

LECTURE NOTES

by
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LECTURE #322

ESOTERIC ALCHEMY

The Transmutation of Attitudes

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ATALANTA
FUGIENS,
hoc est,
EMBLEMATA
NOVA
DE SECRETIS NATURÆ
CHYMICA,

Accommodata partim oculis & intellectui, figuris
cupro incisis, adjectisque sententiis, Epigram-
matis & notis, partim auribus & recreationi
animi plus minus 50 Fugis Musicalibus trium
Vocum, quarum duæ ad unam simplicem melo-
diam distichis canendis peraptam, correspon-
deant, non absq; singulari jucunditate videnda,
legenda, meditanda, intelligenda, dijudicanda,
canenda & audienda:

Authore

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ESOTERIC ALCHEMY

The Transmutation of Attitudes

It was once pointed out by Raymond Lully, one of the great early alchemists, that the tragedy of the concept of alchemy was the transmutation of metals. Basil Valentine, Monk of St. Bennett, expressed the same thought in his book: *WOE TO THE GOLD MAKERS*. The history of alchemy divides into two distinct branches that have descended from antiquity, possibly originating in Egypt. The word "Chem" in both chemistry and alchemy is an ancient name for Egypt. "Al" is divine or sacred and we find it used in the Bible in such terms as "Alevin." Of course the Deity of Islam is Allah. The divine prefix would indicate that alchemy is a spiritual art, a divine secret science.

The great texts of alchemy have come principally from the hermetic background at the beginning of the Christian era and probably there were alchemical schools in Alexandria at that time. There are also early records of alchemy in China and in India. It seems that from very far back there has descended a double concept of chemistry: physical chemistry having to do with those areas of knowledge which are now considered scientific, and spiritual chemistry which was definitely a sacred art.

In practice, the difference in these two systems was summarized rather well by Paracelsus when he pointed out that the alchemical transmutation was impossible unless the alchemist himself was in the process of transformation. Today chemistry is largely dominated by the profit concept, the idea of wealth. All kinds of chemical experiments are being made for various reasons, some of them very good, some of them very dangerous, but always with a certain concept of return in material wealth for the good or the evil that is done. Chemistry is largely a material art, dominated by scientific inquiry and not in any way involving any necessary spiritual overtones. The chemist does not have to be a person of great faith, does not have to believe in metaphysical or mystical procedures. He is simply working with physical tests and physical texts.

The alchemist, on the other hand, has an entirely different perspective. Most of the alchemists were pious people, convinced that their advancement of science was a spiritual contribution to the well being of society and concerned with the development of their own inner lives. Jakob Boehme used a number of alchemical terms in his mystical writings and these have been confusing to modern students of his work. Actually the use given by Boehme in most cases probably is the original intended usage, namely, that alchemy is a great system of human regeneration, having nothing whatsoever to do with the advancement of worldly goods or worldly position.

In Europe the alchemists were persecuted and in many cases put to the rack and tortured to death, because the rulers or avaricious leaders wanted the secret of gold making. The moment the alchemist began to publicize this part of his belief, he immediately opened himself to persecution, so that the gold making as a science brought many of the alchemists to destruction. Also, the manufacture of gold or any other precious substance without control by the state could result in the bankruptcy of the world.

The question then remains: can gold actually be manufactured? Not whether it should be or not, but can it be? I think the answer has to be in the affirmative. It can be. It also is obvious from recent experimentation that the subject could be advanced. But this is not the real purpose of alchemy and where the chemists get together to raise their own level of economic living, the scientists run into a very desperate prostitution.

The ancient alchemists were using symbols at a very early date. In many cases the symbols were accepted as literal pictures, but this has led to further confusion. We know, for instance, that in ancient alchemy the great retort in which all the experiments were being made was a symbol for the solar system itself, viewed as a globe within which all the chemistries and alchemistries of existence were taking place. The ancients believed that this world in which we live is a great theatre of mysteries, the secrets of which have never been solved. Actually, the world is strangely complete within itself, containing everything necessary for the infinite perpetuation of itself. This condition remains rather peaceful and natural until human ambition and avarice take over. The ambition of the average modern person is involving fame, distinction, or wealth. Therefore, he immediately is using knowledge for the formation directly or indirectly of gold. He may not make the gold in the retort but he will sell secrets or scientific formulas which will bring him rich financial rewards.

We might ask: what harm is this? One of the reasons it is extremely dangerous is because the moment we begin to experiment with the basic laws of existence we are very apt to forget their own integrities. Natural laws have to be obeyed and we are not interested in obeying natural laws but in changing them to fit our conveniences. We want to use natural law to exploit the universe in which we live and as a result we are constantly in trouble and in the same dilemma that burdened the alchemist.

