

ALCHEMY: THE BLACK ART

By David Cherubim
(Frater Aurora Aureae)
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INTRODUCTION

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

In this scientific and technological age, the ancient Art and Science of Alchemy is looked upon as mere rubbish of the past, a dark and fanciful cloud upon the sky of history. Yet this, I venture to say, is not the case at all; and this I shall endeavor to demonstrate to you through words of practical insight and wisdom, since Alchemy, in our modern school of thought, is the True Science of every wise and practical WoMan who lives upon the face of the earth.

Alchemy is comparable to the Great Sun of the Ages which ever shines bright in the infinite sky. It is not the fault of the Sun if we cannot see it; it is due to own lack of vision. Yet the Sun ever shines bright for those who have eyes to see, and in seeing the Sun we become enlightened!

Now the word Alchemy is an Arabic term consisting of the article "al" and the adjective "khemi". Aleister Crowley, the eminent Golden Dawn Magician of the 20th century, stated that this word means "that which pertains to Egypt," and that a rough translation of it would be "***The Egyptian Matter.***"

Traditionally, Alchemy is supposed to have originated in ancient Egypt. Alchemists, also called Hermetic Philosophers, recognize Hermes Trismegistus, or "***Thrice-great Hermes***", as the legendary founder of their Royal Art, and Hermes Trismegistus is identified with the ancient Egyptian God Tahuti (Thoth in the Coptic). Alchemy is called, among other things, the Black Art in reference to its

alleged Egyptian origin. It is also called the Hermetic Art or Hermeticism in respect of its legendary founder.

The ancient Chinese were performing Alchemy as early as 500 B.C. But the science of Alchemy in China was originally a spiritual system, dedicated to a mystical end; it was later in the course of history that it took on other forms, whereas in ancient Egypt the Art of Alchemy originated as a metallurgical craft. The teachings of Alchemy as a spiritual science can be found in the sacred writings of the Chinese Sage Lao Tze, who was the founder of the Grand Philosophy of the Tao. Alchemy plays a vital part in esoteric Taoism. It is, in fact, the secret tradition of Taoism, its inner teaching as opposed to its outer philosophy.

In the Buddhist Mahayana Avatamsaka Sutra reference is made to the alchemical Elixir of Life. It is written in this Sutra: "**There exists a Hataka juice or essence. One measure of this solution can transform one thousand measures of bronze into pure gold.**" In the Hindu Atharva Veda, which is older than 1,000 B.C., there are also mystical words concerning the Elixir of Life. The systematic procurement of this celebrated Elixir constitutes the Magnum Opus or Great Work of Alchemy.

There is a legend which claims that Alchemy was originally the Sacred Art of the Sons of God mentioned in Genesis before the Great Flood. These were the "Fallen Angels" or "Fallen Stars" of God who mated with the women of earth and taught them their Sacred Craft. There is another legend based on Genesis which states that Abraham was the founder of Alchemy, as well as of the Qabalah; that the Wisdom of Alchemy was transmitted to his son Ishmael who was born from Hagar, so that the Arabs and Sufis are the true holders of the sacred keys of the alchemical Art; whereas the Qabalah, which was transmitted to Abraham's son Isaac, who was born by Sarah, became the sacred tradition of the Jewish people.

Putting aside all legend and myth, the actual foundations of the philosophic principles of Alchemy are to be found among the ancient Greeks, Byzantines and Arabs. The principal Greek school for Alchemy was founded by Zosimos in Alexandria around the 4th century A.D. Zosimos asserted that Alchemy was the Sacred Art of the Egyptians. Alchemy traveled from Alexandria to Byzantium in the 5th century and it was eventually adopted by the Arabs. After conquering Egypt in the 7th century the Arabs continued their alchemical researches, and from the 7th to the 11th centuries Alchemy was introduced to all the countries that they conquered. From the 9th to 11th centuries Spain especially became one of the great Hermetic centers of the world.

Alchemists assert the famous Tabula Smaragdina, the Emerald Table of Hermes, to be the chief exposition concerning their alchemical operation by which they achieve the Great Work of the Sun. Legend has it that this Emerald Tablet was discovered by soldiers of Alexander the Great in the hands of Hermes' mummy in the Great Pyramid of Gizah, which was, according to legend, the Tomb of Hermes himself. Hermes was supposed to have engraved the sacred words which were discovered upon the Emerald Tablet. The earliest record of the philosophy of the Emerald Table can be found in the Leyden Papyrus which dates back to approximately 300 A.D. and was discovered in the year 1828 in the tomb of an anonymous Egyptian Magician of Ancient Thebes.

Love is the law, love under will.

THE EMERALD TABLE

By Aleister Crowley

Utter the Word of Majesty and Terror!
True without lie, and certain without error,
And of the essence of The Truth. I know
The things above are as the things below,
The things below are as the things above,
To wield the One Thing's Thaumaturgy -- Love.
As all from one sprang, by one contemplation,
So all from one were born, by permutation.
Sun sired, Moon bore, this unique Universe;
Air was its chariot, and Earth its nurse.
Here is the root of every talisman
Of the whole world, since the whole world began.
Here is the fount and source of every soul.
Let it be spilt on earth! its strength is whole.
Now gently, subtly, with thine Art conspire
To fine the gross, dividing earth and fire.
Lo! it ascendeth and descendeth, even
And swift, an endless band of earth and heaven;
Thus it receiveth might of duplex Love,
The powers below conjoined with those above,
So shall the glory of the world be thine
And darkness flee before thy SOVRAN shrine.
This is the strong strength of all strength; surpass
The subtle and subdue it; pierce the crass
And salve it; so bring all things to their fated
Perfection: for by this was all created.
O marvel of miracle! O magic mode!
All things adapted to one circling code!
Since three parts of all wisdom I may claim,
Hermes thrice great, and greatest, is my name.
What I have written of the one sole Sun,
His work, is here divined, and dared, and done.

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CHAPTER I

ALCHEMY IN THEORY

Alchemy is called the Royal Art (Ars Regia). Of this there are three basic types. These are Artisinal Alchemy, the Outward Work; Mystical Alchemy, the Inward Work; and Sexual Alchemy, which, after a certain manner, partakes of both these methods of attainment. Artisinal Alchemy is dedicated to producing the "**external gold**" of material splendour, whereas Mystical Alchemy is dedicated to producing the "**internal gold**" of spiritual splendour. In either case, the actual object of the Great Work is one: to manufacture the Stone of the Philosophers. It is with this stone that the Alchemist performs his transmutations, whether such be spiritual or material in kind.

In a nutshell, Artisinal Alchemy is the art of transmuting base metals into gold. To attain success with this material form of Alchemy, when combined with the mystical aspect, is said to be an outward sign of the accomplishment of the inward work of Spiritual Transformation; this is, in fact, its only justification in the world of Magick. For gold is a material symbol of a spiritual reality, typified by the Sun of Light. Gold is the perfect metal of all metals, the most exalted form of the mineral kingdom. It is, in fact, the alpha and omega of the mineral kingdom. In the Philosophy of Alchemy it is asserted that all base metals are imperfections of gold, and that all metals are ordained by Nature to become the Perfect Gold of the Sun. The base metals are but accidental phenomena due to an unfavorable environment in Nature. The Alchemist seeks to remove from all base metals their disorderly imperfections or base characteristics to bring them to their true state of natural order and to transmute them into the Living Gold of Sol.

Whether or not the Alchemist can actually convert base metals into gold, I cannot honestly say. I have never witnessed nor have I ever attempted to perform this type of alchemical operation, at least not in this incarnation. My principal justification for even writing about this particular branch of Alchemy is that this material form of Alchemy is symbolical of the spiritual and psychological aspect. In fact many have denied the validity of Artisinal Alchemy, stating that such is purely symbolical of an

interior operation that is spiritual and psychological in kind. This may in fact prove true to many of you, but from the scientific and magical point of view it would be but an act of folly to deny the possibility of transmuting base metals into gold. Thus did Eliphas Levi, the famous French Magus of the 19th century who Aleister Crowley claimed to be in a past life, write the following words: "**Yes, gold can be made really and materially by means of the Stone of the Sages.**" History fully supports the possibility of this phenomenon. We cannot ignore the experiences of those in the past who have either succeeded in this sublime work or who have witnessed it first hand.

Let us, for example, take into account Johann Baptista van Helmont, the famous Belgian Physician and Chemist who coined the word 'gas' from the Greek word 'chaos.' He claimed to have performed an actual transmutation of mercury into gold, and he recorded and published this fact in his work "The Garden of Medicine." In 1618 this scientist was one day visited by an unexpected stranger who gave to him a few grains of powder. Concerning this powder, van Helmont recorded: "**I saw and handled the Philosopher's Stone. It was a saffron-coloured powder, very heavy, and it glittered like splinters of glass.**" Van Helmont also recorded that the stranger was seeking to "convince an illustrious scientist whose work is an honour to his country." Van Helmont was, indeed, convinced of the validity of the operations of Artisinal Alchemy after successfully performing a transmutation with the powder, whereas he previously denied the possibility of this phenomenon.

Let us also take into account Helvetius (Johann Friedrich Schweitzer), the Physician-in-ordinary to the Prince of Orange, who was a vicious opponent of Alchemy. But on the 27th of September, in the year 1666, a stranger appeared unto him who had with him a small ivory box which contained a powder the color of pale sulphur. Regarding this powder, the stranger said: "**You see this powder, well, Sir, there is enough of the Philosopher's Stone here to transmute forty thousand pounds of lead into gold.**" This stranger did not give to Helvetius any of the powder, nor did he perform a transmutation with it, but he did show Helvetius some gold which he said was the product of a transmutation performed by an Adept. Helvetius was not convinced, however, and demanded a demonstration. The stranger refused his request, but did say that he would seek to obtain permission from the Adept, and if the Adept agreed he would return in three weeks time. Helvetius, it should be noted, did manage to pilfer a few grains of the powder under his fingernail, but with it he achieved nothing. When the stranger returned in three weeks, he confessed this fact to the stranger who laughed and told him that if an actual transmutation was to be achieved the powder must be wrapped in either a lump of wax or piece of paper to protect it from the fumes rising from the base metal, which would otherwise take from it the power of transmutation. He departed shortly after this, saying that he would return the next day. But he did not return. Through the insistence and impatience of his wife, Helvetius inevitably attempted the transmutation without the assistance of the stranger, and, to his utter surprise, it worked! He had first transmuted an old piece of lead piping which he put in a crucible over a fire. When the lead pipe melted his wife dropped the powder on to it, which was contained and protected in wax; and at the end of a quarter of an hour the lead was successfully transmuted into gold. After this became a known fact, the transmutation was successfully performed under strict scientific observation in the official laboratories.

It has been asserted that the famous Alchemist Eirenaeus Philalethes was the

stranger who appeared unto van Helmont in 1618 at his laboratory in Vilvorde and who visited Helvetius in 1666 at The Hague, which is near Amsterdam. It is believed by some that his real name was Thomas Vaughan. However, it is known that Vaughan died in 1666, and it was in this same year that Philalethes appeared in Amsterdam after many years of traveling, at which time he gave to Jean Lange his book "The Open Door into the Secret Palace of the King" to be translated into Latin. Sir Isaac Newton, the father of Classical Physics, took this book to heart and studied it for over 20 years. This Alchemist was also much respected by Robert Boyle, a famous British Physicist and Chemist who enunciated the law of the compressibility of gases and who discovered the part played by oxygen in combustion. Boyle also financed the publication of Newton's "Principia" and he has been called the father of modern Chemistry and the harbinger of the "Scientific Method". Boyle himself was a lover of Alchemy, but always skeptical at heart, yet he did attempt to transmute base metals into gold, but to no avail, which fact he admitted in 1661 in his important treatise called "The Skeptical Chymist".

