffering that he had to take reasonable care of his body, and not subject it to neglect or abuse. He must do the same with his emotional and mental bodies. His personality is their environment. If he is selfish, unpleasant, intemperate, and ill-tempered, he must drain these swamps, for they are potential causes of psychic infection and contagion. He must provide a healthful internal environment, if his thoughts and emotions are to grow beautifully and naturally.

The courts of law bitterly rebuke a man for training his son to be a thief; yet how many have trained their minds in thievery, and their emotions in larceny? If man's thoughts and feelings do not mature with his body so that he becomes inwardly and outwardly an adult, he is threatened with a variety of enervating and debilitating conditions. He finds his life a far heavier burden than he can comfortably bear. He is fretful, impatient, discouraged, disillusioned, and generally miserable. As these symptoms multiply, he is also tired because of the constant use of energy to combat conflicting pressures. Mental disease may set in as the direct result of disobedience to the basic laws of psychic hygiene and sanitation.

The only excuse is that the average person does not know better and does not realize the need for personal integration and self-control. We cannot force people to change their ways, nor can we so indoctrinate them or legislate for their security that we can preserve them from their own mistakes. Growth requires a basic recognition of the laws governing the nature of

man. The individual must convince himself, by a direct action, of his own consciousness. Reason can help him to understand the laws of living, and faith can inspire him to live according to a better code of conduct. Essentially, however, there must be an awareness of purposed existence. Growth is not merely a motion in time from one age to another. Nor can psychological development be measured in terms of years at all. Man, as a total being, is either growing toward something, or his very existence is meaningless. By growth, the individual comes into more complete control of all the parts of himself in order that he may cause a nobler destiny for himself and others. Assuming the purpose of growth to be important, is also to assume that we should make every possible effort to advance ourselves toward that more sufficient state which the fact of growth implies.

Ancient man envisioned a Golden Age to come, in which all men would dwell together in peace and security. It is obvious that this utopia of the future can come only as the result of a distinct and definite plan advanced by the consecrated efforts of humanity. We must outgrow the old, and meet the challenge of the new, with courage and a good hope. Privately, most of us are utopians, if only in terms of our earthly span. The busy man and woman dream of that future in which they can enjoy the good things they have earned by labor and industry. We live from day to day, sustained by the hope of tomorrow. Yet, very few are consciously creating a better future by fitting themselves to be citizens of a new kind of world. The average man of today could not be happy in paradise, because he has no experience of happiness in his own psychic nature.

The early stages of physical growth are accompanied by a visible increase in the body's size, and also the gradual organization of its functions and powers. Mental and emotional growth

are expressed through the body, which thus becomes an instrument for the expression of psychic energy. We cannot see thought or emotion, but we observe the consequences of these psychic activities. We also learn to realize that the principal use of the body is to reveal adequately the growth of the internal person. It is evident, therefore, that the neglect of the psychic life deprives man of the principal purpose of even his physical existence. The perpetuation of the species is only important to him because it, in turn, provides bodies for the release of mental and emotional values. the popular concept of growth requires only a vegetable-animal existence. The philosophic concept invites the human being to unfold himself through his body and not merely to exist as a slave or prisoner of his corporeal constitution.

Conscious growth begins with a consciousness of growth. The person experiences the insistent pressure of thoughts and emotions seeking expression. Just as the child intuitively embraces the adventure of living, so the mature person accepts the adventure of living more fully and completely. It is his purpose and his destiny and, if he is normal, he will accept it without hesitation. It is only when he has been falsely instructed and is taught to interpret his life incorrectly that he places obstacles in the way of his own reasonable self-expression. This does not mean that the human being exists only to extravert his untutored and uncultured appetites. He is not here to do exactly what he pleases, but, first of all, to educate his pleasures so that they are brought into harmony with his needs. He has the privilege of enjoying a happy emotional and mental adolescence even as he has the right to enjoy his physical years of childhood and growth.

All natural and normal things have a sustaining power in themselves. The universe is not unreasonable nor aggressively compelling. It invites to progress by intriguing the mind with diverse possibilities and warming the heart. with aspirations and opportunities.