Many years ago there was an amateur alchemist here in Los Angeles. He was a delightful old German gentleman and for a prosaic living he worked in a cheese factory, but he was experimenting on the side throughout most of his life, trying to work out some strange and mysterious formulas that had descended to him from the past. Before passing on some years ago, he donated most of his alchemical books to our library. He was certain there was an answer but that he had not been able to live long enough to find it.

Another acquaintance engaged in alchemical speculation followed every rule in the book he could find, and of course soon found that every book had a different set of rules. This was confusing and frustrating to him. He bought a lot of apparatus and instruments, followed hunches and hints, and was always on the verge of a great discovery that never happened. What he did not have was a deep, abiding love of God, faith, or mankind. He was simply an intellectual, convinced that a science could be made to work. What the science meant in terms of his own character never seemed to occur to him.

In the alchemy of China and India the symbolism moves from chemistry to all kinds of vibratory patterns. In China alchemy was tied in with music and the musical scale--the harmonics of life. The ancient Greeks of the Pythagorean period combined all their knowledge of cosmogony and the actual reformation of man into a great mathematical formula which was never to be taken literally but was to become almost like a mantra, a

sacred statement which, if obeyed, could produce tremendous results.

Hermetic philosophy also became involved in alchemy. The hermeticists of Alexandria followed a mysterious being known to them as Hermes Trismegistus, or Hermes the Thrice Great. Who he was, when he lived, no one seems to know. Whether he was a production of symbolism or perhaps a great alchemical adept of some ancient time, we do not know, but in hermeticism we begin to sense the beginning of the transmutation of man as the essential purpose of the great alchemical procedure.

In Europe, in addition to their other problems, it was necessary for the alchemists to be careful in the promulgation of some of these beliefs because of the bitter opposition of the clergy. The clergy sensed the fact that in some way alchemy was a religion and they were therefore quite sure it had to be included among the heresies. As a result, however, of the motion of Arabic knowledge into Europe, the alchemical secrets passed into the keeping of persons like Paracelsus, Khunrath, and Valentine, and these persons gained their knowledge of the alchemical processes largely from Constantinople and Baghdad. This, of course, meant still more that the knowledge had to be held in secrecy against the persecutions and martyrdoms that were popular in Europe at that time.

In many parts of the world alchemy was recognized for what it actually was: a series of symbols intended to convey a major operation concerning the transmutation of man himself. Without this transmutation, none of the great good things we dream of can come about. The elixir of life or philosopher's stone was that power by means of which all good things could come to pass, wherein all errors and forms of ignorance could be overcome and the individual could gain complete control of not only his own life but the laws governing it.

Therefore, we come to the particular question that seems to be very much in the medieval alchemical tradition--that is, is there any proof of transmutation? Is there any actual evidence of things being completely altered? Has there ever been a scientist that could completely alter anything? He could modify it, improve it to a degree, and could destroy it always. But the process of actual transformation of a thing from what it is to something totally different--this has been a question of concern in alchemical researches for ages. The evidence for transmutation is extraordinarily simple: the answer lies in the human body itself.

The process of digestion of food requires the transformation of elements. It requires an almost instantaneous adaptation of certain principles to special usages for which they were not originally intended. It is possible, therefore, for food which is taken in to in some way maintain a life principle which is not a food and not in the body otherwise, but is used to nourish the life or principle in the human being. The bread, butter, vegetables, fruit, milk and other foods keep alive something that is not any of them, which throughout life will continue to cause the heart to beat, to circulate the blood, to nourish the functions of the human being until the end of life. Out of what goes into him comes out of him arts, sciences, poetry, music, philosophy, religion, and economics--they all come out of someone who is nourished by the food, the atmosphere around him, water, the rays of the planets, and the light of the sun and moon. The symbolism of the wedding of the sun and moon in alchemy is very important--not because there

will be a wedding in the sky of the two luminaries, but because of the union of the principles for which they stand inside of the human body.

Thus there is the amazing evidence of the one life flowing behind all forms and made available through nutrition to every creature. From the harvests in the fields a world is nourished, and those who absorb these harvests become proficient in many forms of activity.

In the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist, the divine blood parallels in alchemy the elixir of life. How this divine blood operates is not clear to many people, but in some mysterious way universal life supports the life of people, people who may never be aware of the source of their own nutrition and in a mechanistic era such as ours do not care about the source of their nutrition.