Moreover, let us take into account the infamous Sir Edward Kelly, whose real name was Talbot. Sir Aleister Crowley asserted that he was Talbot in a past life. Talbot was born at Worcester, England, in 1555. After breaking the law and having his ears cropped, he departed from Worcester for Wales where he purchased for one pound sterling an alchemical manuscript and two forms of a powder, one white and the other red, from a man who took them from the tomb of a Catholic Bishop. Being unable to understand the manuscript, he secretly returned to London and contacted the astrologer Dr. John Dee, who was able to decipher it, and by it they successfully performed a transmutation. This resulted in the development of a most peculiar relationship between Kelly and Dee which has left its strange mark on history. Now Kelly was not a very modest man, and he saw no harm in boasting of his power. He performed public transmutations in Prague, the capital of Bohemia. As a result of this he was invited to perform a transmutation in the court of the Emperor Maximilian II of Germany, who, because of Kelly's success, conferred upon him the rank of Marshal of Bohemia. But soon he was imprisoned by the Emperor for not being able to make more of the powder by which he performed his transmutations. Dee, seeking to help Kelly, told the Emperor that he would assist Kelly to make more of the powder, and the Emperor released Kelly. They failed, however, in their efforts; and Kelly, out of frustration, killed a guard and was again imprisoned by the Emperor. Yet in jail he wrote an alchemical treatise called "The Stone of the Sages", which he sent to the Emperor promising to reveal the secret of the powder if the Emperor would set him free. The Emperor, however, did not believe him. Kelly therefore attempted to escape from jail, but he only managed to brake both of his legs and two ribs in the process. He died as a result of these injuries in 1597.

Now with regard to Mystical Alchemy, its formula and operation is spiritual and psychological in kind. The famous Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung and the well-known Golden Dawn Magician Francis Israel Regardie were both inclined to interpret the operations of Alchemy from a purely psychological point of view. Jung wrote a well known book called "Psychology and Alchemy" (1953) and Regardie wrote an illuminating book called "The Philosopher's Stone" (1938). Both of these authors make it an evident fact in these books that they envisage Alchemy to be nothing more than a psychological operation dedicated to a mystical end. Jung was completely fascinated by Alchemy, and he invested an immense amount of his time investigating the symbols and principles of this Art. Regardie himself was an Adept

of Alchemy, and though he envisaged Alchemy to be a psycho-mystical process of initiation, he nevertheless did expound the sexual secrets of Alchemy in his magick book "The Tree of Life" (1932), yet with the essential, magical point of view that this physical aspect of Alchemy is also dedicated to a spiritual cause.

From the point of view of Mystical Alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone is not a powder or any sort of material object, but rather is it a spiritual object, being a symbol of the True Self. The Mystical Alchemist, also called the Alchemystic Philosopher, does not seek to manufacture the Philosopher's Stone to produce the material gold of Nature, but rather to produce the Divine Gold of the Spirit. To attain the Philosopher's Stone is, in this particular case, the attainment of enlightenment, which is the illumination of the aura or Soul of Nature with the Divine Light of Sol, and with this comes the power to illumine the world which is the Divine Gold of the Spirit.

The Eastern System of Kundalini Yoga affords us a basic clue into the interior operations of Mystical Alchemy. Kundalini Yoga aims at the awakening of various centers of psychic force in the Ethereal Body. These are called Chakras or Cakkrans. Although there is literally a Chakra for every nerve in the body, there are seven in particular which are of vital importance in the Science of Kundalini Yoga. These Chakras are symbolized by seven Wheels ascending the spinal column which the Yogi endeavors to initiate into whirling motion, to awaken their subtle energies and vitalize his consciousness with their occult currents of power. This is accomplished by way of awakening the Primary Nerve Current known as the Kundalini or Serpent Power. The Serpent (Kundalini) is a phallic symbol, representing the creative force of reproduction or Sexual Energy. The Kundalini is Sexual Energy -- the Libido -- also called Shakti (Power) in the Sanskrit tongue. It is by this Sexual Power that the Chakras are literally transformed into veritable centers of cosmic radiation, illuminating the soul, mind and body of the Yogi with the Celestial Light of the Sun.

The seven Chakras, which are also called Padmas or Lotuses, are the occult centers of psychic energy in the human body. They are not really a part of the human body, but rather correspond to certain parts of it, thus we call them occult (secret). The Chakras are secret centers which generate Prana and are a part of what is termed the Subtile or Ethereal Body. As Lotuses they exist upside down until the awakened Kundalini strikes upon them and makes them right side up. In this they are slain and transformed, purified and consecrated. It is an essential object of the training of the Magician in the New Order of the Golden Dawn to awaken the Kundalini, and thereby accomplish this inner work with the Chakras. Any proper system of initiation must necessarily awaken the conscious experience of these centers at some level, as they represent the true initiation of the soul. There are seven steps to this internal initiatory operation of Yoga. These seven steps correspond with certain alchemical, astrological and magical principles. The number seven is of great importance in Hermeticism. Note that there are seven letters in the words Sulphur, Mercury and Vitriol, which are names for the three alchemical Principles. There are also seven alchemical Metals which are linked with the seven traditional Planets of Astrology. And to correspond with these and other important concepts of the Septenary, there are seven Steps of Initiation in the New Order of the Golden Dawn. The symbol of the New Order of the Golden Dawn is, in fact, a Gold Cross (4) surmounted by a White Triangle (3), giving us the number seven. This symbol represents the Great Work of Alchemy. Such is also the alchemical

symbol for Sulphur which denotes the **SECRET FIRE of Alchemy**. This SECRET FIRE, which is the **First Matter of the Great Work**, is the **Kundalini** or **Serpent Power** of Yoga.

Moreover, the Cross represents the four Grades of Zelator, Adeptus Minor, Adeptus Major and Adeptus Exemptus; and the White Triangle represents the three grades above the Abyss called Magister Templi, Magus, and Ipsissimus. In alchemical terminology the Cross represents the four so-called Aristotelian Elements called Fire, Water, Air and Earth; and the Triangle represents the three Principles of Trimaterialism called Sulphur, Salt and Mercury. The Cross further represents the four elemental Chakras of Yoga called Muladhara, Svadhisthana, Manipura, and Anahata; and the Triangle represents the three higher Chakras called Vishudhi, Ajna and Sahasrara.

Muladhara is the Root Chakra, Svadhisthana is the Navel Chakra, Manipura is the Solar Plexus Chakra, Anahata is the Heart Chakra, Visuddhi is the Throat Chakra, Ajna is the Pineal Chakra, and Sahasrara is the Crown Chakra. In Alchemy these Chakras are linked with the seven Metals called Lead, Iron, Tin, Quicksilver, Copper, Silver and Gold. These Chakras are also linked with the seven traditional Planets of Astrology called Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Luna, and Sol. The seven Metals and seven Planets correspond with the seven Chakras as follows: Lead and Saturn correlate with the Muladhara Chakra; Iron and Mars correlate with the Svadhisthana Chakra; Tin and Jupiter correlate with the Manipura Chakra; Quicksilver and Mercury correlate with the Anahata Chakra (or alternatively the Sahasrara Chakra); Copper and Venus correlate with the Vishudhi Chakra; Silver and Luna correlate with the Ajna Chakra; and, lastly, Gold and Sol correlate with the Sahasrara Chakra (or alternatively the Anahata Chakra).

Of the seven Chakras, only six are visible to the inner eye of the Yogi. Sahasrara, the so-called seventh Chakra, is an invisible and ineffable centre which cannot be classified as a Chakra per se. Yet it is with this Invisible Chakra that the Yogi or Magician seeks to integrate himself. For this so-called Chakra represents the True Self of the Yogi or Magician which, in Alchemy, is symbolized by the Stone of the Philosophers.

Now there are innumerable centers of Prana in the Subtile Body called Nadis which are commonly defined as Nerves. Prana is the vital, creative energy in Nature which animates and maintains all life and it is the subtle link between the visible and the invisible. Nadis are subtle nerve channels of Prana. The word Nadi is derived from the Sanskrit root "nad", which signifies motion. The various petals of the Chakras are Nadis. Prana moves or circulates in the Nadis, governed by the currents of the Sun and Moon. Purification of the Nadis is one of the most fundamental exercises of Yoga proper.

There are three principal Nadis of Yoga. These are called Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna. Of these three the latter is the most important. Sushumna starts in the lowest Chakra Muladhara (5 cm. above the anus and 5 cm. behind the penis). Within the Sushumna is another Nadi called the Vajrini which contains yet another Nadi called the Citrini. The inmost part or centre of the Citrini is called the Brahma Nadi. However, it is not really a Nadi, but a vivara, that is, a hollow passage. The opening of the Citrini initiates the process or makes open the gate through which the Kundalini can enter the Kula Marga or Royal Road to the Crown Chakra. Such is called Brahma-Dvara.

The Kundalini is asleep, closing with Her mouth the entrance to the Sushumna,

until She is awakened in the Muladhara Chakra. When the Kundalini (Shakti) is awakened, by way of proper initiation, She enters the Royal Way in the Sushumna and rises through it to unite in orgasmic ecstasy with Her lover Shiva who is concealed in the Brahmastrandhra (Sahasrara Chakra). In Her ascension to the Brahmastrandhra She pierces with puissant passion the various petals of the Chakras which, in effect, blossom into beautiful and fragrant Lotus of Light. And when Shakti embraces Shiva in the Sahasrara, then are all the Chakras made one in the blissful, eternal blossoming of the Supernal Lotus of infinite petals.

Ida and Pingala, like Sushumna, start in the Muladhara Chakra and rise to the Ajna Chakra, but, unlike the Sushumna, they rise with an inverse, serpentine movement. Ida is to the left of the Sushumna and its nature is lunar and feminine. Pingala is to the right of the Sushumna and its nature is solar and masculine. When Ida and Pingala meet at the Ajna Chakra they enter the Sushumna, making a triple knot, and again they are separated and, ergo, annihilated. That is, they are discharged of their Prana which then rises through the Sushumna to penetrate and kindle the Sahasrara Chakra, allowing for the ecstatic, orgasmic embrace of Shakti and Shiva which, as you might gather, constitutes the greatest victory in Kundalini Yoga.

