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Secret Fire: The Relationship Between Kundalini, Kabbalah, and Alchemy

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Secret Fire: The Relationship Between Kundalini, Kabbalah, and Alchemy by Mark Stavish, M.A.

Foreword

The following exercises are designed to assist in freeing the most potent energy known to humanity and resident in creation. They are not designed for someone with little or no esoteric experience. In general, it would be advisable to have at least one to two years of practical, daily experience with the Middle Pillar and/or Pentagram Rituals; in addition, an equal amount of time with the Hexagram Rituals. Several workings of the 32nd through 24th Paths on the Tree of Life would also be desirable[1], and regular practice of once a week or so of "Rising on the Planes"[2]. Common sense, a willingness to "Make haste slowly", and a balanced lifestyle may be the best protection against any unpleasant side effects of these, or other, esoteric practices[3]. It is very important that you keep a diary of your practices and experiences with the exercises given.

The amount of time it will take to experience the Secret Fire is unknown, although preparation is the best guarantee of success. The amount of time given to each exercise should not exceed more than 15 or 20 minutes in the beginning, and then 30 or 45 minutes after the first half year or so. It is also strongly advised that anyone undertaking these exercises also maintain a regular, daily usage of spagyric tinctures for each of the planetary qualities of the day it is used. This additional, slow, and methodical cleansing of the subtle psychic channels will aid in relieving some of side-effects of esoteric work. The nightly application of "Dream Yoga" is also suggested, as this will attune the student to the qualities of the day while sleeping, aid in interior contacts, and may shed light on particular problems of the Work.[4]

While this may seem like a lot of work, it is not. Tinctures are fairly easy to make, all that is required is their regular use. This takes no more time than swallowing a vitamin. Dream yoga is done as we are falling asleep anyhow, no additional time required for this either. What it does take is regularity, commitment, and perseverance. Qualities that assure, albeit confer, adepthood. Best of luck in your practices. In the Bonds of Esotericism,

Ora et labora,

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Introduction

In the Western esoteric practices there is an apparent knowledge gap regarding the role of esoteric practices and their effects on the subtle, and not so subtle, bodies of practitioners. In the East, all practices, whether designated as such or not, are designed to awaken the semi-dormant energy resident in all creation, and 'living beings' in particular. This energy is known as "Kundalini", "The Serpent Fire", and the "Dragon" depending on tradition. Extreme care has been taken, despite contradictions between systems, to chart the effects of exercises on this latent energy, and how it 'flows' through the physical, emotional, and psychic body, at what stages, and in relation to which exercises. Such a detailed analysis is lacking in modern Western esotericism.

For modern kabbalists, the most common introduction to ceremonial magic is through the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram and the Middle Pillar Exercise. The purpose of this paper is twofold: to show how this, and related exercise can stimulate the Secret Fire, and to suggest exercises for its regulation by esoteric students who are engaged in a Hermetic path, such as general studies or alchemy, who may have experienced its awakening and are in need of simple and direct exercises for its regulation.

Theoretical Background

The majority of modern esoteric students are familiar with the *Middle Pillar* exercise, as such, it will be the fundamental basis for much of this article. In addition, the *Sepher Yetzirah*, and a limited number of alchemical references will be made.

The basis of kabbalah is that through increasing levels of density, humanity came into its present state of physical incarnation and psychic evolution. Through rituals, exercises, and meditations, the energy latent in creation generally, and the body of the practitioner in particular, can be “awakened”, purified, and directed. This energy can then be used for spiritual development, psychic expansion, or physical health and improvement.

Creation - “In the Beginning ...”

Creation is seen to have taken place, in Western kabbalistic and alchemical terms, in the following process.

The Divine mind of God, the Absolute, or in Hebrew the *Ain Soph Aur* (Limitless Light), through a series of expansions and contractions establishes the boundaries of Creation. The first world is the most subtle, and closest to the original state of non-existence, and is *Atzilooth*. This is called the world of Fire, because of the lively, undefined, and almost uncontrollable nature of fire. Next is *Briah*, or the World of Archetypes and forms as our human mind can grasp them. It is symbolized as the World of Air, and is the result as a barrier world that is formed by the creation of the next World, *Yetzirah*, or Water. This is the highly psychic and emotionally charged world immediately behind the veil of material existence, or *Assiah*. Also known as the World of Earth, because of the solid, concrete nature of material life.