Out of this has come a new concept of nutrition, a concept involving vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates--an entire system of nutrition based upon the development of highly specialized nutrients from the various food materials we eat. All these nutrients have something to do with the maintenance of the various structures of the human body. In this sense there is an acceptance of alchemy without any understanding of it. Here there is the realization that nutrition does do the work, but how and why it does it and how one general type of nutrition can maintain an infinite diversity of creatures is another situation that is difficult to understand.

The nutrition must be conditioned to the creature which is receiving the nourishment. So we have within our own bodies an extraordinary laboratory, a laboratory the mysteries of which we have not begun to touch. Someone can prescribe various materials for our common nutrition and for special emergencies that arise, but prescribing them is not creating them, and prescribing them is not understanding them. We have simply come to know that certain materials have certain effects and we depend upon them to maintain the procedures which we hope will strengthen and lengthen our life expectancies.

Immortal life is one of the beliefs of alchemy and there are a number of very quaint and unusual concepts about this matter. Some of these concepts are difficult to understand even now, but we know that they definitely believed that there were in the world a few individuals who had solved the mystery of alchemy. The master of all the alchemists was Elias Artista, the most celebrated of all the hermetic adepts and philosophers. No one really knew him, although we do have two or three early books in the library in which alchemists described a meeting with him. The symbol of the perfect alchemist, Elias Artista had a number of disciples who came very close to him in achieving the ends which he sought. His powers were such that he would appear in laboratories where worthy persons had worked very hard for years and give them a hint or a little advice to advance their researches, only to disappear and to never be seen by them again. He appeared in many nations in many different guises and spoke many languages. He is supposedly an eternal person, living on and on because there was nothing in him that could cause him to die; death has to be the result of causes. Life expectancies are increasing constantly, but life expectancies to reach a phenomenal extension of time are now either a phenomena in themselves, the result of very serious scientific conditioning, or constitutional ability to adapt nutrition over a longer period of time than is possible for most people.

The alchemists pointed out that the beginning of the alchemical experiment was to remove all friction from life. By friction is meant wear and tear. Now what is wear and tear? To most people it means doing the things they have to do and have no particular interest in doing. Wear and tear is also the result of the lack of control of the mental, emotional and physical activities of the individual. All of these activities use energy. A large part of the energy we use we waste. We are not conserving it, not taking care of this mysterious vitality that comes to us. We are allowing it to be expended in all kinds of useless ways. Of course we have to make physical adjustment for employment, but it is not the work necessarily that is the greatest cause of problems; it is the attitude toward the work. It is the lack of enthusiasm, the lack of recognition of significance of the things that we do that depress us. Emotional relationships out of hand can become a terrible enemy to vitality. Worry, fear, anxiety--all of these use up part of this alchemical nutrition that is constantly being made within ourselves. If we waste it we can no longer have it. If we use it unwisely it is dissipated. And to maintain artificial attitudes will gradually undermine the necessary functions of the body.

The alchemist first of all declared that the master of all arts was God. Deity was in a sense the extra personal perfect alchemist because in Deity all things continue according to the Divine Will. How this Will operates, man does not know, but he does recognize, if he is mystically inclined, that there is a tremendous background of eternal wisdom behind the happenings in nature. Deity becomes the perfect force behind generation and regeneration. Deity brings forth the seed, the plant, the flower and the fruit. And then that seed becomes the next generation of the same.

Alchemical symbolism is strange and obscure but well worth trying to understand. We must begin with what the alchemist begins with: base metals. We must begin with things as they are here. We cannot build our alchemical formulas from elements or substances not available to us. The beginning is to recognize that the first operation is a transmutation of physical factors, elements, and properties; in other words, purification. If it is mercury, it must be purified. If it is sulphur, it must be purified. If it is salt, it must be purified. And if it is man, he must be purified. Everything begins with the purification or removal of the dross which limits the value and survival of elements, principles, and substances.

The alchemist starts with the concept of a pure material with which to work. He is given various clues and keys on how to achieve this pure material. He might assemble it under certain aspects of planets or wait until the moon shines upon the water before he uses it in his test tubes. He may do all kinds of things. First he must purify by gathering his materials from pure sources as much as he can. Most of the great experiments of Paracelsus and many others were possible because of the pure high atmosphere of the Alps where materials were uncontaminated and grew to the fullness of themselves. In their day there was no smog or congestion. These pure materials, having been found, became the basic elements in which they worked.

The same problem applies to the individual. The alchemist must first purify his own body and his own nature. Until the body is cleansed, its various processes cannot be refined. While all the integration and organization of his abilities and capacities, the

improvement of his nature through learning, meditation and contemplation all lead up to, contribute to, and make possible a final internal illumination, the final secret has to come from inside. Therefore, everything has to be refined until the soul of itself is available, and in man it is his own soul; until this is available, he labors in vain.