In the Science of Alchemy, the seven Chakras are linked with the seven Planetary Metals; Sushumna, Ida and Pingala are linked with the three alchemical Principles called Mercury, Sulphur and Salt; and Kundalini is linked with **AZOTH**, the **SECRET FIRE of Alchemy** which is the **Prime Agent** of the Caloric Operation of the Sun. This SECRET FIRE, or the AZOTH of the Sages, is the **Serpent Power** which transmutes the base metals into the Perfect Gold of the Sun. AZOTH is also a name for the Stone of the Wise, and this gives us a clue into the nature of the SECRET FIRE itself. It is written in the Sixth Key of Exodus: "**Our Stone is an Astral Fire which sympathizes with the Natural Fire, and which, as a true Salamander receives its nativity, is nourished and grows in the Elementary Fire, which is geometrically proportioned to it.**"

AZOTH was the name of the Grand Secret postulated by Eliphas Levi, which he also called the Great Magical Agent, concerning which he wrote: "**This Agent, disguised by the ancient philosophers under the name of the First Matter, determines the forms of modifiable substance, and we can really arrive by means of it at metallic transmutation and the Universal Medicine. This is not a hypothesis; it is a scientific fact already established and rigorously demonstrable.**"

Basil Valentine, a fifteenth century German monk of the Order of Saint Benedict, employed the word AZOTH for the SECRET FIRE, which is not the common fire of Nature, but the Inner Fire of Spirit which cannot be seen with the eyes. In paradoxical language, it is a Watery Fire or a Fiery Water. It is the Universal Sperm of Creation, the Semen of Shiva, the Seed in the Metals, the Prime Agent (Primus Agens), also called Virgin's Milk and the Water of the Wise. It is the Alkahest of Paracelsus who was the famous German Swiss-born Alchemist, Rosicrucian and Physician of the 16th century. It is the Fire Water, Hell Water, of Johann Baptista van Helmont, which purifies and dissolves the metals, and which he described as a salt. Eliphas Levi defined it as the Fluidic and Living Gold of Alchemy. Such is also called Philosophical Mercury, concerning which Roger Bacon, a famous Alchemist of the 13th century, said: "**I could transmute the seas, were there enough Mercury.**"

This **SECRET FIRE** is both male and female, solar and lunar, fiery and watery in

nature. Ergo, it is also called the **SECRET WATER** and is symbolized by the Great Sea. It has been said: "**Chemists use fire for burning; we use water.**" This Secret Element has a double nature; it is a dry heat combined with a warm moisture. The first real task of the Alchemist is to discover this Fire-Water Element. Thus it is called the First Matter of our work. However, it is not only the First, but also the Last Matter of our work. Thus did Eliphas Levi call it "**the efficient and final principle of the Great Work.**" Note, in this connection, that the word AZOTH is composed of the first and final letters of the Qabalistic Alphabet, that is, Aleph and Tav. For it represents the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of Our Royal Art. To transmute the base metals into the Perfect Gold of Nature or, in other words, to open and transform the Chakras, the Alchemist must discover for himself the SECRET FIRE of Alchemy, the AZOTH of the Sages, the Serpent Power or Kundalini of Yoga, which is the Great Arcanum itself. No one can reveal to another the mystery of this SECRET FIRE; it can only to be discovered for and by oneself. It is with this SECRET FIRE alone that the Alchemist purifies the seven Metals and extracts from them the three Principles of Alchemy called Sulphur, Salt and Mercury.

The SECRET FIRE of Alchemy is sometimes called Mercury, but also Sulphur or Salt. This, however, is a blind, but it is also a clue into the nature of AZOTH. It serves to indicate its primary nature, which is threefold. AZOTH contains within itself the three Principles of Sulphur, Salt and Mercury, which are not actual chemical substances, but rather are they the three modes of the operation of The One Thing. Depending on the context of its nature and application, this SECRET FIRE can be given the name of any one of the three Principles.

Now according to the Alchemist Raymond Lully (1229-1315): "**In order to make gold we must first have gold and mercury.**" To this he added: "**By Mercury, I understand that mineral spirit which is so refined and purified that it gilds the seed of gold and silvers the seed of silver.**" Eliphas Levi, commenting on this, said: "**Doubtless he is here speaking of OD, or Astral Light. Salt and Sulphur are serviceable in the work only for the preparation of Mercury; it is with Mercury above all that the Magnetic Agent must be assimilated and as if incorporated.**" Levi's OD, or Astral Light is, of course, the SECRET FIRE, which is the Prime Agent of Our Majestic Work which, when combined with gold, produces more gold. In this regard, let us diligently take into account the illuminating words of Philalethes: "**In addition to gold, which is the body and the male element in our Work, another sperm is needed, which is the spirit, the soul, or the female. This element is fluid Mercury; it looks like ordinary quicksilver but is purer and more tenuous.**"

The Mercury referred to above as the SECRET FIRE is not the Mercury which goes to make up one of the members of the alchemical Trinity of Principles. Rather is it the Philosophical Mercury, whereas the Mercury of Trimaterialism is called Philosophers' Mercury or Quicksilver. The only similarity between these two Mercuries is that neither of them has any link with the chemical Mercury. Other from this they are separate substances, though quite often, as we have witnessed above, the word Mercury is used in a general manner, even for Philosophical Mercury. Philosophical Mercury is the Salt or Sulphurated Mercury which is extracted from the First Matter by the successful application of the SECRET FIRE. Eliphas Levi wrote: "**To know how to extract from all matter the pure Salt which is concealed in it is to possess the secret of the Stone.**" In this may you

consider that the Salt to be extracted from the First Matter is dual in nature; it is a synthesis of Mercury and Sulphur. The Greek letter Upsilon represents this dual nature of Salt. It is divided into two branches which spring from one root. The two branches are symbols for Sulphur and Mercury, whereas the root symbolizes Salt. In color symbolism, one branch is red and the other is white, and the root is black. Salt is the foundation or root of this work; and it is the means whereby Sulphur is united with Philosophers' Mercury. Levi informs us: "**All that is material contains Salt, and all Salt can be converted into pure gold by the combined action of Sulphur and Mercury.**"

Zosimos of Panopolis, a famous Alchemist who lived in the 4th century, said: "**Our Gold which possesses the desired quality can make gold and tint into gold. Here is the great mystery -- that the quality becomes gold and it then makes gold.**" And what is this Gold which we must have to make more gold? In the "Rosarium Philosophorum" (1550), written by an anonymous author, it is said: "Aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi" (Our gold is not the common gold). And Roger Bacon informs us: "**Gold is the perfect substance, composed of mercury, that is pure, homogeneous, brilliant, red; and of equally pure, stable, red sulphur that is incombustible. Gold is perfection.**"

It was the famous Geber (Jabir ibn Hayyan), an Islamic Alchemist and Sufi of the 8th century, who proposed that all minerals are composed of Sulphur and Mercury. Then came Al-Razi, another Islamic Alchemist, who proposed a third elemental ingredient. Eliphas Levi proposed that these three alchemical Elements, when volatilized and fixed alternately, compose the AZOTH of the Sages. Paracelsus said that everything in Nature is composed of these three Elements. In the Qabalah these three Elements are OD, OB and AOUR, which are the three modes of the operation of The One Thing -- the Active, Passive, and Equilibrated -- represented on the Caduceus of Hermes by the twin Serpents and the central globe on the staff around which the twin Serpents entwine.

As stated above, Salt is a synthesis of Sulphur and Mercury, which are also called Gold and Silver, Sol and Luna, Fire and Water. The seven Metals are formed from the combination of Sulphur and Mercury in the Salt of the Metals, and the difference between the Metals is based on the proportion of these two Principles in their composition. But Mercury is outwardly Mercury and inwardly Sulphur, and Sulphur is outwardly Sulphur but inwardly Mercury. Each one of the three Principles are dual in nature, and are therefore similar in their essential composition. Thus to possess knowledge of the nature and application of one of these Principles is to possess the knowledge of all three Principles. We are therefore instructed to discover and extract the Salt from the Metals and through this are we able to extract the Sulphur and Mercury from the same. This Salt is like unto a secret seed or sperm which contains the other two Principles. Such is the First Matter of Our Majestic Work which makes for the sublime conversion of the Elements which, may you note it well, constitutes the attainment of the Great Work. As Arnold of Villa Nova, a 13th century Alchemist, declared: "**Convert the Elements, and you shall have what you desire.**"

In the Golden Treatise of Hermes Trismegistus it is written: "**In the caverns of the metals there is hidden the Stone that is venerable, splendid in colour, a mind sublime, and an open sea.**" The caverns of the metals can be linked with the Chakras of Yoga. To extract the stone from the caverns of the metals is, in Kundalini Yoga, the extraction of the Prana from the Chakras that is accomplished

by the Kundalini which is our SECRET FIRE. This stone, or Heavenly Salt, is represented by a Cube made of six squares. Such is the Folded Cross of six squares which is the Rosicrucian Cross with the Rose in its centre. The Rose is hidden in the centre of the Cube or Folded Cross; it represents the Great Secret itself. By the unfolding of the Cube is this Great Secret revealed. Recall, in this regard, that the stone contains and is the product of Sulphur and Mercury. The Rose that is in the centre of the Cube is the Secret of the Union of Sulphur and Mercury. To unfold the Cube, which is to extract it from the metals, and to acquire the Rose on the Cross, is to also extract the Sulphur and Mercury from the metals. In terms of Kundalini Yoga, the unfolding of the Cube is the opening of a Chakra by the Kundalini which extracts from it the Prana which contains in itself the currents of the Sun and Moon.

From the point of view of Jungian Psychology, Sulphur and Mercury are the Animus and Anima. Animus is Sulphur or the Fiery Masculine Principle of the Sun, and Anima is Mercury or the Watery Feminine Principle of the Moon. Just as Sulphur is outwardly Sulphur but inwardly Mercury, and just as Mercury is outwardly Mercury but inwardly Sulphur, so is the Animus the Soul of a Woman and the Anima the Soul of a Man. And just as the Anima is unconscious in man and the Animus unconscious in woman, so is Mercury concealed in Sulphur and Sulphur concealed in Mercury. Sulphur and Mercury are, in Oriental Philosophy, the celebrated Yin and Yang. In the symbol of Yin and Yang it will be observed that Yang contains Yin and Yin contains Yang. The Child of the interplay of Yin and Yang, and also the source of their balanced activity, is the Mystical Tao. This Tao, which is the Salt in metals, is also the Stone of the Philosophers that is obtained by extracting the Salt from the metals, and from this Salt do we extract the Sulphur and Mercury to reunite them in the Hermetic Vessel. In psychological terms, such is the attainment of the balance between the two extremes of consciousness, or the two aspects of the Psyche, which, in other terms, is the cultivation of harmony between the two cerebral hemispheres of the brain which are the Sulphur and Mercury of our neurological system.

Let us now take into account the history of the development of the theory of the so-called Aristotelian Elements which play such an important role in the Philosophy of Alchemy. This theory commenced with a Greek Philosopher named Thales (640-546 B.C.), who proposed that all things were composed of one element, which he claimed to be Water. Anaximenes (560-500 B.C.), a contemporary of Thales, agreed with his theory, but proposed that the element was Air. Heraclitus (536-470 B.C.) proposed that the element was Fire. Empedocles (490-430 B.C.) proposed that there was more than one element, and that Water, Air and Fire, to which he added another element called Earth, were the primary elements of the Universe. Plato (428-348 B.C.) proposed another element which he said was the true Primary Element of which the other four elements were made. This fifth element Aristotle called Hyle.

Plato proposed that Hyle was the prime matter of the Universe with four fundamental properties of hot, cold, moist, and dry, and that it was the combination of these properties in pairs which produced the four elements. Fire is hot and dry, Water is cold and moist, Air is hot and moist, and Earth is dry and cold. Aristotle later proposed another fifth element, the Quintessence or Ether, which he claimed to be like fire. The theory that all things were composed of these primary elements remained strong till the 17th Century, when Robert Boyle published "The Skeptical

Chymist" in 1661, in which he made a critical examination of the Aristotelian theory of the elements.

