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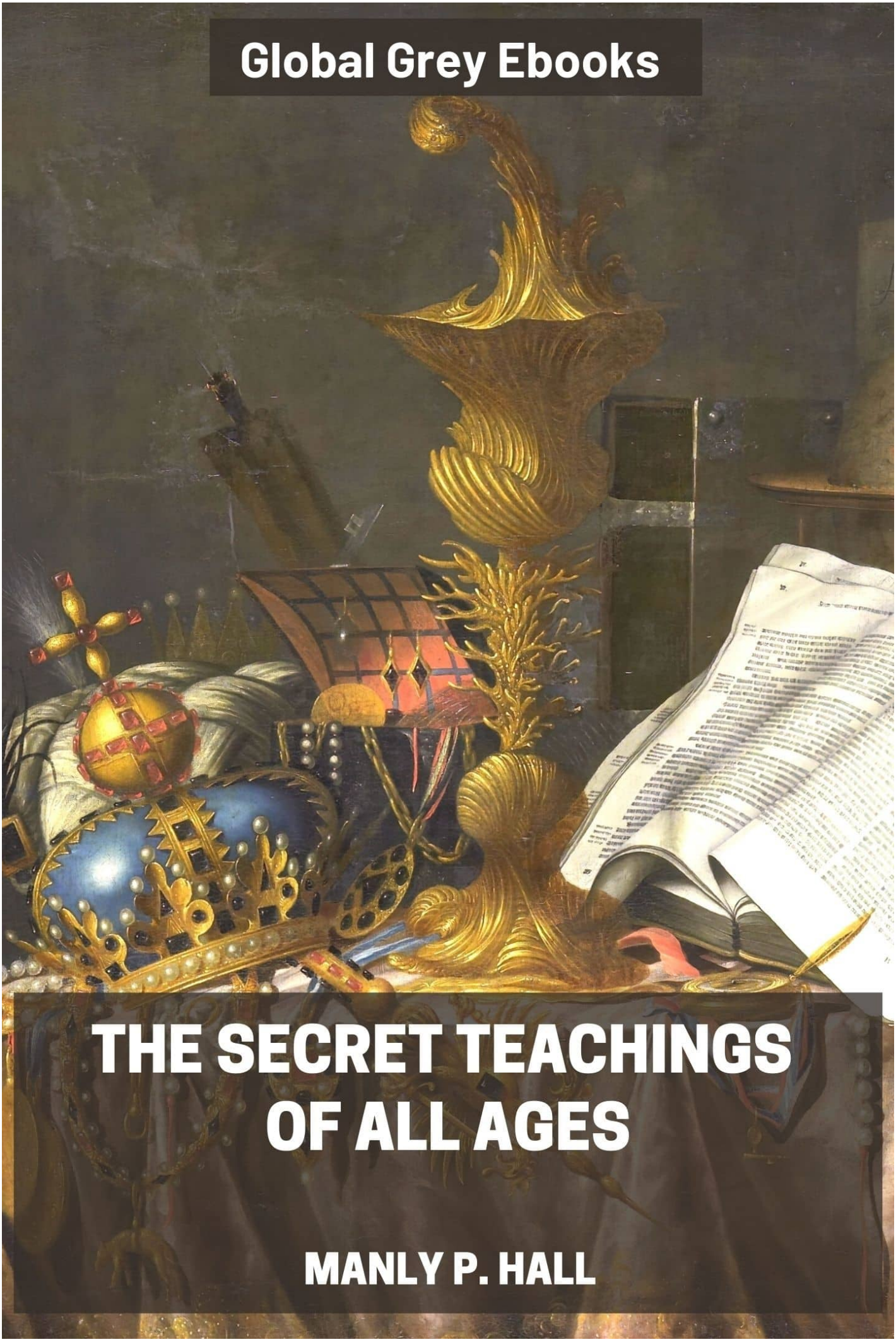

THE SECRET TEACHINGS OF ALL AGES

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Preface

NUMEROUS volumes have been written as commentaries upon the secret systems of philosophy existing in the ancient world, but the ageless truths of life, like many of the earth's greatest thinkers, have usually been clothed in shabby garments. The present work is an attempt to supply a tome worthy of those seers and sages whose thoughts are the substance of its pages. To bring about this coalescence of Beauty and Truth has proved most costly, but I believe that the result will produce an effect upon the mind of the reader which will more than justify the expenditure.