Assuming, therefore, that we begin to see dimly the dimensions of a purposed existence, we have every right and opportunity to live in accordance with that which we sincerely believe to be true. The easiest and safest way to grow is to cease resisting growth. All Nature is contributing to the unfoldment of life. Therefore, there is no need to hasten her ways. Delay is not caused by the failure of a life-motion in the universe, but by human resistance to that motion. As bodies crystallize and become less effective for the distribution of psychic energies, so personalities become fixed and rigid, and prevent the proper expression of the motions of growth. Thus, we begin to grow by relaxing our defenses against inevitable destiny. We were created to reveal growth, and when we deny this destiny, we become sterile. Being no longer fruitful, we deprive our lives of their proper incentives.

Here again, we face the Oriental concept of relaxation, and once more we can learn something from parent-child relationships. If a small child is not well adjusted, has not been taught the rudiments of personal integration, is not dependable or trustworthy, the parents cannot relax; the little one gets into mischief the moment their backs are turned. When a poorly organized individual relaxes to such a degree that he is able to release tension, he is not comfortable nor secure. When he lowers his vigilance, he merely permits his own internal immaturity to flow out, to embarrass him socially, and to destroy his peace

of mind. In a case of this kind, we mean by peace of mind an unreal smugness, and not a mature inner tranquillity.

Relaxation, however, is useful in that it reveals to the thoughtful person the full measure of his own confusion. He learns that the moment his thoughts and emotions are released from the control of his will, they are not self-sustaining, harmonious, or mutually cooperative. He becomes more fully aware of the weakness concealed in his body, and such a lesson should induce him to the serious search for a proper remedy. Such a person may discover that his thoughts and feelings did not go to school with his body. He graduated from his class with honors, but his diploma did not imply that he had come to the end of his need for learning. It is rather depressing to think of sending your emotions to kindergarten after your body has graduated from college; it may be necessary, however. Fortunately, we are saved most of the embarrassment, because our friends cannot see the incongruous spectacle. In fact, the best education for the emotional child in us comes from our own tutoring and teaching. It takes time which we would like to spend wasting time, but the end more than justifies the effort. Our emotions must learn the ABC's of their proper deportment. Parents are not always able to describe how they trained their children. They took advantage of opportunities which presented themselves in the course of living and, being dedicated to their subject, were at least partially successful.

One of the earliest lessons a child must learn when it begins to associate with other children, is social behavior, so we may as well start teaching the infant prodigy in ourselves this fundamental lesson. Emotional adjustment means that we can live in a world with other people, share in their activities, help them to fulfill their dreams and ideals, learn to be patient with their

faults and failings, and like them for what they are even though we may differ with them about what they do. Children should learn these things before they are ten years old, and take it for granted that their school friends and playmates have their own inalienable rights for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It seems simple enough, and the rewards for adjustment are numerous and obvious. Yet, how many adults, in terms of bodies, have accomplished this perspective? What of the intolerance and criticism which have plagued the world since the dawn of history? We penalize people because of the race or nation into which they are born; we dislike them because their sect or creed is different from our own; and we resent them heartily because they dare to contradict us or reject our effort to dominate their lives. All this should have been well settled by the third grade of public school, but even the physical training is frustrated by parental example, and many children are adversely conditioned throughout life because of the intolerance's and prejudices in their parental homes. Those most in need of personal orientation are usually totally unaware of their own shortcomings. The individual cannot be a well-balanced person and at the same time be miserable and discontented. Nature does not penalize us because of our virtues, nor does a well-regulated life result in sickness and misery. If we are unhappy, insecure, or perpetually afflicted with discomfort and inconveniences, something is wrong with us. Excuses and evasions avail nothing. We must either correct the causes, or the effects will continue.

It is always a little surprising that individuals apparently old enough to think straight can spend hours describing their afflictions and, at the same time, be completely satisfied with themselves, and ready to defend actions which have resulted in nothing but misfortune. Nature presses living creatures forward

by confronting them with problems which can be solved only by personal growth. The concept of mental maturity includes, therefore, not only a gradual victory over personal inadequacy, but also the continued advancement of the mind in those fields of endeavor where its functions are apparently already satisfactory. In Nature, decay begins when growth ends. Nothing stands still in the universe. All creatures are either advancing to the fulfillment of their proper destinies or else they are fading slowly into limbo.