From the point of view of modern day science, this theory of the ancients is a closed book. But from the point of view of Hermeticism, this theory is still a useful tool to be applied in the operations of the Great Work, particularly in that branch of Hermeticism called Mystical Alchemy. This, as we shall see, is a most practical point of view, for the application of this ancient theory takes on a new meaning in the works of Mystical Alchemy, since in this branch of Hermeticism the so-called Aristotelian Elements are interpreted in a different light than that of ancient science, though the theory of these elements is still proposed in a similar manner as it was done by the ancients.

Putting aside all modern day criticism of this theory, let us each judge for ourselves whether or not this ancient theory still holds any value for us today when applied to the Great Work. The elements of this theory, as they are proposed in Hermeticism, are not the elements which the ancients thought to compose the Universe, but rather do they denote empirical principles which play a vital part in the constitution of our existential lives. Let us therefore interpret this theory in the illuminating light of metaphor, and not in the literal sense when we approach it in this lesson where it is applied to the practical applications of Mystical Alchemy.

Now from the point of view of Sexual Alchemy the Great Work is to manufacture the Philosopher's Stone by the skillful application of the sexual act between a man and a woman. In this material form of Alchemy the simple adage holds true: "It takes two to tango!" This constitutes the fundamentals of Sexual Alchemy, which we call Our Master Work and the Labour of Hercules, but most especially the Mass of the Holy Ghost. The whole secret of this Magnum Opus is symbolized by the Union of the Rosicrucian Rose and Cross. This symbol is the same as the symbol for Venus, which is a modification of the Egyptian Ankh, which is itself a combined symbol of the Cross and Circle. The Cross symbolizes the Masculine Principle and the Circle or Rose symbolizes the Feminine Principle.

The formula of this Great Work is further represented by the geometrical symbol of the Hexagram. This ancient symbol of Eastern origin is composed of two interlaced triangles indicating the Union of Fire and Water. It also indicates the union of the Phallos and Kteis. The upright triangle is the Phallos, whereas the inverted triangle is the Kteis. And these two triangles united into a single figure symbolize the Child of the Phallos and Kteis, which we call Our Lapis Philosophorum, the Stone of the Philosophers. The Hexagram is a geometrical symbol of the Stone of the Philosophers, also called Lapis Mercurius, the Stone of Mercury. Ergo, it is a symbol of what we call "***the Mystery of Mysteries***" and "***the Secret of Secrets***", which is also symbolized by the Hermetic Androgyne or Hermaphrodite who is the Mercury of the Sages. Fire and Water united produce the element of Air which is symbolic of the Mercury of the Sages, or of the Mercury that is produced by the Secret Union of Sulphur and Salt.

Such is the magical formula of the Rose and Cross, which is the central mystery of the True Rosicrucians; and by the proper use of this magical formula we may accomplish the Great Work and transmute the base metals into the Perfect Gold of the Sun. In the symbolism of the Rosy Cross, the Rose is synonymous with the Moon and the Cross is synonymous with the Sun. The Adept of Sexual Alchemy is one who accomplishes the Great Work of uniting the Rose and Cross or Sun and Moon to produce the Stone of the Philosophers, the Elixir of Life, and the Medicine

of Metals.

Another important symbol of Sexual Alchemy is the Triangle surmounted by a Cross. Eliphas Levi wrote: "**Now the Triangle surmounted by a cross signifies in Alchemy the end and perfection of the Great Work.**" And in the Neophyte Ceremony of the New Order of the Golden Dawn, it is proclaimed to the Candidate: "The Cross surmounting a Triangle has many special meanings. But principally it represents the Stone of the Wise, the Medicine of Metals, and the Elixir of Life, which is the object of the Great Work, the Knowledge of which is concentrated in the Secret Sanctuary of our Holy Order. This Stone of the Wise is the Secret of Secrets, the Grand Arcanum of the Sacred Mysteries. By its power, all manner of miracles can be accomplished. By its power, the Adepti of Magick can attain eternal youth, perfect joy, and true wealth. But most especially can it assist you in the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of your Holy Guardian Angel and in the accomplishment of your True Will."

In a duly constituted Temple of Initiation in the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn, the Sun (Hadit), the Moon (Nuit), and the Child of Their Mystick Union (Ra-Hoor-Khuit), are represented by three Officers in the Temple who are called the Royal Prince, the Royal Princess, and the Very Honoured Hierophant. The Prince is the Sun, the Princess is the Moon, and the Hierophant is the Child of Their Holy Union. In all the Initiation Ceremonies of the New Order of the Golden Dawn, the Great Work is impressed on the mind of the Candidate by way of these three principal Officers, who also represent the three Principles of Sulphur, Salt and Mercury.

In the Neophyte Ceremony of the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn, it is proclaimed by the Royal Prince: "I am the Royal Prince of the Sun who stands beside this Neophyte to signify his/her Male Self, the Force of Light in action in his/her soul; and I am the Secret Flame within the heart of this Neophyte, ever burning bright to nourish him/her with Life and Beauty and the Eternal Wisdom." It is then proclaimed by the Royal Princess in the same ceremony: "I am the Royal Princess of the Moon who stands beside this Neophyte to signify his/her Female Self, the Force of Darkness in the soul of Nature; and I am the Secret Aspiration of the soul of this Neophyte, ever seeking to nourish him/her with Love and Bliss and the Eternal Understanding."

The Very Honoured Hierophant then proclaims in the same ceremony: "In thee ever, O Neophyte, are the Royal Forces of the Sun and Moon, and in thee ever do they seek union, so that without that union there is no true equilibrium in the soul. Thou shalt do well to know and unite these two Forces within thyself, so that thou mayest be without suffering and attain true harmony within."

Moreover: "Let the Sun and the Moon unite, and let them bear an Hermaphrodite! Let a Child be born from this holy union. And lo! it shall be the Stone of the Wise, and the Medicine of Metals. And so shalt thou perform the Great Work of the Sages. And so shalt thou accomplish the Supreme Goal of the Adepti of Light."

CHAPTER I I

ALCHEMY IN PRACTICE

Let us begin this practical part of our lesson with the subject of Mystical Alchemy. As previously explained, the Philosopher's Stone in this branch of Alchemy is not a powder or any sort of material object; it is rather a spiritual object, being a symbol of the True Self. To acquire this stone in Mystical Alchemy is to attain the ideal identity of our inmost nature. In the Philosophy of Magick, such is called "the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." It is by this attainment alone that the Mystical Alchemist is able to transmute all base metals into the Perfect Gold of the Sun, conforming all things to his/her True Will. But there are various forms of alchemistical practice to attain the Stone of the Philosophers and to effect this Supreme Transmutation.

Mystical Alchemy can be practiced through the Eastern techniques of Kundalini Yoga. However, there is a form of Occidental Kundalini Yoga. Such is one of the central mysteries of the royal system of initiation in the New Order of the Golden Dawn. This system, as previously explained, is sevenfold, having seven principal grades or steps of initiation. Each one of these initiatory steps directly corresponds to the awakening of one of the seven Chakras. The actual alchemical process begins with the First Grade of the Zelator.

In the Thelemic Ceremony of the Zelator, the Hierophant proclaims the following to the initiate: "The word Zelator is from the ancient Egyptian Zaruator, signifying 'Searcher for Hathoor.' Hathoor is otherwise called Het-Heru, that is, the House of Horus. This House of Horus is Nature Herself, the Temple of the Elements, of which you are a zealous student." Moreover, the Hierophant proclaims: "Zelator is further the title of the assistant of an Alchemist who must keep the Fire burning in the Athanor or Alchemical Furnace. The Alchemist of the Operation is the Inner Self, the Athanor is the human body, and the Fire is the Sacred Flame of the True Will. As a Zelator you must keep this Fire burning in your body and brain, by constant dedication of yourself to the Great Work of doing your True Will, that you may fulfill the Law of Thelema."

Unknown to many, the twenty-two Atu of Thoth or Major Arcana of Tarot symbolically describe a form of Occidental Kundalini Yoga or an alchemical operation of Self-Transformation. They represent particular stages in the Great Work, or stages in what is called the "**process of individuation**" in the field of Psychology. The Tarot is, to all intents and purposes, a symbolic book of Self-Initiation, a method and means of realizing by oneself the wisdom of one's True Self without the guidance of a visible teacher, but by way of an invisible teacher who is, in fact, the One Teacher of which every visible teacher is only a symbol. In Tarot this One Teacher is Thoth, who is the Mercury of the Sages.

In the Masonic book "Morals and Dogma", by Albert Pike, we find the following comment on page 777: "**He who desires to attain to the understanding of the Grand Word and the possession of the Great Secret, ought carefully to read the Hermetic philosophers, and he will undoubtedly attain initiation, as others have done; but he must take, for the key of their allegories, the single dogma of Hermes, contained in his Table of Emerald, and follow, to class his acquisitions of knowledge and direct the operation, the order indicated in the Kabalistic alphabet of the Tarot.**" This comment contains one

of the most important clues to the practical understanding of the Royal Art and Science of Alchemy. In my own opinion, for whatever worth it may hold for you, without Tarot the Art of Alchemy is a meaningless operation, and this extends to all other fields of the Hermetic Science. Thus did Eliphas Levi declare: "**All secrets of the Qabalah and Magic, all mysteries of the elder world, all sciences of the patriarchs, all historical traditions of primeval times, are enclosed in the Hieroglyphical Book of Thoth.**"

It has been said that the word Taro is derived from the Egyptian terms Tar (Road) and Ro (Royal). Thus the Tarot is the Royal Road of Initiation. To travel this regal road we work with the twenty-two Atu of Thoth in accordance with the Qabalistic scheme of the Tree of Life, commencing our alchemical journey with the Serpent's Tail at the place of Atu XXI at the Path of Tav on the bottom of the Tree of Life, and we end at the Serpent's Head at the place of Atu 0 at the Path of Aleph at the top of the Tree of Life. The Serpent embraces within its coils the twenty-two Paths and it ascends from Tav to Aleph. Such is the Path of Initiation by which the Mystical Alchemist can attain the Stone of the Philosophers to effect the Supreme Transmutation. The Serpent in this operation is, of course, the SECRET FIRE of Alchemy or the Kundalini of Yoga without which nothing can be accomplished. There is, however, another method of traveling the Royal Road, but concerning this I must maintain a certain degree of silence, lest I reveal what must be discovered for and by oneself. Yet the nature of this secret operation is so obvious that it is like a light that is so bright that it makes one blind. In this tarotic alchemystic operation the Qabalistic scheme of the Tree of Life is not employed in the same manner as it is in the operation that is explained in the above paragraph. It is rather an operation that is independent of the system of initiation that is outlined on the Tree of Life, yet it does in fact partake of the mysteries of this system after another manner. But this operation is only for the few, and thus it is concealed beneath the veil of the obvious. It is only revealed to them who are duly prepared to execute its formula. To others it will seem a meaningless path.

Astrology, the Science of the Stars, also has a story to tell us. In this science there are seven traditional Planets and twelve Signs of the Zodiac. As previously explained, the seven traditional Planets are linked with the seven Chakras of Yoga and seven alchemical Metals, and they also represent seven stages in the Great Work. Most sevenfold systems of initiation are based on the astrological model of the seven traditional Planets. The alchemical Metals themselves grow in the bowels of the earth under the magical influence of the Planets. In the Mithraic Mysteries the initiate climbed seven metallic steps representing his ascent into the seven Planetary Spheres, and Zosimos defined Alchemy as the Mithraic Mystery. The Signs of the Zodiac also represent distinct stages in the Great Work, but there are twelve of these stages instead of seven. These twelve stages are defined by the nature of the Zodiacal Signs themselves which have planetary and elemental attributions. The Circle of the Zodiac, called the Path of the Sun, is the Circle of Initiation, containing twelve distinct Signs or stages. Like the images of the Atu of Thoth, the Signs of the Zodiac are images of archetypes in the Collective Unconscious which can be systematically evoked and consciously experienced for the attainment of the Philosopher's Stone.