The purpose of this scheme, is to show that creation occurs in increasingly dense levels of energy-matter, from the most subtle, or *Fire*, to the most dense, or *Earth*. Within this context of increasing density, there also arises a series of ten planes or levels of consciousness which combines with energy-matter, known as *Sepheroth*, or spheres of being. They occur in a pattern of: unity, reflection, polarity, reflection, polarity, unity, reflection, polarity, unity, and finally materialization. This basic idea of unity-polarity-and re-harmonizing, is the basis of kabbalistic and alchemical practices, and is derived from the observation of Nature.

Each World is a reflection to a denser or more subtle degree than the one before or after it. Each *Sepheroth* is a reflection, in part, of what proceeds or follows it. However, since each reflection is only partial, or slightly distorted, each Sphere takes on its own unique characteristics. Only the so-called “Middle Four Sphereoth” have the ability to harmonize or reflect in total all of the energies of creation, on some level.

This ‘zigzag’ of Creation is called the “Lightning Flash”. The return of energy from dense matter, back through the various stages, *Sepherith*, and Worlds of Creation is known as the “Path of the Serpent” because of its reverse, or complimentary ‘zigzag’ nature back up this diagram called the Tree of Life.

For the alchemist, somewhere between the third and fourth level, or sphere of creation, energy takes on the characteristic that will allow for the formation of matter at some future state, or level ten. This energy is called *Prima Materia*, *Chaos* in the Bible, *Spiritus Mundi* (Spirit of the Earth), and others. Here, duality is made complete, and genuine polarity exists, as opposed to simple the potential, or idea, of polarity that had existed previously. Energy is divided into active and passive modes, with the active energy constituting the energies of life, and the passive one the energy of matter. In “The Golden Chain of Homer”, the active energy is called *Niter* and the passive energy is called *Salt*.

The energy of Life manifests in two forms, Fire and Air. While both are predominately active in nature, fire is the more active of the two, with Air being slightly passive because of the partial Water Element in its makeup. Potential Matter manifests its energy as Water and Earth. These Elements have nothing to do with the material bodies of the same name, and as such are capitalized and called “Elemental” to distinguish them from the earth we walk on, water we drink, air we breath, and fire we cook with. They are in fact, energetic states, each with their own unique characteristics, as well as each of the previously mentioned ten levels of consciousness within them. The Elements also have preferred ways of interacting with each other, to form the *Three Principles* of alchemy. There are in fact, forty different ways energy-matter-consciousness can manifest in our world.

The Three Essentials are the alchemical principles of Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt. Like the “Elements” these principle concepts are to be thought of a “Philosophical” and not literally as chemical elements or compounds. The Alchemical Sulphur, or Soul, of a things predominates in the animating principles of energy (Fire) and intelligence (Air); Alchemical Salt, or the physical body of a thing, predominates in unconscious forces, psychic, and instinctual intelligence (Water) and solid matter (Earth); Alchemical Mercury, or general life force, predominates in intelligence (Air) and instinctual forces, and psychic energy (Water), as such it is the link, or bridge, between the higher forces of Sulphur and the lower body of matter.

In the mineral realm the dominant energy is that of Earth, a little Water, and very little Air or Fire. In the vegetable realm, the dominant energy is Water and Air, but little Fire and Earth. In the animal realm, the dominant force element is Fire, then Air, but little Earth. These qualities need to be understood as they have been defined for the following information to be of any use to the practicing, or aspiring, Hermeticist. For example, using the above definitions, we can say that the plant realm has an abundance of instinctual energy (Water) and intelligence, i.e. a specific function (Air), but little direct energy (Fire), as this is received passively from the sun; and little hard, physical, matter (Earth).

In the East as in the West, the idea of principle Elements and Philosophic Principles are expressed in more or less the same manner. This original undifferentiated energy from creation is often called in Indian philosophy, and modern occult, and New Age circles, as *akasha*, or Spirit. However, *akasha*, consists of two (2) aspects, one active as we have noted, Niter, and the other passive, Salt. The energies of Niter are also referred to as the force of *Kundalini*, or spiritual forces. In alchemy, this is the Secret Fire. To the Salt, belongs the force of *Prana*, or Vital Energy.

The function of the Vital energy is to maintain physical life forms and existence. It is completely instinctual and unconscious and is heavily influenced by cosmic cycles, astrological pulses, and other natural phenomena. The function of the Secret Fire is to increase in humanity, the only place where it is present, its sense of self, or "I". At the lowest level or functioning, this is the ego, at its highest, it is Divinity incarnate, as both are two sides of the same coin. One is 'self' in relation to the physical world and others; the other is 'self' in relationship to all of Creation and as a co-creator.