Philosophically speaking, there are two kinds of death: the death of the body, and the cessation of psychic growth. A healthy mind is one constantly open to new ideas and equipped to evaluate knowledge in terms of its essential contribution to well-being. Energies are available to advance mental growth as long as the person is willing to accept the challenge of self-improvement. If, however, through a distorted sense of accomplishment, personal omnipotence, or forthright egotism, the mind is closed to the proper circulation of vital energies, a process of disintegration sets in. By degrees, the mental resources are depleted and enervated. Nature then takes on the aspect of a hard taskmaster, depriving the individual of his rights and benefits until he mends his ways. It is tragic indeed to be punished without admitting that we deserve the reprimands that come to us. As Buddha pointed out, we must suffer until we discover and correct the cause of suffering.

The true indications of a proper adjustment between the growing mind of man and the unfolding universe in which the drama of life is played, are a quick and ready willingness to accept the challenge of personal progress, and the ability to interpret correctly the purposes of the lessons which we are required to learn. Two kinds of children go to school: the normal

child studies because he desires to learn; the child lacking such integration merely attends school because it is required by law. He neither appreciates the instruction he receives, nor makes any valid claim to his art of available knowledge. He resents the pressures of the curriculum and dreams only of the day to come when he will be free from such restrictions. Years later, this unwilling boy or girl is penalized for neglecting his educational requirements.

Those who resent the school of life must face the future without the resources necessary to successful living. Rebellion and evasion have their just and proper consequences, but we seldom enjoy the happenings which they precipitate. Thus, growth through a series of stimulations equips the individual for his own inevitable tomorrow. The habit of growth is as easy to develop as the habit of resisting growth. The immature lack good habit patterns, and where these are absent, bad habits take their place. No one can be without habits, but each person can cultivate such practices and policies as he has found to be necessary and useful. Children enjoy a kind of happiness because they are without responsibility and live in an atmosphere which protects them from the shocks of living. Mature persons are happy because they have responsibilities and discover within themselves the strength necessary to meet and overcome the obstacles that must be met along the way. We all desire to be happy, but those who attempt to perpetuate their childish pleasures into their adult years are perpetual adolescents totally unfit to cope with reality.

The mind, although its resources are numerous, can accomplish only that which is possible to the total psychology of the individual. There is a time for each of us when thinking levels off, and on this level we must build our lives and careers.

Growth actually continues, but it is less obvious and not so rapid or intensive. There is little value in attempting to force the mind. When this occurs, the intellectual life becomes a burden, defeating the major purpose of its guiding power. This is frequently observable in families where ambitious parents demand more of their children than may reasonably be expected. A man came to me once who had been forced into a profession to satisfy a doting mother. This man was poorly adjusted because he was internally uncomfortable. He had not wanted to be a lawyer; his real interest had been shipbuilding. He loved the sea, and in his spare time he still made model boats. They brought the only real satisfaction he had ever known. This reminds us that growth is always development motivated by internal need, and not by the advice and recommendations of our associates. We must fulfill our own nature. It is far better to be a happy ship-builder than an unhappy attorney.

Thus, we must overcome a prejudice about knowledge which is frequently noticeable. We assume that the growth of the mind is measured by the level of society. We regard physical labor as the lowest of these levels; the crafts and trades next; the arts, professions, and sciences above these; and the highest levels those of creative philosophy and religion. If we are ambitious for our children, therefore, we want them to aspire to one of the higher brackets of attainment. We ignore the fact that these upper brackets contain countless neurotic and unadjusted persons who cannot cope successfully with the responsibilities of their positions. Growth is actually a fulfillment of the personality pattern, and it is quite possible for the farmer or the shopkeeper to become a magnificent human being without departing from the career which he has found suitable to his innate taste and abilities.

Growth does not imply the need for a desperate struggle to ascend the ladder of learning. The unadjusted plumber and the unadjusted physician have their deficiencies in common. Only a realistic attitude can solve their difficulties. In such a case, growth is a victory over interior confusion. We cannot move in Nature from misery on one level to contentment on another. It is perfectly possible for the plumber to reach that degree of fulfillment and integration in which he will feel the natural urge to advance into some other field of endeavor. When he has attained that degree of understanding which permits him to undertake a new enterprise, he can make this move not because he is running away from a deficiency, but because he is being invited to make use of greater opportunity. His own life will decide for him and his transition will be normal. and proper. What we like to call maturity is therefore possible on many levels. It means that the individual is sufficient in his own sphere of activities. If he is less than his need, he is unadjusted, and if he is greater than his need, he is already beginning to adjust to a higher level. There will be little shock or stress unless he attempts to live contrary to his abilities, or in conflict with his concept of right and wrong. It is observable in schools that students have a natural tendency to level off according to their intrinsic potentials. When the power to learn on a scholastic level is obviously exhausted, it is then time for the person to select a means of expression which will provide him with a livelihood and confer the rights and benefits of citizenship. Theory must always lead to practice, and we must work with those resources which we are capable of accumulating. As we practice our trades or crafts, we find new ways of growing and, in due course, this growth may lead us to outstanding achievement. Thus, growth by learning impels toward growth by doing. There is still no