In each of these methods the principal theme is the realization of a single object: the True Self. Such is the Indivisible Self of the Universe, the One without a second. The great secret of Alchemy can be summed up in a few simple words: "All is

One." This is the meaning of the Greek motto "en to pan" which, note it well, is composed of three words with seven letters, which relate to the Three Principles and Four Elements of Alchemy, to the seven alchemical Metals or Interior Stars, and to the seven Steps of the Great Work which are the seven Grades of Initiation. One of the symbols of the Great Work is Ouroboros, a Serpent forming a Circle by swallowing its own Tail and which bears this Greek motto upon it. The Circle that is formed by this Serpent gives us a clue into the nature and operation of the Great Work itself.

Now this Oneness or Unity of All is concealed in a secret substance called First Matter (Prima Materia), which is not matter in the common sense, as it is perceived by our human senses; it is the potential rather than the actual; it is matter in its metaphysical sense. According to Thomas Vaughan: "***If thou dost know the First Matter, know also for certain that thou hast discovered the Sanctuary of Nature.***" In the Yoga System of Patanjali, the First Matter is called Prakriti, the primal source of the three Gunas or Qualities of Nature. Prakriti is the Soul of the World (Anima Mundi), also called the Great Mother. In the Qabalah, She is Neschamah, the higher Soul of Nature whose formless form remains pure and unchanged behind all change and diversity in form. She is the eternal essence in all things, the secret substance of all visible and invisible objects in Nature.

"***The squaring of the circle***" is one of the most important interpretations and definitions of the Great Work of Alchemy. The Circle represents Unity, the First Matter of our work, and the Square represents the Four Elements of Nature which emanate from and return to the Circle. In Alchemy it is asserted that the metals are composed of the Four Elements, which the ancient philosophers called Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. The actual differences between the metals are the result of the particular proportions in which the elements are combined in the metals. Gold itself is the natural result of a particular combination of the elements. The other metals of Alchemy are also combinations of the elements. By extracting and purifying the elements in the base metals, thereby reducing the metals to their pure state of Prima Materia, and then by skillfully converting the actual proportions in the combinations of the elements which constitute the life of the metals, the metals can be transformed into gold.

By purifying an object of the Four Elements we are left with a fifth element which we call the Quintessence and the First Matter of our work. In WoMan this fifth element is called his/her Spirit. Now in Mystical Alchemy the elements represent the human senses. Fire is the sense of sight, Water is the sense of taste, Air is the sense of smell, Earth is the sense of touch, and Spirit is the sense of sound. The fifth element of Spirit, unlike the others, has a direct link with our True Self, which is the Crown of our alchemystical work. To attain this fifth element we must first purify or deprogram ourselves. Then must we recreate or reprogram ourselves in accordance with our True Will. When the True Self is attained through its so-called purification, or, in other words, when we rise above the elemental senses, it is then that we are able to properly recreate ourselves, to reprogram our systems, or to recombine the elements to fit in with our new perspective. But first we must purify our systems; only then are we truly fit and freely able to properly consecrate ourselves to the Great Work, to reprogram ourselves in accordance with our True Will, and to effect the Supreme Transmutation.

To deprogram ourselves is not really an act of elimination but of purification. In this case the elemental senses are to be purified. The senses, as commonly applied in

the world, are material in nature, causing an identification of consciousness with the material plane at the expense of the spiritual. But we cannot realize our True Self if our senses are bound to the material world; they must become the vehicles of our True Self. The senses must be purified and then magically dedicated to the Great Work if we are to attain the same; and this dedication must not be partial, but whole. For the senses are the instruments which we must use in the operation of the Great Work; they are the essential, creative vehicles of our True Self which need to be completely lustrated and then magically consecrated to the True Self for the proper execution and essential fulfillment of its True Will which is the attainment of the Great Work itself.

What is needed first is for you to realize your True Self beyond your elemental senses by eliminating your identification with them and their innumerable desires, and in this profound realization is the very act of purification. If a WoMan can witness something, it means that he/she is beyond that thing, for awareness is transcendence. We are always witnessing our senses in the form of desires, usually becoming identified with them. We take into account no measure of the True Self which is beyond the senses and desires, but instead we become slaves to our senses. But if we go within and acknowledge our True Self beyond our senses, and become a witness rather than an animal, then do we transcend our senses and gain the power to master them. The True Self is the ultimate source of the elements, therefore we must be the True Self to master them. But this does not mean that we have to give up our senses with all their delicious desires. It is all a matter of what we are identified with, our True Self or our desires. We are not our desires, but they are a part of our personality which is the divine expression of our soul.

The laboratory wherein to perform and accomplish this alchemystical work is naturally the Body of WoMan. And since a WoMan's body is his/her own and not another's, it is a simple fact of Nature that only that WoMan can work upon him/herself to accomplish the Great Work. No person can do the work for us; we must all do it by our own individual efforts. Mystical Alchemy is a personal science, a sublime and effective system of Self-Initiation. Only you, as a single individual, can calculate and follow your way up the Great Mountain of Hermetic Attainment. It is entirely a matter of your own practical application and devotion. All essential guidance is within you, in the inmost centre of your heart where your own Holy Guardian Angel, or Inner Self, resides. To depend upon any other thing than your own Holy Guardian Angel to accomplish the Great Work is to insult your Angel who is with you to instruct and guide you. All essential wisdom by which to achieve the Great Work is to be ascertained only within you; nowhere else will you find the Truth. But enough of all this mystical talk! Let us now tackle the more mundane aspect of Alchemy. Such is contained in the ancient Science and Art of Sexual Alchemy, which was the great secret of the Egyptian Magicians, the Gnostics, the Ophites, the Initiates of Mithras, the Knights of the Temple, the Freemasons, and the Brethren of the Rosy Cross. Aleister Crowley envisaged Sexual Alchemy to be the flower of Magick and the key to the future progress of humanity. By it we are able to partake the Supreme Sacrament of the Golden Dawn, to create dynamic changes in accordance with our True Will, and to make Light, Life, Love and Liberty our chosen lot. Members of the New Order of the Golden Dawn are instructed in the mysteries of Sexual Alchemy by way of "ceremonial symbolism," which impresses on their minds the universal formula of the Great Work by which they may become Adept in Our Royal Art to accomplish their True Will.

In Sexual Alchemy there are certain emblems linked with the Tetragrammaton. These are the Red Lion for Yod (Fire), the White Eagle for Heh (Water), the Serpent for Vav (Air), and the Gluten for Heh final (Earth). The Red Lion is the male operator, the White Eagle is the female operator, the Serpent is that which swims in the Blood of the Red Lion, and the Gluten is the Menstruum of the White Eagle. The Egg which is laid by the White Eagle is fertilized by the Serpent. The instrument or apparatus of the male operator is the Athanor or Furnace. The instrument or apparatus of the female operator is the Cucurbite or Retort. Now when the Blood of the Red Lion is one with the Gluten of the White Eagle, and when the Serpent and the Egg are perfectly fused, then is the Stone of the Philosophers manufactured. In this the Lion exchanges his Red Blood for the White Gluten of the Eagle. The Red Lion turns White, and the White Eagle turns Red. The Fire burns up the Water and the Water extinguishes the Fire. Such is the consummation of the Royal Marriage of the Sun and Moon in the Hermetic Vessel. Basil Valentine wrote: "**Let the Lion and Eagle duly prepare themselves as Prince and Princess of Alchemy -- as they may be inspired. Let the Union of the Red Lion and the White Eagle be neither in cold nor in heat...Now then comes the time when the elixir is placed in the alembic retort to be subjected to the gentle warmth...If the Great Work be transubstantiation then the Red Lion may feed upon the flesh and blood of the God, and also let the Red Lion duly feed the White Eagle -- yea, may the Mother Eagle give sustainment and guard the inner life.**"

I would now like to present to you an alchemical ritual called "The Ceremony of the Sun and Moon." This ritual contains the whole secret of the Great Work from the point of view of the material plane. It is a Sexual Ceremony designed to unite the Sun and Moon to produce the Stone of the Philosophers. This ritual is specifically designed for the use of two participants. These are the Priest of the Sun and the Priestess of the Moon. In this ritual the Sun and Moon are invoked in the Priest and Priestess who then unite in ecstasy to produce the Philosopher's Stone. It is the Official Thelemic Marriage Ceremony of the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn, composed by my own hand in the year 1991 e.v. by the magical inspiration, and under the guiding light, of the Sun and Moon. As such, it is a unique contribution to the Magick of Thelema, and it is the first ceremony of its kind to openly reveal the secrets of Sexual Alchemy. For it is a True Ceremony of the Rose and Cross, only to be understood by those men and women of the earth who live and breathe in the Secret Sanctuary of the Gnosis. Such are the Holy Brothers and Sisters of the Rosy Cross, whose names are writ with blood in the Stone of Eternity.

THE CEREMONY OF THE SUN AND MOON

**Being a Ritual of Marriage
designed for the Conjoining of
two souls in Nuit and Hadit.**

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

I

The Arrangement of the Temple

The Temple shall be arranged accordingly. In the centre shall be the Altar, having upon it a Cup of Wine, two Cakes of Light, the Magick Wand, the Magick Bell, the Holy Oil, two Magical Links for the Priest and the Priestess (two consecrated Rings), and The Book of the Law.

II

The Preparation of the Ceremony

The Priest shall wear a Red (or White) Robe and the Priestess shall wear a Blue (or Black) Robe to symbolize Fire and Water (or Light and Darkness, that is, Male and Female). The Priest shall wear a Lamen of the Sun and the Priestess shall wear a Lamen of the Moon. They shall duly purify their bodies before they robe.

To begin this Holy Ceremony of the Sun and Moon, let the Priest duly banish in the Temple by the proper magical method. (Perform the Banishing Ritual of the Star Ruby, Liber XXV.) Then shall he apply the Holy Oil to himself and the Priestess shall do the same to herself, consecrating their Wills to this Great Work of Union.

Then shall they kiss, uniting hands as they do so. Then shall they position themselves in their appropriate stations in the Temple, the Priest in the East of the Temple and the Priestess in the West of the Temple, facing each other.

Before conducting this Holy Ceremony, the Priest and the Priestess should meditate in their hearts upon verses 33 and 34 of Chapter I of The Book of the Law. Also they should meditate in their hearts upon verse 35 of Chapter II of The Book of the Law. Let them perform this Holy Ceremony in accordance with these holy injunctions of Thelema. They should especially meditate upon and put into proper effect the holy injunction: "the rituals shall be half known and half concealed."

III

The Proclamation and the Oath

Priest:

(In the East facing Priestess in the West.)

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Priestess:

(In the West facing Priest in the East.)

Love is the Law, Love under Will.

Priest: What is thy Will, O Lady of the Night?

Priestess: It is my Will to sacramentally Unite.

And what is thy Will, O Man of the Sun?

Priest: It is my Will to become as One.

Priestess: And by what Magick Spell shall we work our Will?

Priest: By the Spell of this Ritual's Mystick Seal.

Priestess: And what shall we make by this act Unknown?