In the vast majority of humanity, this Secret Fire, or liberating energy of self-consciousness, lies dormant, asleep at the base of the spine, coiled like a serpent. Only a small amount manages to escape, reaching a *sepherothic* level, or so-called *chakra*, thus creating a loci of consciousness for each person. If it reaches the top of the skull, and beyond, a spiritual awakening can occur, allowing for a descent and re-ascent of the energy, during which the psychic centers can be awakened allowing for the manifestation of psychic powers and related phenomena.

The Secret Fire ascends as a result of a temporary weakening of the Vital Energy in the physical body. This is why so many spiritual awakenings take place under great physical stress, times of illness, or near-death-experiences. When the Secret Fire will ascend through the various psychic-physical currents causing it to be enveloped in a sphere of luminous light.

The experiencing of the Secret Fire, as a result of the suppression of the physical body's Vital Energy, can create condition which manifests in various forms:

-Some perceive the bright light as an angel, their Higher Self, or "Holy Guardian Angel", others as a spiritual teacher.

-Astral projection may result, along with perception of the immediate surroundings.

-Uncontrolled physical movements may also result, typical of so-called 'kundalini phenomena': shaking, rapid breathing, swinging of the torso, uncontrolled giddiness, and sitting straight upright in the Pharonic position. After a period of time, the energy will descend, and return to the base of the spine.

The effects of this awakening will take some time for the consciousness of the individual to adjust to, and not limited to the 'non-physical' realms. The physical body, although to a lesser degree, is also changed and improved in functioning, constituting a genuine "re-birth" on several levels. However, it is up to the mind, or sense of "I", of the individual, to cooperate with this influx of power if more permanent changes in consciousness are to be made.

As we can see, the concept of kundalini, or the Secret Fire, is linked to two polar concepts: that of the undifferentiated creative energy, and the second, as the seed of this energy locked on each cell of material creation, and focused in humanity at the base of the spine.

When this energy rises as a result of psychic experiences, and not because the physical weakness, can cause the Vital Energy of the body to be concentrated on various areas of the body, creating physical and psychic disturbances. If the energy becomes concentrated in the head, it can create the illusion of a spiritual awakening, as well as the well known "hot and cold" flashes, or currents, up and down the spine. The effects of the Secret Fire however, and not its re-distributive effects on the Vital Energy, can create the following phenomena:

- Intense pains suggestive of an illness
- Crawling sensations of ants or small bugs over the skin, as well as a 'jumping' sensation of the energy
- A feeling of crystal clear calmness and tranquillity, rise from center to center to the top of the head
- Ascending in the famous 'zigzag' or Rising Serpent pattern
- The energy can skip a center or two
- The energy can reach the top of the head in a flash of light
- The character attributes of both positive and negative are exaggerated and sexual power is increased.

If the energy rises to the top of the head, then it becomes possible to work directly on the Vital Energy within the body, and use it, as a means of enhancing the psychic experience and spiritual awakening.

In short, the psychic centers must first be awakened by the Secret Fire and purified, before the energy of the physical body, can be concentrated upon them.

Thus, our psychic exercises, and esoteric meditations are designed to prepare our minds, bodies, and consciousness for the liberation of the Secret Fire buried deep inside us. Through a progressive cleansing of the blood, nervous system, and endocrine glands, the 'chains' of the Vital Energy upon the Secret Fire are reduced and eliminated,

allowing the ever present power and energy, a veritable pressure waiting to be released, to spring into action. Thus, the Serpent doesn't really sleep, it is we who are asleep to its presence and potential blessing.

The Secret Fire and the Sepheroth

"So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life." Genesis 3:24

The use of the "Tree of Life" has been both a blessing and a curse for modern esotericism. When understood, the "Tree" offers a complete and working model of Creation on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic scales.

However, where many fail is on the personal level. The ability to apply the often very general information of the Tree to personal experiences of the initiate when they deal with physiological phenomena is profoundly lacking in modern esoteric circles. The reasons for this are several: *First*, many modern esotericists simply repeat what they have learned without experiencing whether or not it is true on a personal level; *second*, the language of kabbalah is multi-leveled, with the same word having several meanings, thus many who are using the words don't know what they actually mean, or on what level it may be interpreted; *thirdly*, the diagram of the Tree is simply too neat and compartmentalized. Many kabbalists are unable to adapt to the fact that interior reality is much more flexible than the Tree allows when applied to the two dimensional page or illustration.