better way of increasing skill and broadening knowledge than the apprenticeship system.

Now let us apply these principles to the internal growth of the mind. For one reason or another, education as a formal system of indoctrination must come to an end. It may happen that physical or economic circumstances have prevented the individual from enjoying all of the scholastic advantages to which his abilities entitled him. This can lead either to resentment or frustration, or, as has less frequently occurred, inspire him with a determination to find ways and means of completing his educational program.

Not long ago, a man entered college with his own grandson, thus fulfilling one of the deepest desires of his nature. Where the pressure of need is real, it will create its own opportunities and bestow the courage and patience necessary for success. With most persons, however, the drive is not so intense, and so the apprenticeship system, which contributes to growth through experience, is a most important factor.

The philosophy of personal development through work is not especially popular. We are inclined to feel that responsibilities demand too large a sacrifice of time and energy. It is a great truth, however, that work is the most important directive in the maturing of the human being. To avoid work, to be deprived of it, or to attain a leisure which reduces the zest for creative activity, is to depart from the basic pattern of our natures. Growth through living, and through the enriching of our consciousness by the experiences of labor and adjustment, is a vital part of the universal plan for man. Maturity accepts this, but adolescence resents the limitations imposed by routine. To understand and appreciate the work we are doing is to find happiness in obedience to law. The adolescent is also

in more or less constant conflict with authority. He resents direction, leadership, advice, and reprimand. He nearly always overestimates his abilities, and can see no reason why he should conform with the standards of his time. He probably excuses himself on the grounds that he has a better standard, but this is seldom the case on a practical level.

There is a period in physical adolescence when young people are inclined to regard their parents with pity, if not with scorn. The young person is convinced that he knows better than his elders and can succeed where they have failed. A reasonable amount of ambition may be helpful, but only after it has been tested and proven through experience. If this smug and arrogant conviction that we know better than others is carried into adult years, it is merely an indication of childishness. If we know better, we will do better, but most boasters are content merely to affirm their ability. In practice, they are seldom able to demonstrate their claims. Thus we learn that genuine internal maturity is accompanied by a proper modesty and a willingness to continue to learn and grow through patience and observation. The ignorant individual is over-confident because he does not know enough to recognize his own limitations or the proper boundaries of his optimism. It is easy to give advice and ignore the consequences if they are disastrous.

Mental maturity inevitably leads the individual to the examination and classification of his internal potentials. Religion becomes important to him only after he has faced the problems of living sincerely and earnestly. Thus the rejection of religious consolation, the cultivation of aesthetic attitudes, and the inclination to disparage the religious instincts of others, are also signs of immaturity. After middle life, the mind should properly consider the best use of time and opportunity in elder years,

and prepare for the transition to that other state which is, for most, a mystery.

The person who is content to drift without purpose through the long afternoon and evening of his years—without the strengthening of inner resources—is childish. Children give little heed to the problems of age because they are far removed from them, and have much to look forward to in this world. The thoughtlessness of the young is acceptable, but this attitude is not becoming to those who have larger experience. Thus, there are numerous indications that should warn us that the person within us is not maturing and developing as it should. We should accept these symptoms for their real value, and act accordingly. Otherwise, old age can be a very dismal experience.

On the level of emotional maturity, we are confronted with pressures that may be ill-defined, difficult to examine, and impossible to rationalize. Yet, we do not all feel in the same way, or with the same intensity. Some are enriched by their feelings, and others are impoverished. Emotional activity makes heavy demands upon vitality. Those who do not discipline their feelings come in the end to a state of emotional exhaustion. There are experiences and conditions appropriate to the various levels of emotional growth. We observe, in general, that emotions are inclined to be excessive, and as the maturing processes advance, these intemperances decrease, to be reconciled ultimately by an attitude of moderation. If we are easily excited and quickly lose control of our feelings, we are exhibiting childish behavior. Children want what they want, and accomplish their ends by subtle tyranny. Small reverses make them miserable. Yet these tragedies are short-lived and are not long remembered. Children resent discipline, but will accept it if it is wisely given.