Priest: A mysterious object called the Philosopher's Stone!

Priestess: Art thou prepared to do thy Will?

Priest: I am prepared to accomplish the Grand Miracle.

Priestess: Will you take an Oath to complete this Rite?

Priest: I will take the Oath and we will Unite.

Priestess: Then seal thy words with a precious Kiss

And so shall we unite in infinite Bliss!

The Priest and Priestess go to the Altar and the Priest kisses his Priestess on her lips. Then shall they unite hands above The Book of the Law on the Holy Altar, and together they shall take the Oath.

Priest and Priestess:

In freedom we take this Oath of Love

To accomplish our Will on earth as above!

We promise and swear, and infinitely aspire,

To unite as one -- our hearts desire!

By Fire and Water we will partake this hour

The Holy Sacrament of Magick Power!

Priest and Priestess:

And so shall we work our Will to Unite

And attain the Quintessence of this Rite!

This Oath we promise; this Oath we swear

As we enflame ourselves with Prayer!

In the Name of Thelema -- the Law of Liberty,

As we will, So mote it be!

IV

The Invocation of the Elements

The Priest advances to the appropriate Elemental quarters and invokes the Elements by way of the Unicursal Hexagram and the appropriate verbal invocations.

Priest:

(Advances to the East, traces the Unicursal Hexagram of Fire, and invokes:)

Holy art Thou, O Lord of the Fire,

Thou Lord of Light, to which we aspire!

O Thou Flashing Flame of Eternity,

Come Thou forth we say unto Thee!

(Priest goes to the South, traces the Unicursal Hexagram of Earth, and invokes:)

Holy art Thou, O Lord of the Earth,

Thou Lord of Life, our essence of birth!

O Thou soul of all forms that we see,

Come Thou forth we say unto Thee!

(Priest goes to the West, traces the Unicursal Hexagram of Air, and invokes:)

Holy art Thou, O Lord of the Air,

Thou Lord of Liberty, to which we adhere!

O Thou perpetual Breath of Ecstasy,

Come Thou forth we say unto Thee!

(Priest goes to the North, traces the Unicursal Hexagram of Water, and invokes:)

**Holy art Thou, O Lord of the Water,
Thou Lord of Love and Mystick Rapture!**

**O Thou inscrutable Depth of the Sea,
Come Thou forth we say unto Thee!**

(The Priest now goes to the Centre of the Temple, completing the Circle. He then gives the Sign of the Cross, and declares:)

**Holy art thou, ye Elements Divine,
Invoked and inspired to perfectly combine
In this Temple consecrated to Love
To accomplish below That which is Above!**

V

The Invocation of the Sun and Moon

The Priest and Priestess now exchange stations, so that the Priest is facing East and the Priestess is facing West.

Priest:

(Makes Unicursal Hexagram of Sol and invokes:)

**I invoke Thee, O Thou Glorious Sun,
To come Thou forth that our Will be done!**

**Let Thy Light illumine this Temple
Making true the Magick of this Holy Ritual!**

Priestess:

(Makes Unicursal Hexagram of Luna and invokes:)

**I invoke Thee, O Thou Soul of Night,
To come Thou forth that we may Unite!**

**Let Thy Love work its Mighty Spell
To make as one, both Heaven and Hell!**

VI

The Conjoining of the Sun and Moon

The Priest and Priestess shall now unite to produce the Philosopher's Stone, that they may duly charge their Magical Links with the invoked Current of this Sacramental Ceremony of Love for the accomplishment of their Will to Unite. When this is complete, let the Priest consume the Elixir and administer the same unto his Priestess.

VII

The Charging of the Magical Links

A portion of the Philosopher's Stone shall be used to charge the Magical Links which are designed to bring about the desired magical effect of this Holy Ceremony. They shall be imbued with the invoked force of the Stone. These links should be in the form of consecrated Magical Rings which shall be worn by the Priest and Priestess as true tokens of their consummation of this Sacramental Ceremony. The Priest shall do best by tracing the Sigil of the Moon on the Ring which he will administer to his Priestess, and the Priestess shall do best by tracing the Sigil of the Sun on the Ring which she will administer to her Priest.

Priest:

(When tracing Sigil of Luna, let him declare:)

**This ring I bless to unite my soul
with the Priestess of this Holy Ritual!**

The Priest shall now kiss the Ring and place it on the proper finger of his Priestess.

Priestess:

(When tracing Sigil of Sol, let her declare:)

**This ring I bless to unite my soul
With the High Priest of this Holy Temple!**

The Priestess shall now kiss the Ring and place it on the proper finger of her Priest.

VIII

**The Proclamation
of the Rings of Power**

Priest and Priestess:

**Upon our fingers there is Magick Power,
Rings of a Spell, by which we empower
Our Will to unite in Love and Liberty - -
A Mystic delight for all eternity!**

Priest and Priestess:

**These Rings of Love we do proclaim
As Links of a Power we do acclaim!
By their Magick we enforce our Way
To work our Will both Night and Day!**

IX

**The Proclamation
of the Union of the
Sun and Moon**

Priest and Priestess:

**This we proclaim; that we are Bound
In Mystick Love and Freedom Profound!
Our divided souls are wed in Ecstasy:
We are ever joined in Love and Liberty!**

Priest and Priestess:

**This we proclaim; that we are One:
In the Sun and Moon our Will is done!
We shall now celebrate with Wine and Cake
This blessed Union which we undertake!**

X

**The Celebration of
the Sun and Moon**

Priest and Priestess:

**We partake the Cake; we partake the Wine:
The bread and the blood -- sacraments divine!**

Let the Priest and the Priestess now partake the Cakes and the Wine. When this is duly accomplished, they shall then declare:

Priest and Priestess:

**We revel with joy in this act of zeal,
Partaking the elements with Love under Will!**

The Priest and the Priestess shall now embrace their bodies in pure passionate ecstasy and joy, ending all with a sacramental kiss of delicious delight as a final token of their Mystick Love.

XI

The Great Work

Accomplished

The Priest and the Priestess shall now strike the Magick Bell. The Priestess shall hold the Bell on high, and the Priest shall strike the Bell 3-5-3 with his Wand.

When this is duly accomplished, they shall then both proclaim:

ABRAHADABRA!

This final Word of Power seals this Sacramental Ceremony of Love with the Magical Current of the Great Work of Thelema, of which it is a proper magical glyph, being the glyph of the Magick Formula of the Mystick Union of the Rose and Cross. It is the great Reward of Our Lord Ra-Hoor-Khuit, administered unto them who are chosen and united in Nuit and Hadit.

To properly end this Holy Ceremony, the Priest shall duly perform the Banishing Ritual of the Star Ruby (Liber XXV). Then shall the Priest and Priestess depart the Temple in unison, with hands joined to symbolize their going forth together to do their Will among the legions of the living; yea, to do their Will among the legions of the living.

Love is the law, love under will.

CHAPTER III

DE MAGNUM OPUS SOLIS

(ON THE GREAT WORK OF THE SUN)

Now, o my beloved brethren of the Golden Dawn, shalt thou read herein the words of Hermes Trismegistus, Thrice-greatest Lord of Our Royal Art and Science, whose Voice is Wisdom and whose Thought is Light. And this, o my beloved brethren, is His Holy Book, dedicated to His Royal Work, the Magnum Opus of the Sun. It is made of thirty-six verses in all, being a manifestation of the Glory of Mercury, from whence it was written in the mind of a Magician. It is the magical fruit of the Invocation of Hermes-Mercurius-Thoth, the Threefold Lord of Our Majestic Opus of the Sun, in whose Holy Image it was written. Mayest thou partake of the splendour of its Truth, tasting the sweetness of its Wisdom, to fortify and illumine thy soul, mind and body with the Life and Light of the Sun which is the *Eternal Spirit of the Golden Dawn*.

LIBER ALKHEMI

(The Book of Alchemy)

Official Holy Book of the
Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn

Received by
Sir David Cherubim
(Frater Aurora Aureae)
1988 e.v.

1. The Great Work is One: Attain Thou That! All things are modes of expression of That One Thing and Its Eternal Quest for Unity with Itself in the Immeasurable Light of Its Universal Holiness.

(Comment: The One is the Many. There are as many great works as there are stars in the Universe. That which "Thou" shalt attain is your own Great Work, which is the fulfillment of your own True Will. All things partake of that great union between the human and the divine; all is a necessary part of that great play of your own True Self. The Immeasurable Light is Kether, the first Sephira on the Qabalistic Tree of Life which represents the Yechidah or the True Essence of the soul, your Highest Self.)

2. This is the Highest Will of All: Union with That!

(Comment: The Highest Will of All is to attain union with That, your Kether Self, or your True Self, which is The All in All. And this can only be achieved through your True Will which is your True Self in action.)

3. That Alone is Truth; and this that thou knowest is a necessary complement thereof.

(Comment: The only valid truth in the Universe is your True Self as indicated by the dynamic motion of your True Will; and your physical consciousness is a necessary, complementary part of your True Self, made manifest for you to accomplish its One Will on earth.)

4. Wherefore We charge ye to know the True Nature of That One Thing.

(Comment: It is in the nature of the Secret Chiefs to instruct all in the knowledge of their True Self. Thus they have delivered one of their own unto the world, to initiate

this knowledge in the minds of men and women. But the True Nature of that One Thing is for each individual to discover in his/her own way, since it partakes of the very essence of his/her own unique nature. It cannot be realized through another; it must be obtained by oneself, for oneself, and in oneself. All that another can do is to assist you to the Path, to initiate this knowledge in you. But once you are on the Path, only you can master that knowledge in accordance with your own True Will.)

5. Therefore shall We also charge ye to know the One Meaning of That One Thing, as ye shall learn in the course of thine initiations, through the many lives of thy fabricated karma, to the Final Illustrious Summit of Thy True Will in the Eternal and Secret Abode of L.V.X.; yea, in the Eternal and Secret Abode of L.V.X.

(Comment: The One Meaning of the True Self is in the Way of its True Will. The True Will is the mystery of initiation and of incarnation. The Eternal and Secret Abode of L.V.X. is the Home of our True Self, the Place of the Palace of Perfection.)

6. The Great Work of the Sun is proclaimed: Attain Thou the Mystic Crown of the Ages!

(Comment: The Great Work of the Sun is to attain our Kether Self, which is The All in All, defined above as the True Self. This Royal Work makes for the attainment of the Philosopher's Stone, which is a symbol of our True Self. It is with this stone that the Alchemist can transmute all base metals into the Perfect Gold of Nature. But this is only a metaphor for the Supreme Transmutation of the human into the divine. As Eliphas Levi once wrote: "*The Great Work is something more than a chemical operation: it is an actual creation of the human Word initiated into the power of the Word of God Himself.*")

7. Here is a prophecy of divinity, most sublime for many future Adepts. This Royal Book of Our Transcendental Science will remain amongst men of this little earth for many generations to come. Many adepts in the future will understand this Holy Book and apply its secret gnosis to the accomplishment of the Great Work; and thereby will they secretly partake of the Ineffable Mystery of the True Stone of the Wise which is hidden in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Eternal Temple of the Holy Magick of Light.

(Comment: This holy book can be compared to the famous Emerald Table of Hermes, which has exercised a profound influence on many Adepts of the Hermetic Art. This alchemical book shall also influence, in a most profound manner, many Adepts in the coming generations, and it shall be the cause of much speculation among them. But of these many will come to an understanding of the Great Work and thereby attain the Stone of the Sages.)