Work upon the text of this volume was begun the first day of January, 1926, and has continued almost uninterruptedly for over two years. The greater part of the research work, however, was carried on prior to the writing of the manuscript. The collection of reference material was begun in 1921, and three years later the plans for the book took definite form. For the sake of clarity, all footnotes were eliminated, the various quotations and references to other authors being embodied in the text in their logical order. The bibliography is appended primarily to assist those interested in selecting for future study the most authoritative and important items dealing with philosophy and symbolism. To make readily accessible the abstruse information contained in the book, an elaborate topical cross index is included.

I make no claim for either the infallibility or the originality of any statement herein contained. I have studied the fragmentary writings of the ancients sufficiently to realize that dogmatic utterances concerning their tenets are worse than foolhardy. Traditionalism is the curse of modern philosophy, particularly that of the European schools. While many of the statements contained in this treatise may appear at first wildly fantastic, I have sincerely endeavored to refrain from haphazard metaphysical speculation, presenting the material as far as possible in the spirit rather than the letter of the original authors. By assuming responsibility only for the mistakes which may' appear herein, I hope to escape the accusation of plagiarism which has been directed against nearly every writer on the subject of mystical philosophy.

Having no particular *ism* of my own to promulgate, I have not attempted to twist the original writings to substantiate preconceived notions, nor have I distorted doctrines in any effort to reconcile the irreconcilable differences present in the various systems of religio-philosophic thought.

The entire theory of the book is diametrically opposed to the modern method of thinking, for it is concerned with subjects openly ridiculed by the sophists of the twentieth century. Its true purpose is to introduce the mind of the reader to a hypothesis of living wholly beyond the pale of materialistic theology, philosophy, or science. The mass of abstruse material between its covers is not susceptible to perfect organization, but so far as possible related topics have been grouped together.

Rich as the English language is in media of expression, it is curiously lacking in terms suitable to the conveyance of abstract philosophical premises. A certain intuitive grasp of the subtler meanings concealed within groups of inadequate words is necessary therefore to an understanding of the ancient Mystery Teachings.

comprehensible only through its attributes, which are extension and thought: these combine to form an endless variety of *aspects* or *modes*. The mind of man is one of the modes of infinite thought; the body of man one of the modes of infinite extension. Through reason man is enabled to elevate himself above the illusionary world of the senses and find eternal repose in perfect union with the Divine Essence. Spinoza, it has been said, deprived God of all personality, making Deity synonymous with the universe.

THE PTOLEMAIC SCHEME OF THE UNIVERSE.

From an old print, courtesy of Carl Oscar Borg.

In ridiculing the geocentric system of astronomy expounded by Claudius Ptolemy, modem astronomers have overlooked the philosophic key to the Ptolemaic system. The universe of Ptolemy is a diagrammatic representation of the relationships existing between the various divine and elemental parts of every creature, and is not concerned with astronomy as that science is now comprehended. In the above figure, special attention is called to the three circles of zodiacs surrounding the orbits of the planets. These zodiacs represent the threefold spiritual constitution of the universe. The orbits of the planets are the Governors of the World and the four elemental spheres in the center represent the physical constitution of both man and the universe, Ptolemy's

scheme of the universe is simply a cross section of the universal aura, the planets and elements to which he refers having no relation to those recognized by modern astronomers.

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German philosophy had its inception with Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz, whose theories are permeated with the qualities of optimism and idealism. Leibnitz's criteria of *sufficient reason* revealed to him the insufficiency of Descartes' theory of extension, and he therefore concluded that substance itself contained an inherent power in the form of an incalculable number of separate and all-sufficient units. Matter reduced to its ultimate particles ceases to exist as a substantial body, being resolved into a mass of immaterial ideas or metaphysical units of power, to which Leibnitz applied the term *monad*. Thus the universe is composed of an infinite number of separate monadic entities unfolding spontaneously through the objectification of innate active qualities. All things are conceived as consisting of single monads of varying magnitudes or of aggregations of these bodies, which may exist as physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual substances. God is the first and greatest Monad; the spirit of man is an awakened monad in contradistinction to the lower kingdoms whose governing monadic powers are in a semi-dormant state.