Upon reaching physical majority, the individual escapes from discipline in the sense of parental control. He enters a sphere of activity, however, in which powerful disciplinary forces are constantly operating. His parents may have been very patient and understanding, but in the world of maturity, many are impatient and have little inclination to tolerate the unpleasant attitudes of their associates. It is quite a shock to discover that we cannot have our own way in everything without paying a price that is far too great. If we insist on remaining headstrong and uncooperative, we are ultimately left to our own devices. We have neither friends nor family, and the world simply does not care how we feel or what we think. The bridge between ourselves and others, on the emotional level, is our graciousness of manner. If we are kindly, patient, tolerant, and sincerely concerned about the happiness of those around us, we may expect a rich emotional experience. To lack these attractive qualities is to reveal emotional childishness. We are acting like children, headstrong and indifferent, but there is no longer a parent who can administer the proper correctives. The society of which we are a part now takes on parental prerogatives, and it is wise for us to hearken to such instruction.

When a person, physically mature but internally immature, is confronted with the challenge of social adjustment, he is at a serious disadvantage. More is expected of him than of the child, because he appears to be full-grown and capable of controlling himself. In this way, Nature reveals to us that there is a time and place for childishness, but when adulthood is reached, maturity is expected and required. Confronted with this unpleasant discovery, the individual may attempt to escape through introversion. He may attempt to create a fantasy-world within himself, and retreat thereto whenever he is outwardly

hurt or offended. He tells us by his action that he prefers to remain an adolescent. Unfortunately, the universal pattern will not accept this compromise. The introvert is not happy and, by degrees, his imaginary world takes on gloomy and terrible dimensions. He is reminded in many ways that he must objectify and take his place in a world of mature creatures. The longer he indulges his daydreaming, the more difficult it will be when he must ultimately face facts.

Maturity reduces the pressure of man-made certainty. Belligerence gives way to a sincere desire for peace. The immature live upon excitement, variety, and the stimulation of self-indulgence. The mature, however, have grown past this transitory mood and are seeking to find foundations which are lasting and secure. Emotional intemperances are among the heaviest burdens that flesh must bear; yet, like some habit-forming drug, they become an obsessing force which easily escapes the boundaries of propriety. The old adage is true that the man who conquers himself is greater than the one who captures a city. Mankind has learned from bitter experience that it can never trust the individual who cannot control himself. A man cannot be given authority over other men until that man has learned to accept authority from others graciously and constructively. Most tyrants in this world were rebels against authority in early life; parental guidance was either lacking or it was not sufficiently firm and enlightened. The wayward child becomes the temperamentally unstable adult in whose nature there is no rhyme or reason.

In Eastern philosophy, emotional discipline includes the impersonalizing of likes and dislikes and the gradual transformation of passion into compassion. The disciple is encouraged to relax his attitude of possessiveness, moderate his ambitions,

deepen and order his emotions, and learn the invaluable lesson of patience. Even growth itself cannot be immediate. Maturity is not attained in a day, but through the quiet systematic direction of thoughts and the cultivation of virtues. When an individual says he has lost his patience, he usually means that he had very little to start with. Men cannot lose their virtues so easily. The practice of patience does not exhaust it, but enlarges its power and availability. The individual who is basically impatient, becomes more so through the years, and the same is true of the patient man.

Perhaps it would be practical to examine this subject of patience in its relation to maturity. We have a tendency to regard patience as weakness or lack of appropriate aggressiveness. Yet, experience teaches us that patience must be extremely valuable because it is one of the most difficult virtues to cultivate. In those who have advanced far in the perfection of patience, the advantages become evident, and we know that this virtue is advocated in nearly all the great systems of world philosophy and religion. Patience is not a blind acceptance of adversity, but a sublime understanding of the larger meaning of life. We are patient with children because we know more than they do, and the adult is patient because his inner life is richer and therefore more completely self-sustaining. Patience is an expression of faith, for if our belief is strong, we have the inner strength to know that all things in Nature, and all lessons in living, are working together for the greater good of the greater number. If we are truly enlightened, we can wait quietly for the fulfillment of individual and collective destiny.