Those efforts that have to contribute to this progress must be considered as disciplines or as first steps toward achievement. They represent first of all man's recognition of his responsibility to the life principle which exists in him and in which he exists. This principle is divine, sacred, and the most valuable and mysterious thing in the whole world. Unless the individual is true to this basic principle in his own life and way of living and thinking, he cannot hope to advance in the cause of spiritual alchemy. For achievement he must do everything possible to make his own life reasonable and normal.

This does not mean that he has to depart from society or go into some refuge near the top of the Alps, but there must be an establishment of basic harmony within himself. Harmony is the proof of the compatibility of the elements. Harmony is the ability of different chemical elements to work together, only possible when they are purified--in their gross form they will never be compatible. Salt and sulphur in the form of the physical elements available for purchase can never be compatible. It is necessary to cleanse them both, refine them, and remove from them those elements which are the cause of conflict. It is not the essence of the sulphur or salt that is the problem; it is the crystallization around them which comes into conflict with other similar crystallizations. The alchemist must put his own house in order; he is actually searching for something that is in its substance and essence completely sacred. Therefore, any other consideration is going to damage his probabilities of getting it.

The alchemical procedure most commonly known is related to one of two distinct ends: one the creation of the philosopher's stone; the other the brewing of the philosophical medicine--the elixir of life. The stone in itself represents the body of wisdom purified; the universal medicine represents the soul. The medicine of immortality must be derived from things that have a birth and death of themselves. In other words, the nutrition that is given off may cause the primitive element to be lost, but its power goes on. It does not die; it simply reincarnates on a higher level. When we take into ourselves basic elements they are reborn in us and therefore pass through a process of evolution as they are used by the human being to maintain the economy of life.

The alchemist must first find a quiet place to work; he must have his little laboratory. To the ancient alchemists the laboratory was a furnace, a fireplace with some bottles and a few old books to guide his way. The meaning of the laboratory for us is actually a body free from interference and confusion that we can retire into when we so will. In other words, the laboratory is our own internal, that part of ourselves which is always capable of being reduced to a harmonious situation. The personal life must be basically harmonious. Many people feel that this is not possible, that there is no answer to all these grievances and griefs that beset us and affect us. But the alchemist says you are after the most valuable thing in the world and if you are hoping to get it you must earn it by making adjustments that will never be required of anyone except for this purpose.

To create a quiet place within the self for the contemplation of the symbols of regeneration is very vital. This does not mean, however, that the person has to become a constant celled monk or mysterious acolyte. He does not have to retire from life; he simply has to retire from confusion. He has to reject the idea of confusion within himself. The acceptance of confusion is a form of ignorance. It is not real, but we all are subject to it. Confusion also means waste of energy, waste of time, depletion and inability in that state to contact a deeper and higher part of ourselves.

In the Oriental philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta the mysteries of the chakras equate with the Seven Seals of Revelation, and the Seven Seals of Revelation equate with the seven sacred metals of the alchemical transmutation.

In the practice of Yoga it is very important first of all to recognize that the purpose is not to gain power in order to dominate someone else nor to become free of the responsibilities of living. It is a way ordained by Deity by means of which the wanderer returns home to the spiritual homeland from which he came. It is a part of a journey toward reality, toward the self, toward the Infinite, which we are all seeking to understand.

In alchemy the quietude is the same as that recommended for Yoga--to find a quiet place. In Tibet there used to be an old monastery where they had an unusual way of training an acolyte in quietude. They had him sit under the temple bell and rang it all the time until most people would have gone completely crazy. He was supposed to sit there and attain peace. He must reach a point where the clanging would mean absolutely nothing or in which finally he was able to hear in this clanging the voice of God. There had to be a complete indifference to interruption. Indifference did not mean to neglect duties but to endure abuses of all kinds. The alchemist also had to learn to achieve an absolute quietude that was not negative. He was not looking for a psychic revelation but simply finding the peace which is the foundation of growth. After a certain amount of time in this allotted labor, he was able to quiet his nature and release from it certain basic powers already available to him because he also had within himself the seven seals of revelation in the forms of the vital organs, the various ductless glands, the various systems of the body, the composition of the blood, and the orifices of the heart. It is in this septimate cave of the heart that the great mysteries are revealed. The heart becomes also part of the alchemical paraphernalia by means of which the individual receives finally the full support.