Though a product of the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school, Immanuel Kant, like Locke, dedicated himself to investigation of the powers and limits of human understanding. The result was his critical philosophy, embracing the critique of pure reason, the critique of practical reason, and the critique of judgment. Dr. W. J. Durant sums up Kant's philosophy in the concise statement that he rescued mind from matter. The mind Kant conceived to be the selector and coordinator of all perceptions, which in turn are the result of sensations grouping themselves about some external object. In the classification of sensations and ideas the mind employs certain categories: of sense, time and space; of understanding, quality, relation, modality, and causation; and the unity of apperception. Being subject to mathematical laws, time and space are considered absolute and sufficient bases for exact thinking. Kant's practical reason declared that while the nature of *noumenon* could never be comprehended by the reason, the fact of morality proves the existence of three necessary postulates: free will, immortality, and God. In the critique of judgment Kant demonstrates the union of the *noumenon* and the *phenomenon* in art and biological evolution.
German *superintellectualism* is the outgrowth of an overemphasis of Kant's theory of the autocratic supremacy of the mind over sensation and thought. The philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte was a projection of Kant's philosophy, wherein he attempted to unite Kant's practical reason with his pure reason. Fichte held that the known is merely the contents of the consciousness of the knower, and that nothing can exist to the knower until it becomes part of those contents. Nothing is actually real, therefore, except the facts of one's own mental experience.

Recognizing the necessity of certain objective realities, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, who succeeded Fichte in the chair of philosophy at Jena, first employed the doctrine of identity as the groundwork for a complete system of philosophy. Whereas Fichte regarded self as the Absolute, von Schelling conceived infinite and eternal Mind to be the all-pervading Cause. Realization of the Absolute is made possible by intellectual intuition which, being a superior or spiritual sense, is able to dissociate itself from both subject and object. Kant's categories of space and time von Schelling conceived to be positive and negative respectively, and material existence the result of the reciprocal action of these two expressions. Von Schelling also held that the Absolute

occupies a position at the vernal equinox for nearly 2,160 years, then gives place to the *previous* sign.

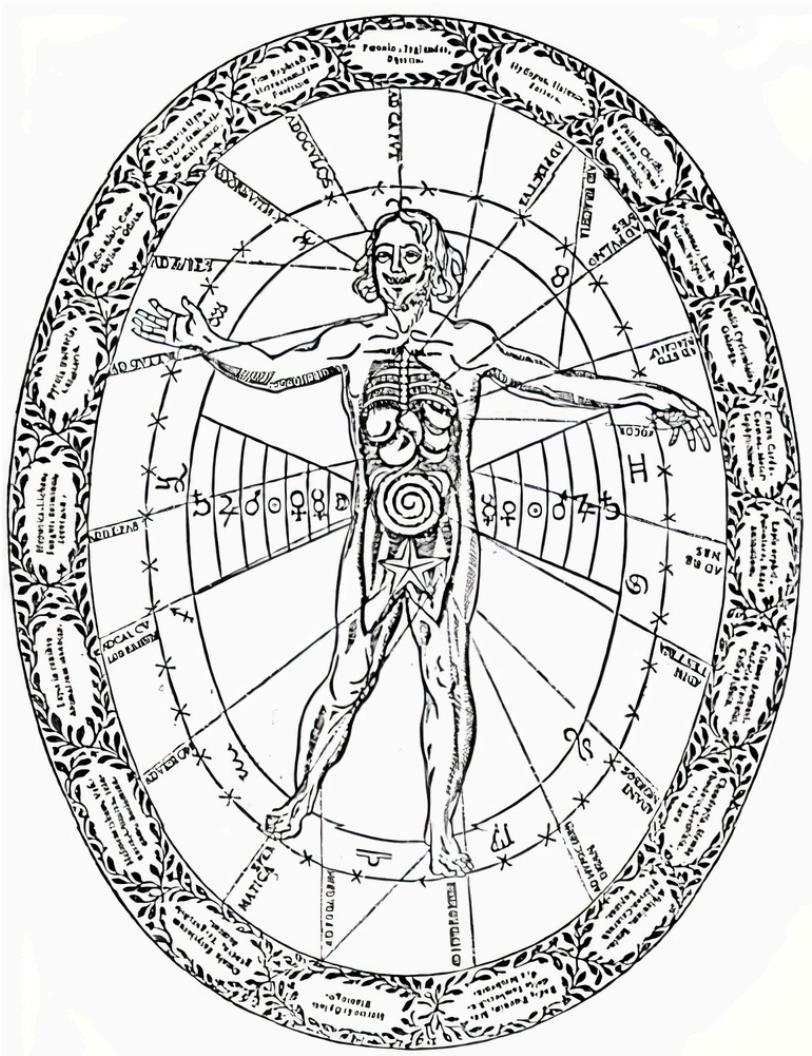

CHART SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HUMAN BODY AND THE EXTERIOR UNIVERSE.