Even during childhood and adolescence, the individuality of the human being is obvious. When majority is reached, both the parents and the teacher realize that they can no longer

dominate or regulate the conduct of the adult person. It is not possible, therefore, to require or demand the continuance of programs for the improvement of character or temperament. The human being is not an animal, he will not react to the instinct of the herd with any degree of consistency. If he is forced to accept or believe ideas or concepts contrary to his own inclinations, he will ultimately rebel. We cannot force growth upon each other, or prescribe the methods by which our friends and associates shall unfold their internal potentials. This is a world of infinite opportunity and an infinite diversity of ways and means for self-improvement.

When working with those physically adult, we are bound by certain proprieties. We can cooperate but we cannot coerce; we can recommend, but we cannot demand; we can invite, but we cannot insist. When we over-step the boundaries of our natural rights, we always create resistance in others and place them in a highly defensive position. In so doing, we forfeit our opportunity to be of assistance.

There are many paths that lead to a better life, and each individual has the right to choose his own. It is more important that he choose than what he chooses, for decision, thoughtfully and conscientiously made, is certain to be beneficial. Yet most of us have a fanatical desire to help others to be like ourselves, even though we may only be an example of misdirected energy. This attitude labels the would-be helper as himself immature. He has not yet reached that stage or degree of integration in which he can see good in policies and programs different from his own.

While we are busy trying to influence the behavior of others, we feel that it is unfair when they, in turn, attempt to command our conduct or allegiances. We fail to recognize that

the same basic error is operating in all of these situations. To correct this error, we must accept the fact that a proper and successful program of growth originates from within the individual himself, for it must be adapted to the peculiarities of his own temperament.

Good counsel, at the right moment, is usually appreciated, but we must always remember the importance of individuality. The artist will not benefit from the same instructions that may satisfy the scientist; the devout person finds the fulfillment of his own needs by an attitude incomprehensible to the skeptic. We cannot grow more rapidly than we can understand, and the very process of understanding calls upon our own unique integration of faculties and powers. The great teachers of the race have accepted the inevitable fact that one man's meat is his brother's poison.

Nature obviously has arranged this strategy in order to force man to make his own decisions and thus strengthen his will-power and direct his energies into channels appropriate to his needs. Those who constantly seek the advice of others, or run for protection to their more dominant associates, are sacrificing their own maturity and revealing their perpetual adolescence. At the same time, while it may be flattering to take the attitude of being a protector and director of other persons' lives, this is a dangerous procedure. The wise leader seeks not to create followers, but to inspire leadership in those around him. While we dogmatize, others must obey or rebel. If they obey, they are weakened; if they rebel, conflict results.

The exception to this general rule is the discipline of philosophy. Here a disciple voluntarily chooses to obey his teacher, not because the teacher is always right, but because a consciously

and purposefully bestowed obedience is a method of gradually developing self-control. The end is not attainable, however, unless the person obeying is fully aware of the purpose of this discipline and voluntarily subjects himself to it. If it is forced upon him against his will, it is worthless and detrimental. Many situations are brought to our attention, especially on the level of family relationships, which indicate that one adolescent is attempting to force his own immaturity upon another in a similar condition.

There are none so certain of what is necessary as those who do not know. It is noteworthy that the more mature we become, the more cautious we are not to exert undue pressure or demand improper acceptances of our own beliefs and opinions. We must all build upon foundations deep within ourselves, for our growth must always be the next step forward from our present condition. When we follow blindly or bestow our allegiances improperly, we are disillusioned and disappointed. If we are immature, we blame others; if we are mature, we censure ourselves. Emotional intensities frequently impair our ability to plan a wise program for ourselves.

Today, we observe a negative kind of versatility which prevents the individual from integrating his own resources. We begin things with great zeal and optimism, but when difficulties arise, we lose interest and seek avenues of escape. If we planned more quietly, conserved our energies for important decisions, and advanced our purposes with long-range patience, we would find that we could accomplish much more with less strain and stress. We must learn to plan our own futures more effectively. Most young people are dismayed at the panorama of opportunities which presents itself to those planning a career. There are hundreds of professions and crafts and trades, and

within each of these there are further possibilities of specialization. We must remember that each of these opportunities is an invitation to growth, for, as human beings, we can mature and unfold in any line of activity with which we become associated. The same is true on the levels of ethics, morality, culture, philosophy and religion. We must make our own decisions and sustain them with consecration and diligence, if we want to grow and improve our lives.