The alchemists used as the symbol of their achievement the lamb with the cut throat and the blood pouring from it, because of the idea of man being saved by the blood of the lamb. The blood of the lamb in this case is actually the eucharistic vitality which arises from the absolute sacrifice of all forms of negation and the purification of the life that flows through us through the wonderful possibilities of the Infinite. The body can be considered alchemically the power of the moon. The body being subject to all kinds of digestive and assimilative processes, the lunar energies work for the maintenance constantly of the peace of the flesh, and the individual has to cooperate consciously with this process if he wishes to proceed further.

The alchemist usually makes a disheartening discovery, at least at the beginning. It is that, essentially speaking, the body, which is the earth of the alchemical experiment, did not really do him very much harm

in the first place. It was not the flesh but the dweller in the flesh that was giving trouble nearly always. The flesh was the victim, the daily scourge. It was being constantly beaten like some faithful animal by the ambitious, self-centered driver. The next thing was to determine what this driving force was, and that meant getting into the fire principle, or the emotions.

Emotion is life. The energy behind emotion is magnificent, it is divine; but the use to which we put it is miserable in most cases. When we get mad, angry, or jealous, our ambitions run wild. We do not like people or things. We cannot stand the daily problems of life and become beautifully and systematically neurotic. With all these disagreements within ourselves, our emotions are constantly battling us with negative thoughts. There is also the temptation: if I am going to put this much effort into it, what am I going to get for it? This is one of the major temptations. Those working truly for the good of the great alchemical mystery will be concerned only with the fact that it is the spiritual and moral necessity of their lives.

The negative emotional factor which beats the body and uses up a very large part of the energy the body is able to manufacture is a constant wasting of life. It is a wasting of the Divine Power. Behind this problem lie thousands of years of tradition. We have always supposed that when we were unpleasant we had a right to be. We have also believed that when we wanted to think ill of a person it was our privilege. If we wanted to be angry and go into warfare, that was also a right that was inalienable. Out of the emotional excess on the personal level are all the temper fits, poutings and psychoses we most dread. On the larger world field of the great alchemical retort this misuse of the emotional energy is war, crime, and all the difficulties that we most fear. We need to rid ourselves of our own conflicts, hurt feelings, offenses, those things we want to do which we know that we cannot, and the extravagance that demands we accomplish the incredible, or be miserable. We have to get our own attitudes and our emotions down where they are reasonable.

One of the best uses of emotion is through the arts and music, but in the ordinary commonplace of things it is the qualities of kindness, affection and compassion. Where these attitudes increase strongly there is a change in body chemistry and the emotions no longer persecute the body nor offer the body on the altar of private ambitions. They no longer destroy, cause the nursing of grievances nor the waste of time and energy in dwelling on past events. The thing of value from the past is experience, which is helping to make us better now. The emotions can be beautiful, and emotions that are beautiful are well worth cultivating, but they must be sincere, real, and within a natural pattern of normalcy. Even the best emotion gets into trouble if it becomes hysteria.

While the emotions sit around making trouble for the body, the mind arrogantly stands up and makes trouble for both. The mind sets the body in great habits, and these habits are mostly unreasonable. The mind is the final basis of career. It is that which we learn to do well so that we can get rich doing it; the mind is planning forever to make a millionaire out of the body. Another problem of the mind is that it argues and debates. If it is not up to its neck in politics, regardless of whether any of the candidates are worth voting for, the mind is the basis for telling other people how to live, even though the person does not know how himself. And the mind is that which comes to the conclusion that the more we accumulate, the happier we are, when every day this is proving to be an absolute falsehood.

The mind needs to be brought down to where it was intended to be: a sort of psychological bookkeeper. The mind is not the master of life, although we have allowed it to become such. The mind is simply a very useful secretary, able to keep the ledgers balanced. While we are giving all the minds courses in computerization, it is going to be a long time before we can use these computers to find out what is wrong with ourselves. We may sometime--it may be someday that we will have to fight it out with the computers because they may be more right than we are. In any event, the mind is a constant cause of agitation. Its ambitions and appetites know no bounds and very often it forms a difficult and unfortunate partnership with the emotions. When the emotions justify an unfortunate attitude, there is definitely a bad situation. When the emotions tire the mind, that is one trouble; when the mind rationalizes the emotions, that can be another. The solution of these problems is the gradual recognition of the ascent of the being through these conditions.

The stories in the great system of the ancient mysteries: the rites of Eleusis and Dionysus, the rites of Horus and Isis, the rites of Buddha in India, China, and Japan--these were always arranged in three basic steps, and these three basic steps represent the three great levels of the personality, that part of ourselves of which we have some inkling but very little understanding. They will also become the basic bulwark degrees of Free Masonry, and many fraternal orders have this same trichotomy of rituals and symbols. The three together constitute what might be termed the visual or tangible temples.