From Kircher's Œdipus Ægyptiacus.

The ornamental border contains groups of names of animal, mineral, and vegetable substances, Their relationship to corresponding parts of the human body is shown by the dotted lines. The words in capital letters on the dotted lines indicate to what corporeal member, organ, or disease, the herb or other substance is related. The favorable positions in relation to the time of year are shown by the signs of the zodiac, each house of which is divided by crosses into its three decans. This influence is further emphasized by the series of planetary signs placed on either side of the figure.

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Among the ancients the sun was always symbolized by the figure and nature of the constellation through which it passed at the vernal equinox. For nearly the past 2,000

are the *Fathers of Fountains*, whose duty it is to care for and preserve the principles of all things and sustain the inviolable laws of Nature. Here are the gods of the spheres and also those who wander from place to place, laboring with all substances and forms (Zonia and Azonia), grouped together as figures of both sexes, with their faces turned to their superior deity."

The *Mensa Isiaca*, which is divided horizontally into three chambers or panels, may represent the ground plan of the chambers in which the Isiac Mysteries were given. The center panel is divided into seven parts or lesser rooms, and the lower has two gates, one at each end. The entire Table contains forty-five figures of first importance and a number of lesser symbols. The forty-five main figures are grouped into fifteen triads, of which four are in the upper panel, seven in the central, and four in the lower. According to both Kircher and Levi, the triads are divided in the following manner:

In the upper section

1. P, S, V--Mendesian Triad.

2. X, Z, A--Ammonian Triad.

3. B, C, D--Momphtæan Triad.

4. F, G, H-Omphtæan Triad.

In the center section

1. G, I, K--Isiac Triad.

2. L, M, N--Hecatine Triad.

3. O, Q, R--Ibimorphous Triad.

4. V, S, W--Ophionic Triad.

5. X, Y, Z--Nephtæan Triad.

6. ζ, η, θ--Serapæan Triad.

7. γ, δ (not shown), ε--Osirian Triad.

In the lower section

1. λ, M, N--Horæan Triad.

2. ξ, O, Σ--Pandochæan Triad.

3. T, Φ, X--Thaustic Triad.

4. Ψ, F, H--Æluristic Triad.

Of these fifteen triads Kircher writes: "The figures differ from each other in eight highly important respects, i. e., according to form, position, gesture, act, raiment, headdress, staff, and, lastly, according to the hieroglyphics placed around them, whether these be flowers, shrubs, small letters or animals." These eight symbolic methods of portraying the secret powers of the figures are subtle reminders of the eight spiritual senses of cognition by means of which the Real Self in man may be comprehended. To express this spiritual truth the Buddhists used the wheel with eight spokes and raised their consciousness by means of the noble eightfold path. The ornamented border enclosing the three main panels of the Table contains many symbols consisting of birds, animals, reptiles, human beings, and composite forms. According to one reading of the Table, this border represents the four elements; the creatures are elemental beings. According to

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There is also a system of calculation in vogue for the English language, but its accuracy is a matter of legitimate dispute. It is comparatively modern and has no relationship either to the Hebrew Qabbalistic system or to the Greek procedure. The claim made by some that it is Pythagorean is not supported by any tangible evidence, and there are many reasons why such a contention is untenable. The fact that Pythagoras used 10 as the basis of calculation, while this system uses 9--an imperfect number--is in itself almost conclusive. Furthermore, the arrangement of the Greek and Hebrew letters does not agree closely enough with the English to permit the application of the number sequences of one language to the number sequences of the others. Further experimentation with the system may prove profitable, but it is without basis in antiquity. The arrangement of the letters and numbers is as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

The letters under each of the numbers have the value of the figure at: the top of the column. Thus, in the word *man*, *M* = 4, *A* = 1, *N* = 5: a total of 10. The values of the numbers are practically the same as those given by the Pythagorean system.