When we bring order out of personality confusion, we follow the dictates of a wise providence. We no longer scatter ourselves over so wide an area that we lose all penetration. At the same time, we do not specialize so intensely that we destroy our perspective and fall into ruts which separate us from the larger motions of society. We learn to work and to rest, and gradually the wisdom of Mohammed's pattern becomes apparent. The Prophet of Islam divided his day into three parts. He gave eight hours to the service of his people, eight hours to the cultivation of his own nature, and eight hours to rest. He believed that by keeping this rule, he served everyone better. He was true to the God in his fellow man, but he did not neglect the divinity within himself or his proper obligation to the body in which he lived. This was a mature program, for the Prophet declined to take his worries to sleep, or to become so obsessed by his nobler purposes that he failed to relax, refresh his spirit, enjoy his human companionships, and fulfill his duties as husband and parent. By this balanced program, he protected his own nature against the pressures of both his mind and his emotions.

If we learn to grow properly, we can save ourselves most of the growing pains. Actually, a normal attitude toward ourselves and our composite disposition makes life easier. No one can grow well who has forgotten how to relax and enjoy the simple

experiences common to all men. The drive of profession which makes us a slave to our own ambitions, like the drive of religious fanaticism, accomplishes no good end and perpetuates an adolescent level of behavior. During the difficult years which immediately precede human majority, the individual does not control his emotional intensities. It is therefore at this period that he is in greatest danger of committing actions which will damage his entire life. If adolescence goes on, uncurbed by the dawn of reason, the hazardous years may be unduly prolonged. Wherever there is lack of moderation, the dangers of misconduct are present.

We must outgrow these hazards by establishing our lives upon the three footings advocated by Mohammed. We owe one-third of our living to the service of society, in whatever calling or capacity we have chosen; we must provide for the material needs of our family and learn how to earn the economic security which bestows responsibility. We also have a constant and real need for a certain controlled and directed diversity of activity. We must have enjoyments suitable to our mental and emotional capacity; we must cultivate the artistry of our own soul. It is said that Mohammed, burdened by the responsibilities of creating a powerful political and religious institution, paused in his labors to say to a friend, "Had I two coats, I would sell one and buy white hyacinths for my soul."

Many have a feeling that recreation is a revelation of childishness. This is true only if our enjoyments are infantile. If, however, we have an appreciation for art, music, literature, and desire to advance ourselves in philosophy and religion, we are exhibiting what the Chinese would regard as the most certain evidence of maturity. When we are willing to moderate our ambition, so that our aspirations may have a greater expression,

we are truly wise. Most perpetual adolescents are not able to make any clear line of distinction between work and play. They accept employment only as a game which they play badly, giving little of themselves to the labor at hand. Then they play with a desperation more exhausting than proper toil. Thus, they lose the benefits of the proper contrast between labor and rest.

It is only a mature person who can appreciate the importance of leisure and make use of it constructively. We cannot over-stress the importance of avocational interests. Our friends may think that our hobbies are childish, but we suspect that those who feel no need for hobbies have simply failed to recognize the importance of a well-balanced adjustment to society.

In sober truth, we grow most rapidly in those departments of expression which most completely satisfy our hearts and minds. Through work, we learn to accept discipline, but through play we learn self-discipline, and this is the greater lesson. We are truly mature only when our work and play are controlled and directed solely by the strength of character within us. The mature person needs no time-clock and no supervision, except perhaps creative guidance. He keeps his obligations because his code of right demands this integrity. Elbert Hubbard once noted that many men are underpaid because others must be employed to watch and direct them. We divide our wages with those who must supervise our actions. The immature must also divide their wages with the lawyer, the doctor, the psychologist, the police department, and the fire department. Indifference and carelessness are burdens which every taxpayer must carry. The adolescent motorist is often an elderly person determined to be a one-man traffic department, or resolved to become the undisputed monarch of the highways. He is a small child with a dangerous toy, and death rides with him. We live in a world

of wonderful inventions, but unless we are mature human beings, we cannot safely be entrusted with our own inventions.