In the body these three powers are the grand masters of life--the ones upon which nearly everyone depends for survival, continuance, and the fulfillment of purposes. When something cannot be solved physically, we try to solve it emotionally. If that fails, we try to explain it or rationalize it mentally. If all of these fail, we are at a kind of wit's end. We simply drop back sometimes, feeling there is no answer, and turn to the more familiar things. Those of an idealistic nature look beyond and see above these three steps something else, perhaps God, realizing there is something they still have to transcend more than they assumed necessary. But for our personality and for the experiments of salt, sulphur and mercury, there is the threefold body and the auric or magnetic field in which it functions.

The magnetic field is very curious because it is also a mass of chemical factors--a constantly changing compound of interactive energies. The magnetic field is like a bottle that is being violently shaken after a whole group of materials have been put into it. Looking at these situations symbolically, the magnetic field is a bottle containing the three parts of our lower nature, each one of which has a magnetic overtone. When we begin to realize this we begin to see that we have interactions here as well as in the body. We have to explain, for instance, why a temper fit can cause a headache, or why indigestion can result in serious emotional complexes. The answer is that the troubles arise in the difficulties in the auric or magnetic field, due to intemperance of attitudes. If an individual is angry, the magnetic field blazes up and really practically burns out most of the other values, for the moment at least. If the individual is depressed, the magnetic field fades down to a shadow. If an individual is in the presence of contagion and is healthy, the magnetic field can protect him from infection. If, however, he is depleted and in the presence of contagion, he may catch the ailment.

The magnetic field is in constant motion, made up of emotion forms, thought forms, and bodily essences. If there is any deceit or falseness in the personality, it will show in the magnetic field, although the individual may try to talk himself out of the problem. A temper fit can only be justified if it does not result in trouble in the magnetic field. The magnetic field is not interested in excuses or explanations, but in the chemical interaction of values. When a value is perverted or misused, the magnetic field bears witness. The moment it bears witness its resources are depleted and the individual does not feel so well.

Little by little, abuse of the various emotions, thoughts, and bodily functions will result in the exhaustion of the magnetic field. When that exhaustion is complete, the individual simply leaves this world. He cannot function if the energy fields do not sustain him. Thus it is very important to maintain harmony. One of the great principles of Pythagoras was that the world had to be maintained as a musical instrument, that it had to be in harmony always. And the individual in his personal life is also a musical instrument. He is the vina of Siva, the mysterious instrument that plays the majestic music of life. If he mistakes his destiny or misuses his power, he is in trouble.

Now most of the alchemists got about to the point where they were beginning to sense some of these values. Having gone as far as the mind could take them, they found themselves at the entrance to a promised land which they could not enter into. They did not know how to handle that which lay beyond. They had listened carefully and, as Faust in his library, had read all the great books. They had studied all the mysteries, but there at last they stood with all their lore, fools no wiser than before. The great search ended in frustration, not in the great reward for which they had hoped. The only answer to this was to do what Lully, Valentine, and Khunrath and many others did--check over what had happened. What did happen? Why this sudden block that is impossible for most people to get through? The final realization was that this block was the absence of a faculty higher than the mind. The mind could go only a certain distance. Even the most beautifully trained mind could not fulfill the ultimate. There had to be something higher than the mind, without which the great experiment could not be performed.

When Elias Artista visited the alchemists he sometimes gave them a small amount of transmuting powder. He put it in his ring or he made a tiny vial which was worn around the neck, and one grain of this powder could transmute a thousand times its own weight into solid gold. There was a lot of talk about that and the grains were few, but it was known that in some cases they existed. It is believed that Roger Bacon offered to finance the Crusades for England as the result of the ability to transmute base metal into gold suitable to be minted. The legends and fables continue, but the main story seems to be that Elias Artista, or one like him, appeared at the proper moment to give some type of instruction, something more than the alchemist alone had achieved. Elias never appeared unless the disciple was in every way worthy. He would never help any alchemist out of his own mistakes, but he would help him to progress beyond a sincere effort to a greater degree of accomplishment.

In the alchemical tradition there were seven stages of adepts and masters relating to the science. It was a long journey at best, but a journey where every step brought with it a greater sense of inner security and sincerity. With the beginning of the fourth step, under the leadership

of a guide or by means of the mysterious tincture, the alchemist received his first evidence that he was ultimately going to succeed. He received the inner message that the labor was not in vain. It was from a hope in the first three to a kind of mysterious, mystical certainty in the fourth level that made it possible for him to go on.