8. By the Ageless Wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus, Thrice-greatest-One, Who is the Lord of Our Royal Science and Sacerdotal Art, is this Holy Book made possible for the children of men.

(Comment: The Ageless Wisdom pertains to the Sephira called Chokmah on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Chokmah is the Logos. Hermes Trismegistus, or Hermes-Mercurius-Thoth, is the Logos, and He is the Threefold Lord presiding over the alchemical Art. This is none other than His Holy Book for the illumination of the Adepts in the generations to come.)

9. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear the wondrous and melodious splendours of High Wisdom, immanent yet concealed within these sweet celestial words of the vast subtlety of the Crown of Creation.

(Comment: The true teachings of this holy book cannot be found in the words which go to make up its external form, but can only be intuitively realized by the interior ear of the Spirit. These are the wondrous and melodious splendours of the Logos who is the Crown of Creation.)

10. Thou shalt discern the imperishable golden splendours of these holy runes of magick in the Eternal Vision of Wisdom, and with the Inner Ear of Thy Spirit, and also by virtue of a certain key of knowledge which is unpronounced and unrecognized amongst the men of this little world of corporeal existence.

(Comment: You shall intuit the interior meanings of this holy book in the ageless light and intelligence of the Logos, and by way of your inner ear, and also by virtue of a certain key of knowledge which, when discovered, unlocks all the mysteries of Our Royal Art and Science. This key is openly revealed in the interpretations that follow.)

11. These secret splendours reveal the highest glory for the perfect attainment of the One Truth in man.

(Comment: The interior parts of this holy book are its true revelations. These interior truths are what constitute the attainment of the Great Work. To reveal is to remove a veil, to unveil a Mystery. The highest glory is the Knowledge of our Kether Self, which alone makes for the perfection of our soul.)

12. For all that is recorded herein is a true testimony of things seen with the Inner Eye of Our Soul, and of things heard with the Inner Ear of Our Spirit.

(Comment: This holy book is a true testimony of the Wisdom of the Secret Brethren of the Rose and Cross. But I have no proof of this fact; only personal experience can demonstrate the authenticity of my words. Illustration: You cannot convince a blind man that there is such a thing as light. A greater fool is he who tries to convince him!)

13. This Holy Book is a fountain of truth, by which ye shall come to understand the Invisible Agencies which direct the hidden operations of the Great Work throughout the infinite spaces of Infinity, with worlds without end, above and below, left and right, before and behind.

(Comment: The Invisible Agencies of Alchemy are supernal and universal in kind. They are the very forces of infinity which constitute universal creation, preservation, and destruction. These are manifest in all things, and all things are but combinations and modifications of these Universal Principles.)

14. These Subtle Agencies are three in number, capable of great and vast transformations through pure multiplication and exaltation of their infinite and elastic elements of becoming.

(Comment: In the Qabalah these three Agencies are linked with the three Supernal Sephiroth on the Tree of Life. These are Kether, Chokmah, and Binah. These three Sephiroth are the hidden cause of all transformation in the Universe. They are abstract, synergistic, conspiratorial Principles which cannot be defined in any concrete or linear terms, for they are beyond all manifestation, existing in what we may call "*the interior universe*." These three Agencies are the very forces which constitute the Great Work in both Macrocosmos and Microcosmos, and they are the hidden cause of all celestial and terrestrial changes through the multiplication and exaltation of the subtle forces which are the universal, central instruments of creation.)

15. Yet there is but One Knowledge of the One True Formula of those Three Arcane Agencies which constitute the accomplishment of the Great Work, which hath been communicated partially in diverse ways throughout the aeons of time, with each way declaring itself the One Absolute Truth.

(Comment: The One Knowledge of the One True Formula of these three Agencies is simply the knowledge that they are One. These three Principles are unified self-transformations and self-perpetuating productions of each other. This One Knowledge has been the subject of many a school of thought, yet under the dire spell of monistic thinking. There is, however, a further mystery.)

16. But herein is a great and mighty misfortune which hath bound many uninitiated candidates of Our Royal Art to the baleful chains of ignorance and death.

(Comment: As pointed out in the beginning of these comments: the One is the Many. The One Knowledge of Our Royal Art is, in point of fact, infinite in kind, being as diverse as the stars in the Universe. This may seem paradoxical to the mind, but to the soul it is a fact as simple as the nose on your face!

Monism and monotheism, may you note it well, are dangerous beliefs which have corrupted our world view. Our Universe is multidimensional, and there is nothing in Nature which is not a phenomenon of multiplicity.)

17. For many are the ways which lead to the Grand Golden Palace of Our Magnum Opus, and in each way thou shalt find a lesser formula of knowledge applicable to the One End; yet are all these lesser ways but mere reflections of the One True and Unknown Way of Attainment.

(Comment: There are many paths which lead to the perfection of the soul; and since all paths lead to the same place, they are all reflections of the One, that is, they are all reflections of each other. Again, I must emphasize, the One is the Many.)

18. There are also three lesser agencies which concentrate and synthesize the Three Higher Agencies into the innumerable worlds of Our Infinite Universe.

(Comment: The three lesser agencies are, of course, Sulphur, Salt and Mercury which, according to Eliphas Levi, constitute the Stone of the Sages when they are thrice combined in AZOTH by a triple sublimation and a triple fixation. AZOTH, the First Matter of our work, can be compared with the Atom, and the three agencies which constitute AZOTH can be compared with the proton, the neutron and the electron which are the three basic indivisible components or particles which compose the Atom. The proton and the neutron are contained in the central nucleus of an atom, and outside of this nucleus is the electron.

Now all atoms are identical in substance; that is, every atom has an identical, fundamental, internal structure; the protons, neutrons and electrons in one atom are identical to those in any other atom. The atoms of one element differ from those of another element only in the number of their protons and electrons. Also note that atoms cannot be created or destroyed; they can only be rearranged by chemical reactions. It was Democritus of Abdera (400 B.C.) who proposed the theory that all things were composed of atoms and empty space, though the theory of atoms did not become a living part of scientific thinking till the latter part of the 18th century. Sulphur, Salt and Mercury can also be linked with the three Gunas or Qualities of Yoga Philosophy, which are the three fundamental modes of Energy. Such are called Tamas (Passivity), Rajas (Activity) and Sattva (Equilibrium). Tamas is Salt,

Rajas is Sulphur, and Sattva is Mercury. These correspond with the Atu of Thoth called "The Magus" (Sattva/Mercury), "The Emperor" (Rajas/Sulphur), and "The Empress" (Tamas/Salt). Aleister Crowley, regarding these three Principles, said: **"Sulphur is Activity, Energy, Desire; Mercury is Fluidity, Intelligence, the power of Transmission; Salt is the vehicle of these two forms of energy, but itself possesses qualities which react on them."**)

19. If thou canst discover the exoteric operations of these three lesser principles of Nature, thou shalt likewise obtain a holy glimpse of the Three Higher Principles of which We speak.

(Comment: The three lesser agencies are reflections of the nature of the three Higher Agencies of the Universe. Salt reflects the essence of Binah; Sulphur reflects the essence of Chokmah; and Mercury reflects the essence of Kether. To discover the exoteric operations of these three lesser Principles of Nature is, in the ultimate sense, a scientific process. The model of the Atom affords us a wealth of information in this regard.)

20. Each lesser principle is a sign of the higher, but after a certain manner most secret and most mysterious.

(Comment: As previously indicated, the lesser is a reflection of the greater. Thus it is written: **"As above so below, and as below so above, for the accomplishment of the Miracle of The One Thing."**)

21. On earth shalt thou find these principles reflected and made especially manifest in thy works of physical union.

(Comment: In the sex act is reflected the mystery of the operation of the three Principles. Works of physical union are, in fact, the most suitable means of attaining an understanding with regard to the inner workings of Nature for the production of the Philosopher's Stone. Thus did Sir Edward Kelly write in his "Stone of the Philosophers": **"In short, our whole Magistracy consists in the union of the male and female, or active and passive, elements through the mediation of our metallic water and a proper degree of heat."** And in the Rosarium Philosophorum it is written: **"From a man and a woman make a circle, then extract from this a square, and from this extract a triangle, and then make a circle, and you will obtain the Philosopher's Stone."**)

22. There is fire, and there is water, and then there is Air: there is sulphur, and there is salt, and then there is Mercury.

(Comment: Fire represents the Masculine or Solar Principle called Rex, the King; Water represents the Feminine or Lunar Principle called Regina, the Queen; and Air, which is Water coagulated by Fire, is the product of their union, the Androgynous or Mercurial Principle called Rebis or Regulus, the little King. These are the Male and Female operators, or the Red Lion and the White Eagle, and their One Will to Unite. Sulphur is the Blood of the Red Lion; Salt is the Gluten of the White Eagle; and Mercury is that which results from the dissolution of the Sulphur in the Salt, which is also the Chymical Marriage of Sulphur and Mercury, or the Union of the Fixed and the Volatile. Such is also called the Hierosgamos of the Sun and Moon and the Conjunctio of Fire and Water.)

23. Seest thou not the true nature of these things?

(Comment: Not all are able to understand these alchemical mysteries, to pierce the Veil of Isis, no matter what is said on the subject or how much of it is revealed. Thus do I speak so fearlessly and openly regarding these alchemical mysteries, knowing that none may understand my words without already having in their possession the

secret keys to this knowledge.)

24. Ah! thou hast not yet trained thy mind to comprehend the treasures of earth, which are not material wealth, nor are they material goods; but rather are they holy treasures which, when found, make a man to sell all that he hath for them.

(Comment: The true treasures of earth are the treasures of life itself. They are incomparable in nature, being invaluable elements in the constitution of existence. Without these true treasures there is no life, no creation, no evolution.)

25. But the Three Higher Principles of the Universe are beyond these, being subtle, ineffable and supernal. All three of these greater principles are equal in essence to one another; there is no difference between them in the measure of infinity which they contain within themselves: each one of these Higher Principles is equally infinite.

(Comment: The Three Higher Principles of the Universe are immaterial abstract energies, metaphysical in nature, which remain unchanged in their various combinations with each other and in the modifications of their manifestations in matter through the activity of the three lesser Principles which are their direct reflections on earth.)

26. Now let it be understood amongst the holy circle of Initiates that in thine own Holy Rose Garden there dominates these Three Higher Principles of the Vast Unknown of the Celestial Beyond.

(Comment: The Holy Rose Garden is, of course, the human body, the Laboratory or Laboratorium of Our Magnum Opus, wherein are concealed the Three Higher Principles of the Universe through their subtle interplay in matter by way of the three lesser Principles of Nature.

In "The Book of the Elder Kings", received by my own hand in the year 1988 e.v., it is proclaimed by the Brothers of the Rose and Cross: "***Ours is the Sevenfold Path of Initiation: thou shalt transmute the base lead into the subtle Aurum Solis by rising on the Stairway of the Heavens in thy Secret Laboratorium on earth. Here is the Excellent Way! The steps of the Stairway are seven; the Laboratorium is Our Holy House of Song and Our Holy Rose Garden, which thou knowest so well. Yet to those who are vulgar, it is a secret even though they themselves possess it.***")

27. Thou shalt first secure Understanding; then shalt thou attain Wisdom; and so shalt thou obtain the Ageless Crown of Eternal Splendour. These are the Three Ineffable Mysteries of the Palace of the Stars!