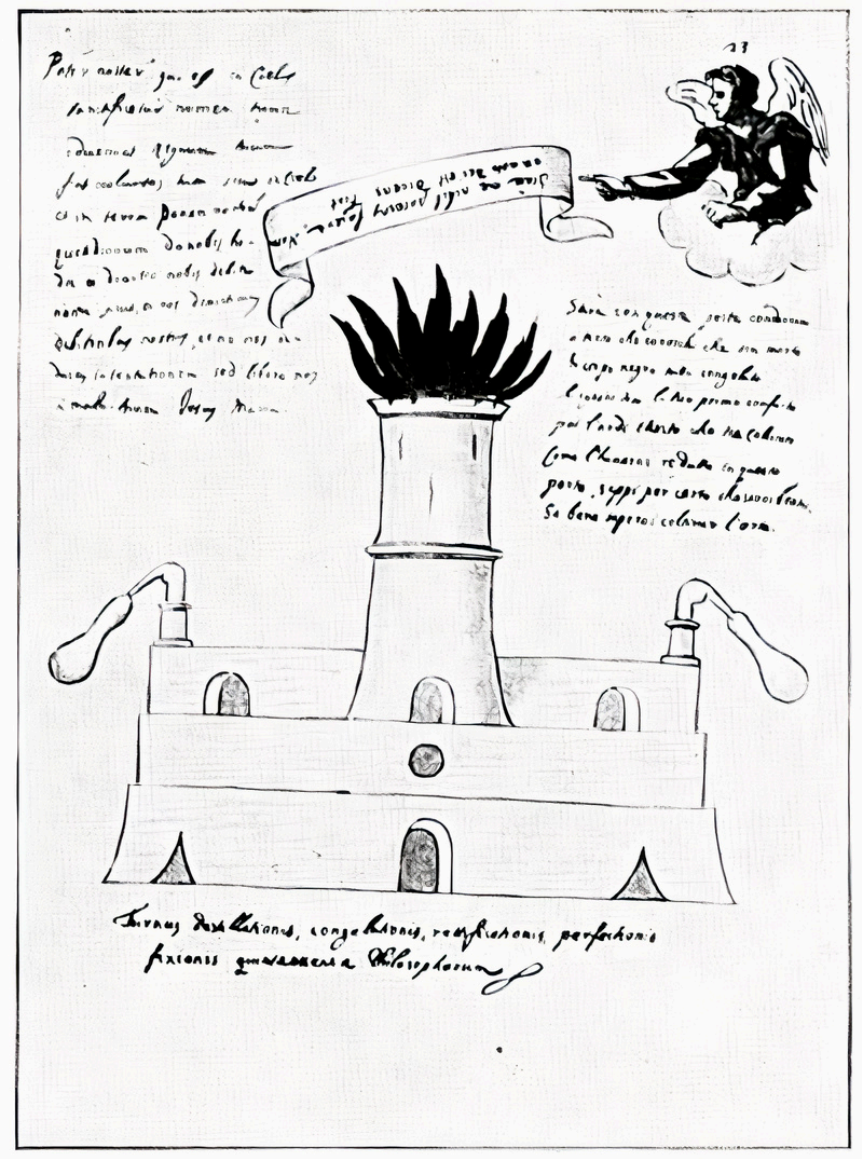
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PYTHAGOREAN THEORY OF NUMBERS

(The following outline of Pythagorean mathematics is a paraphrase of the opening chapters of Thomas Taylor's *Theoretic Arithmetic*, the rarest and most important compilation of Pythagorean mathematical fragments extant.)

The Pythagoreans declared arithmetic to be the mother of the mathematical sciences. This is proved by the fact that geometry, music, and astronomy are dependent upon it but it is not dependent upon them. Thus, geometry may be removed but arithmetic will remain; but if arithmetic be removed, geometry is eliminated. In the same manner music depends upon arithmetic, but the elimination of music affects arithmetic only by limiting one of its expressions. The Pythagoreans also demonstrated arithmetic to be prior to astronomy, for the latter is dependent upon both geometry and music. The size, form, and motion of the celestial bodies is determined by the use of geometry; their harmony and rhythm by the use of music. If astronomy be removed, neither geometry nor music is injured; but if geometry and music be eliminated, astronomy is destroyed. The priority of both geometry and music to astronomy is therefore established. Arithmetic, however, is prior to all; it is primary and fundamental.