On this fourth level of alchemy we find the life of Christ is an alchemical formula. We also find, according to the cabalists, that the SONG OF SOLOMON is also purely a chemical formula in disguise. But the Christian formula of the Christ mystery places Christ as the final achievement of the universal medicine. In the alchemical symbols, pictures of Christ and saints appear in the bottles to indicate that this was the intention of the story, although most people did not realize its import.

In the fourth step is the beginning of an integrated mystical experience. In other words, the fourth step was the awareness of the soul. It was what in Indian philosophy is the Buddhist state. It is the state of the individual suddenly becoming rational inside himself, achieving a sense of reality superior to thought, and also becoming for the first time capable of directing his own efforts by the very Divine Power within him which he was seeking to release into manifestation. In the ancient hermetic mysteries the soul was the symbol of the Elias Artista, the adept. It was the one power in man capable of becoming the internal instructor, capable of becoming the source of inner enlightenment that cannot fail.

In alchemy, the cultivation of this soul power is perhaps most clearly defined in the writings of Boehme, the German theologian mystical shoemaker who was one of the greatest mystics of the Protestant world. Boehme was the one who finally realized that within himself was the adept. The adept was not someone wandering around outside, but the adept self, more or less in the same spirit of the leadership that we find in the psychology of Carl Jung where the inner teacher becomes the symbol of the master alchemist.

At this particular phase, light begins to shine from within and clarify. The eye begins to see through the blind spot in its center. The world becomes more and more translucent, the elements more and more understandable. Instead of seeing nothing but bodies, the intuitive mind gradually learns to concentrate on qualities. The intuition mystical experience is one in which the individual sees things as they are and not as he has thought them to be. He sees not with mortal eyes but from an inner vision which projects a higher level of sight. To make it a little clearer, all things that exist have not only the visible forms of their existence, but invisible forms. Each rock and pebble, each twig and flower, is not only a physical thing but a metaphysical thing. With the mind, emotion, and body we see the physical thing. With the psychic power of the soul we see the psychic bodies of these things, the magnetic fields of them, and become aware of their degree of growth in the development of their potential. We also become able to watch clearly the result of combining them. We see the compatibilities and incompatibilities. We see the elements that work together and the works that cannot be reconciled.

As we work with the soul eye we slowly become aware of the universal soul. For the first time we are capable of seeing the quality of life. This is well noted in some of the early visions of the Platonic writers and many other mystics who were able to behold the invisible shapes of things, and in seeing their shapes behold their natures. While the

physical body cannot change greatly, the psychic centers within the body are in constant motion and agitation. It is then also possible for the alchemist to discover something that perhaps he had never fully realized before. He may have believed it, but believing and knowing are two different things. He now knows that no matter what he sees or examines, there is nothing in the entire universe that is not alive. Even the grain of sand is a living mystery. Everything is alive, and in the great aliveness of things the magnetic fields of all these different forms gather in the magnetic atmosphere of the universe. It is a very great and important subject for careful study.

With the beginning of this dimension of value, the alchemist begins to discover how to accomplish the mutations which are necessary to his art. He knows the principle of sublimation. He knows the cycles of recapitulation that have to be used because gradually he sees that alchemy is only a symbolic representation of the entire process of universal activity. Everything is part of the same great pattern, and this pattern unfolds as we become capable of understanding it. The pattern is never more nor less, but our relation to it is forever changing as a result of personal growth.

Finally the individual through an intuitive process forms a reunion with the divine part of himself. Having formed this union with the divine part of himself, he then goes on to the further steps of the great transmutations, finding himself gradually lifted up into the hierarchies of life but never, however, for personal gain, never for glory, never for wealth, and never to escape pain. The pains and sufferings we have are the impairments which by our own policy we know no better. They are processes of growth which Nature has presented to us for contemplation and which we must face, whether they are happy or not.

In time we find the part of alchemy in the great universal plan of things. We find the planet itself is in a state of constant alchemical transformation. We know that the solar system is moving from one level of evolution to another and the whole cosmos is coming more and more into perfect harmony with its own rules. The different forms of life have a tendency as time goes on to be absorbed into higher forms of life. It is not that sometime our planet will disappear or go forever and we will cease because of it, but that evolution is a growing, and when we outgrow the experiences that we are facing in the twentieth century, we will no longer be subject to the confusion and sorrow of these experiences.

We have to solve problems. The alchemist's problem was to solve the mystery of himself. He had to find ways to outgrow his own limitations and various systems have been advanced by that. Religion and philosophy have attempted the same thing and science will someday attempt it because science will have instruments by means of which many of the great mysteries of antiquity can be solved. Regardless of the motive behind it or the methods used, the solution is the gradual transformation called transmutation, multiplication, and finally projection of the great work.