There is every inducement to grow up. We will live longer, and life will be an increasingly pleasant interlude. We will have friends and devoted families. We will also learn that right action ultimately wins, and that conscientious endeavor, if wisely directed, will be proportionately rewarded. As internal integration increases, we can plan our own careers more effectively. The instinct to drift is re-educated, and becomes the instinct to organize and to prepare for the contingencies that may arise. It is good and proper for children to be childish, but when we have outgrown the proper period of childhood, it is also good and proper to accept the natural demands of maturity, meet them, and fulfill them. When we meet these adjustments, we have every right to hope for happiness and success.



## **INVISIBLE BODIES OF MEN IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY**

This archival audio series of Manly P. Hall includes over eight hours of lecture material.

1. *The Sthula Sharira*—Physical Body & Its Attributes
2. *The Living Shariri*—The Etheric & Vital Bodies
3. *The Kamaru Pa*—The Emotional Nature & Its Activities
4. *The Rupa & Arupa Manas*—Vehicles of the Concrete & Abstract Mind
5. *The Buddhic Sheath*—The Seat of the Intuitive Principle

**\$40.00. 5 Audio Cassettes. ISBN: 0-89314-152-6**

---

## *Pamphlets on Occultism by Manly P. Hall*

---



## **MAGIC, A TREATISE ON ESOTERIC ETHICS**

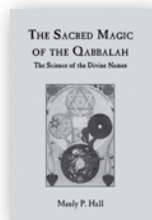
An essay enabling individuals to distinguish between “black” and “white” magic, thereby avoiding practices and disciplines which may be detrimental to character and dangerous to physical health.

**\$5.95. Pamphlet. 72pp. ISBN: 0-89314-384-7**

## **THE SACRED MAGIC OF THE QABBALAH: The Science of Divine Names**

This essay sheds light on the doctrines of the old rabbis and the Pythagoreans regarding the science of the divine names and the mystery of numbers.

**\$5.95. Pamphlet. 47pp. ISBN: 0-89314-844-X**



## **UNSEEN FORCES**

An illustrated treatise on the denizens of the invisible worlds, including the “*Dweller on the Threshold*,” and the individual’s connection with them.

**\$5.95. Pamphlet. 55pp. ISBN: 0-89314-385-5**

*Visit Our Online Catalog at [www.prs.org](http://www.prs.org)*

**UNIVERSITY of PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH**

**A CONTEMPORARY WISDOM ACADEMY**

## **Nationally Accredited MASTER'S DEGREES**

- **Consciousness Studies**
- **Transformational Psychology**

**TRANSFORM YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND YOUR LIFE** | In today's global postmodern world, a holistic, multicultural, evolutionary and spiritual perspective is a **necessity in every life enterprise**. For those lacking these consciousness skills, today's world presents a crisis; for those possessing them, a wide opportunity and a promise. With a graduate degree from UPR, you can more fully realize your **highest potential** and become a **dynamic participant** for achieving universal cultural and spiritual harmony in our time.

**WHAT OUR GRADUATES BECOME** | Our graduates are inspired by the aspiration to become leaders of society with the capacity for living well and doing good as teachers, writers, scholars, life-coaches and administrators.

## **Online Learning | the wave of the future**

- **UPR utilizes universally accessible online and telecommunication technologies to teach its graduate courses**
- **Learn in your free time and wherever you can access the Internet and/or a CD player**
- **Enjoy the privilege of interacting with the world's leading teachers of wisdom**
- **Online learning keeps tuition at affordable rates**

**For complete information, including a Catalog visit our website at <http://www.uprs.edu>**

e-mail | [registrar@uprs.edu](mailto:registrar@uprs.edu)

phone | 800.548.4062

fax | 323.663.9443



**UNIVERSITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH**  
3910 Los Feliz Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Manly P. Hall founded the Philosophical Research Society, Inc., a non-profit organization in 1934, dedicated to the dissemination of useful knowledge in the fields of philosophy, comparative religion, and psychology. In his long career, spanning more than seventy years of dynamic public activity, Mr. Hall delivered over 8000 lectures in the United States and abroad, authored over 150 books and essays, and wrote countless magazine articles.

VISIT US AT [WWW.PRS.ORG](http://WWW.PRS.ORG)