Pythagoras instructed his disciples that the science of mathematics is divided into two major parts. The first is concerned with the *multitude*, or the constituent parts of a thing, and the second with the *magnitude*, or the relative size or density of a thing.

Magnitude is divided into two parts--magnitude which is stationary and magnitude which is movable, the stationary pare having priority. *Multitude* is also divided into two



Leaf 23. The writing at the upper left is, in substance, the Lord's Prayer, with the addition of the words *Jesus and Mary* at the end. The inverted words in the banner read: "Ye can do nothing without me, for God has so promised, saying 'So be it.'" The text under the angel reads: "By this plague he will be damned who knows he is dead, all cold in a black body. And let this be thy first comfort: then he will burn unto calcination. When I have reduced him within this door, know for certain that I shall be blessed if I shall know how to cultivate the garden." The main part of the leaf is devoted to an elaborate symbolic drawing of alchemical equipment, under which are the words: "The furnace of distillation, congealing, rectification, perfection, fixation: quintessence of the Philosophers." By "quintessence" should be understood the "fifth essence" of the most wise.

Conclusion

PHILIP, King of Macedon, ambitious to obtain the teacher who would be most capable of imparting the higher branches of learning to his fourteen-year-old son, Alexander, and wishing the prince to have for his mentor the most famous and learned of the great philosophers, decided to communicate with Aristotle. He dispatched the following letter to the Greek sage: "PHILIP TO ARISTOTLE, HEALTH: Know that I have a son. I render the gods many thanks; *not so much for his birth, as that he was born in your time*, for I hope that being educated and instructed by you, he will become worthy of us both and the kingdom which he shall inherit." Accepting Philip's invitation, Aristotle journeyed to Macedon in the fourth year of the 108th Olympiad, and remained for eight years as the tutor of Alexander. The young prince's affection for his instructor became as great as that which he felt for his father. He said that his father had given him *being*, but that Aristotle had given him *well-being*.

The basic principles of the Ancient Wisdom were imparted to Alexander the Great by Aristotle, and at the philosopher's feet the Macedonian youth came to realize the transcendency of Greek learning as it was personified in Plato's immortal disciple. Elevated by his illumined teacher to the threshold of the philosophic sphere, he beheld the world of the sages--the world that fate and the limitations of his own soul decreed he should not conquer.

Aristotle in his leisure hours edited and annotated the *Iliad* of Horner and presented the finished volume to Alexander. This book the young conqueror so highly prized that he carried it with him on all his campaigns. At the time of his triumph over Darius, discovering among the spoils a magnificent, gem-studded casket of unguents, he dumped its contents upon the ground, declaring that at last he had found a case worthy of Aristotle's edition of the *Iliad*!

While on his Asiatic campaign, Alexander learned that Aristotle had published one of his most prized discourses, an occurrence which deeply grieved the young king. So to Aristotle, Conqueror of the Unknown, Alexander, Conqueror of the Known, sent this reproachful and pathetic and admission of the insufficiency of worldly pomp and power: "ALEXANDER TO ARISTOTLE, HEALTH: You were wrong in publishing those branches of science hitherto not to be acquired except from oral instruction. In what shall I excel others if the more profound knowledge I gained from you be communicated to all? *For my part I had rather surpass the majority of mankind in the sublimer branches of learning, than in extent of power and dominion*. Farewell." The receipt of this amazing letter caused no ripple in the placid life of Aristotle, who replied that although the discourse had been communicated to the multitudes, none who had not heard him deliver the lecture (who lacked spiritual comprehension) could understand its true import.

A few short years and Alexander the Great went the way of all flesh, and with his body crumbled the structure of empire erected upon his personality. One year later Aristotle also passed into that greater world concerning whose mysteries he had so often discoursed with his disciples in the Lyceum. But, as Aristotle excelled Alexander in life, so he excelled him in death; for though his body moldered in an obscure tomb, the great philosopher continued to live in his intellectual achievements. Age after age paid him grateful tribute, generation after generation pondered over his theorems until by the