This is a marvelous wonder world of forces and values which work together with the music of the spheres, as Pythagoras called it, a universe of infinite integrity, infinite beauty, and infinite wonder--a universe which exists within ourselves as a potential of all of these

things, for there is nothing in the universe that is necessary to man that he does not possess. And it is perfectly possible to conceive the ultimate unity of man and the universe--not by his ceasing to be himself but by outgrowing what he has come to consider himself, another problem that we all have to face.

We all think of ourselves as we are. We look around us and we see our clothing, friends, associates, and limit ourselves to the kind of creature we seem. On the mental and emotional levels of vision we see the inside the way we think it is. We look inside and we see ourselves as a more or less complicated mass of conflicts and contradictions. We realize that we are nothing to brag about, if we want to be really honest about it. But we can always think of something to brag about. All these infirmities, weaknesses, limitations are taken for granted; the individual is what he is. He is going to be here a little while and then he is going to leave. Where he is going, most people are not very sure. But in any event we take this selfness as it is to be ourselves. This selfness is the thing we have given the name John Doe to, and whenever someone says "John Doe" we stand up. We recognize ourselves as a separate entity somewhere in the world of creatures, and it never occurs to the average person that there is any real reason that he should be anything but what he appears to be. There is no reason why he should give up all his pleasures for something he does not understand. There is no reason to assume that he can ever be anymore than he is.

It is from that standpoint we are locked in the lowest level of achievement. About the only other answer seems to be to try to make as it is as comfortable as possible. We do not want to suffer more than we have to. We do not want to do anything that is going to inconvenience us. We want to go along as well as we can until we leave. But this, of course, is a lack of aspiration, and there has to be some aspiration, or nothing works. Therefore, it becomes very necessary for the individual to sense that there is something more he can become, or he will stay the way he is. No amount of education can get him out of it because education can only help the mind, but the mind cannot get at the facts.

Out of growth, friendship, kindness, experience particularly, we need to release the soul power, the overself of Emerson. We have to release this inner superiority and give the best of ourselves immediate rulership over the rest of ourselves. Plato says that in the philosophic empire the wisest lead. Those not so wise are still wise enough to follow honorably. To the individual, the best part of himself must be the leader of the rest, for the moment he rests leadership upon any contaminated level of his own consciousness, he is in trouble. The alchemist was a kind of a being apart, a natural mystic, and there were many mystics who were not alchemists but were also on the same general level. There is a small part of society, unfortunately small, that has discovered within itself the need for growth, the need to become more, aware that there are certain nagging questions that need to be answered in order to live well now.

We need to increase in all these values in order to make life in this world suitable to us. We have to try to find the answers to war and corruption. We realize that as we are now, even though we may never be in a war ourselves, we are in a war and conflict with our neighbors and our families and within the biological structure of our own bodies.

Something has to be done to arbitrate these things. The way of arbitration is a slow process of discipline by means of which we ascend the three personality factors of our lives and come into harmony with the fourth level. This in the ancient astronomy was the level of the sun, the fourth orbit. The wedding of the body and the psyche, or soul, was called by the alchemists the marriage of the sun and moon.

Alchemy is actually a dedicated effort to find out where we come from, why we are here, and where we are going. It is also a science by which all sciences built in selfishness can be rededicated to the common good of humanity. It is a way of applying all that we know to all the problems that we must solve. Step by step, we become more knowing, more useful, and more helpful, becoming better citizens here and, whether we realize it or not, better citizens of Eternity.

Alchemical symbolism is a lovely metaphysics, a gracious and beautiful approach to one of the great problems of daily existence. Every individual in his own personal life can be an alchemist, a worker with the divine chemistries of living. He can work with the chemistry of adjustments with society, he can work and discipline his own nature, he can develop integrities and kindness, and gradually transmute his life from a self-centered effort to succeed into a soul-centered effort serving the great cause of life.

As these changes take place the individual will find that he is being transmuted. He is being changed from a mortal creature to the divine being which was always there, always within him, but which was locked out. There is a life growing up within that has to grow to know, has to develop its own potentials in order to be able to learn, and which in one way or another through the problems of life will ultimately be impelled to dedicate itself to the service of that which it needs to know.



WAS HELFTEN FAKELN. LICHT
ODER BRILN.
SO. DIE LEUT NICHT SEHEN
WOLLEN.

*In Torches, Candles, Spectacles
What Help may be
If People are Determined
Not to See*