(Comment: Understanding is Binah, the third Sephira on the Qabalistic Tree of Life; Wisdom is Chokmah, the second Sephira on the Qabalistic Tree of Life; and the Crown is Kether, the first Sephira on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Such are the True Keys to the Golden Palace of Our Magnum Opus.)

28. They are also the eternal secrets of the Great Lamp of Wisdom: there is the light, and the oil, and the lamp itself.

(Comment: The Lamp of Wisdom is what guides the soul on its journey to the summit of the Great Mountain of Hermetic Attainment. The Lamp is held in the 'hand' of our True Self who is represented in Tarot by "The Hermit". The Hermit holds this Lamp on high that we may comprehend the threefold nature of the Great Work to illumine our Path and make bright our ways.)

29. Study thou well this threefold teaching of Hermes-Mercurius- Thoth, Thrice-greatest-Master of the Opus of the Sun; and so shalt thou

accomplish the Great Work of the Aeon.

(Comment: The Hermit is the image of Hermes-Mercurius-Thoth, as one who has attained the Great Work and who now stands ready to illumine all others below Him on the Path with the threefold teaching of the ages. Yet only those who are truly fit for His Teaching can recognize His Wisdom. The unfit cannot recognize His Wisdom, since they are blind and stupid, unable to see or comprehend the obvious, the Light which is even now upon them.)

30. Thou shalt also know that the Three Higher Principles of which We speak are mysterious revelations of a more Ineffable Trinity of Inscrutable Unity.

(Comment: This seems to imply a mystery of Qabalistic significance in which Kether, Chokmah and Binah are but reflections of three higher abstract concepts, called Ain (Nothing), Ain Soph (The Limitless), and Ain Soph Aour (The Limitless Light). These are the three Veils of Negative Existence which are beyond the Tree of Life. From them, however, emanate the three Supernals, and from these the remaining Sephiroth.)

31. Now the Inward Work is threefold; and the Outward Work is threefold. Each is a Threefold Unity of Soul, Mind and Body.

(Comment: The Inward Work is, of course, Mystical Alchemy and the Outward Work is, of course, Sexual Alchemy. Both of these operations are comprised of three basic stages. These three stages are called **Nigredo**, **Albedo**, and **Rubedo**, or the Black, the White, and the Red. Nigredo is the stage of Dissolution, which is the Putrefaction of our work; Albedo is Coagulation, which is the Synthesis of our work; and Rubedo is Sublimation, which is the Multiplication of our work.

These three stages are represented by three figures which constitute the Astrological Trinity of Scorpio. These are the Scorpion, the Serpent, and the Eagle. The Scorpion is Nigredo, the Serpent is Albedo, and the Eagle is Rubedo. The latter of these three is the astrological equivalent of the alchemical Phoenix and Pelican. It represents the Great Attainment, the rebirth of the soul or stone, which can now transfigure all base metals into the Perfect Gold of Nature. Thus the great emblem of the New Order of the Golden Dawn (Order of the T.:G.:D.:) is the Eagle whose Vast Wings represent the Liberty of the Adept to accomplish the Great Work.

The three stages in Mystical Alchemy, or the three states of the stone, are transmutations of a most peculiar kind. They are, in fact, metamorphic in nature, constituting actual quantum jumps or abrupt transitions from one state of development to another; they do not necessarily follow a logical pattern of change. The stone itself remains continuous throughout the operation, but the changes it endures are not connected with each other in any phenomenological or observable sense. Each stage is a complete transformation of the stone, a veritable death and rebirth of its soul from one state of existence to another. Each stage, though it be the natural result of our work, comes about unexpectedly; it is an unpredictable event in the space-time continuum.

Now in this threefold experimental operation the saline stone of Our Majestic Work first undergoes a critical death or disintegration process, which is also a purification of its soul, mind and body. It then becomes the White Tincture of our work, which is a magical consecration of the stone, and this White Tincture transmutes base metals into the Silver of the Moon. Then it becomes the Red Tincture of our work, the Elixir of Life, which transmutes base metals into the Living Gold of the Sun.

In Egyptian mythological symbolism, this threefold operation is represented by the slaying of Osiris by his brother Set, His revival through the Magick of His wife Isis, and His mysterious resurrection in His son Horus, who is the Aurum Aurea or Golden Dawn of Our Regal Art, and whose holy image is the Solar Eagle. Such is the death and rebirth of THAT which is like unto itself: such is the Great Experiment of the Royal Art of the Sun!

DISSOLUTION is the FIRST KEY to the GREAT WORK. It is the purification of Sulphur and Mercury. **COAGULATION**, the second key, is the unification of Sulphur and Mercury with the aid of Salt. These two keys correlate with the alchemical formula "solve et coagula". **SUBLIMATION**, the third key, is the multiplication of the stone by repeating the actual operation, and the effect of this process is the exaltation of the Philosopher's Stone.

Eliphas Levi wrote: "***This stone is both one and manifold; it is decomposed by analysis and recomposed by synthesis. In analysis it is a powder, the alchemical powder of projection; before analysis and in synthesis it is a stone.***" The analytical decomposition of the stone is the dissolution of our work; it is the volatilization of the fixed. The synthetic recomposition of the stone is the coagulation of our work; it is the fixation of the volatile. These two alchemical processes result in the production of the Philosopher's Stone, but only in potential form. It is not until the stone is subjected to Sublimation that it is completely regenerated and, ergo, capable of transmuting base metals into gold and conferring immortality.

Sublimation ultimately becomes an eternal self-generating process which regenerates the stone time and time again, making of the stone an immortal soul, and an eternal traveler on the Great Circle of Perpetual Initiation. Sublimation makes for the immortalization of the stone; it is the Principle of Eternal Change, the magical perpetuity of the stone which constitutes its immortal existence. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said: "***There is nothing permanent except change.***")

32. The Hidden Stone of the Ages is thus obtained, even here and now. Let the Sun and the Moon unite; let them bear an Hermaphrodite! Let a child be born: it shall be the Stone of the Sages, the Medicine of Metals, and the Elixir of Life.

(Comment: It is by the scientific application and execution of the threefold operation of Alchemy that the Stone of the Philosophers is to be obtained, here and now. The Sun is man; the Moon is woman; and the Hermaphrodite is the magical product of their union. This Hermaphrodite is Two-in-One; S/he is the Rebirth of the Sun and Moon. Such is called their Magical Child and is the Great Secret of Alchemy, the Arcanum Arcanorum which constitutes our true power and wealth on earth, the key to our immortality and orderly perpetuation as an evolving species. The Magical Child is also known as the Stone of the Sages, Medicine of Metals, Universal Medicine, Elixir of Life, Universal Solvent, Dew of Immortality, Amrita, Soma, Mana, Eucharist of the Sun, Wine of the Sabbath, Powder of Projection, Red Tincture, Unguent, Pill of Power, Potable Gold, and the Quintessence. Such is the mystery of Samson's riddle: "***What is sweeter than honey, and stronger than a Lion?***" It is also the mystery of which Paracelsus wrote: "***The Son of Hamuel says that the Stone of the Philosophers is Water Coagulated, namely in Sol and Luna. From this is it clearer than the Sun that the matter of the Stone is nothing else but Sol and Luna.***" In Michael Maier's "Chemical Secrets of Nature" (1687),

it is written: ***"The offspring of the Sun and Moon is the Philosopher's Red Stone, floating upon the liquid in the crucible."*** Roger Bacon in his "Mirror of Alquimy" wrote: ***"Alquimy is the science that teaches the preparation of a certain medicine or elixir which, if it is poured over base metals, brings them on the instant to a state of perfection."***)

33. Also the Threefold Unity Above is expanded into a seven-petalled Rose; and on each petal there is inscribed in fire one of the seven letters of VITRIOL.

(Comment: Kether, Chokmah, and Binah, in their subtle interplay of orgasmic ecstasy, produce seven other emanations or Sephiroth on the Tree of Life. These are Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malkuth. To these correspond the seven Metals, the seven Chakras and the seven traditional Planets of Astrology. Such form a seven-petalled Rose with the letters VITRIOL inscribed in fire on its petals.)

VITRIOL is a Notarikon for **"Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem"**, which is Latin for **"Visit the interior parts of the earth; by rectification you will find the secret stone."** VITRIOL is the name which Basilus Valentinus (Basil Valentine) applied to the Universal Solvent, a secret diluent salt. VITRIOL represents the balanced combination of Sulphur, Salt and Mercury. And how is this achieved? ***"Make the fixed volatile -- unite the fugitive male with the fixed female."***

Basil emphasized a third Principle in the Great Work which he called Salt, concerning which he wrote: ***"Salt is the fire, the water that does not wet one's hands."*** VITRIOL is a name for this third Principle; it is also a name for the Philosopher's Stone. In the word VITRIOL is contained the formula of the Great Work by which the Adept can attain the Secret Stone through the rectification of the salt and its subsequent regeneration.)

34. Also each rose petal is of a different color; four petals are mixed, and the other three are virgin. Also each petal has a unique scent, taste, and touch to it. All these come forth from the Centre of the Cross, that is, from the Place of the Palace of the Stars in the midst of it all.

(Comment: Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malkuth are impure (i.e. they are mixed principles, combinations of the interplay of Chesed, Geburah, and Tiphareth, which are reflections of Kether, Chokmah, and Binah. Colors pertain to sight, the sense of Fire. Scent is Air, taste is Water, and touch is Earth. These four elements are manifestations of the seven Sephiroth below the Abyss which come forth from the Centre of the Cross of the Sun.)

Note also that in the sevenfold system of initiation in the New Order of the Golden Dawn (Order of the T.:G.:D.:), there are four outer stages and three inner. The four outer stages are the four gates to the Palace of the Stars in which we experience the Three Invisible Rites of Initiation. The completion of these seven stages of initiation make for the attainment of THAT which exists beyond the Planetary Spheres: it constitutes the transcendence of the Planetary Spheres and the subsequent attainment of the Gnostic Ogdoad, which is the eighth sphere of Celestial Wisdom.)

35. And in each letter of fire on the seven petals of the Sacred Rose there is concealed a vision and a voice. And in each vision and voice there is concealed a divine splendour of unspeakable transmutations of ineffable mystery and wonder. All these inner splendours are different stages of Our

Master Opus of Divine Transformation which can be interpreted in many ways in many lands.

(Comment: In each Sephira there is concealed a vision and a voice corresponding to its own particular nature. This is the vision and the voice of initiation. And in each vision and voice there is concealed a divine splendour which partakes of the nature of the initiation that corresponds thereto and which is capable of being interpreted and defined in a variety of ways.)

36. So saith Hermes Trismegistus, Lord of Our Royal and Sacerdotal Art of Alkhemi, Who is also the Wisdom of the Gods and the Logos of the Ineffable Unknown. Mysteries revealed are mysteries concealed; and none but the Wise may decipher them. This Holy Book of the Magick of Hermes is hermetically sealed; and none but the Wise may unravel its sublime splendours of High Wisdom for the accomplishment of the Great Work of the Sun; yea, for the accomplishment of the Great Work of the Sun.

(Comment: In this holy book are many mysteries of Our Royal and Sacerdotal Art revealed by the Voice of the Logos Himself; but, it is a true saying: "***That which guides the Wise misleads the foolish.***" This holy book is sealed with the Spirit of Wisdom itself, and only the Wise may intuit and commune with that Spirit to attain the **Great Work**, the **Summum Bonum**, **True Wisdom**, and **Perfect Happiness**.)