These problems are farther complicated by the idea of "One Tree" but "Four Worlds" making much meaningful, practical information nearly impossible to come by regarding the crises of spiritual awakening and so-called Kundalini phenomena as it relates to kabbalistic practices. When compared to the clear and explicit information available from Taoist and Tantrik sources, it is no wonder that so many Americans and Europeans prefer those systems to those more culturally and historically related.

To help resolve these problems in the transmission of knowledge, only information that has a relationship to experience of the author or others he has discussed this topic with will be included here. Theory will be stated as theory, and experience as experience. The meaning of common kabbalistic words will be defined, and redefined, to keep the communication clear and direct. An extensive use of confusing and somewhat irrelevant god-forms, references to mythology, and cosmology unconnected to the personal experience will be avoided.

Arousing the Sleeping Serpent

"Just as Moses lifted up the flaming serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that all who believe may have eternal life in him." John 3:14-15

The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram is often the first ritual learned by aspiring magicians. Its function is to teach the basic mechanics of solitary ritual, and to give a basic technique whereby destructive energies maybe repelled or dispersed from the sphere of influence of the operator. The symbols used in the ritual are fundamental to other rituals of a more complex nature, however, to disregard the Lesser Ritual as somehow less effective is a mistake. A ritual, no matter how simple or complex is only as effective as the skill of its operator. Repeated use of the LRP is can be more effective than incompetent or irregular use of more sophisticated rites.

In total, there are approximately six fundamental rituals used in Western occultism reflecting an influence of The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn: 1) the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram 2) the Supreme Ritual of the Pentagram 3) the Lesser Ritual of the Hexagram 4) the Greater Ritual of the Hexagram and 5) the Rose+Cross Ritual. The use of *The Flashing Sword* appears to be irregular, however it will also be considered along with its companion exercise or, *The Rising Serpent*.

Within these, the use of the Middle Pillar is optional, it is however, the Middle Pillar Exercise which does the most to purify the bodily energies, or Vital Energy, and make pathways for the release of the Secret Fire.

The Middle Pillar

"I will make the victor a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Revelations 3:12

Several variations of the Middle Pillar Exercise exist, however their fundamentals remain the same. Whether or not one uses the Elements as suggested by Regardie in "True Art of Healing" or the Sepherothic/planetary correspondences as he later suggests (and is most commonly used) in his book "The Middle Pillar" is irrelevant. The methods used by the *Arum Solis* will also be considered as an alternative exercise.

The theoretical basis of the Middle Pillar is that through imagination, breath, and concentration, the psychic energy of creation, here principally *Yetzirah*, can be directed allowing for a purification of the Vital Energy that holds the Secret Fire in check. As our psychic centers are cleansed of emotional, moral, and materialistic residue, they better reflect the cosmic energy that works through them. Through its pre-described pattern of circulating the energy, the Middle Pillar assists in smoothing out the edges of our aura, as well as increasing the flow of energy in general directions, so that the psychic pathways, both large and small, can be purified and strengthened through an increase of Vital Energy.

The pathways described for the Middle Pillar are circular in nature. They are for the most part large, clear, and bright, with a reflective quality too them. Regardie says that the psychic spheres should be imagined like large, clear, brilliant diamonds if no other color is known. Although, in the end, the entire sphere, or extended aura, of the practitioner should be imagined as a brilliant diamond radiating heat and light.

The beauty of the Middle Pillar is that it, like many esoteric practices, is really a layered exercise. Containing an almost infinite amount of flexibility and growth potential. As the practitioner develops in skill and manipulation of the imagery, the amount of new possibilities increases.

One of central movements of the Middle Pillar is the “*Fountain of Light*”. Here, the practitioner imagines a brilliant force of energy forcing its way up through the soles of their feet and out the top of their head, spraying along the edges of their aura, making it strong and clear of any roughness, and gathering again at their feet. This cyclic imagery is repeated several times. This key part of the exercise, is the central part that prepares the central pathways for the eventual release of the Secret Fire. It is also similar to Eastern practices as seen in Chinese *Chi Kung*, Indian *Tantra*, and Tibetan *Vajrayana* yoga.

This being said, it is also clear that some differences exist between Eastern and Western methods of releasing the Secret Fire. The methods of direct work on the psychic centers, and an upward climbing of the spinal column is more traumatic than the more general work of the Middle Pillar. It is for this reason, that the techniques of yoga, save a few, that are aimed straight away at releasing the Secret Fire, require supervision of a guru. Being that they so restrict the activities of the practitioner, and require close supervision, they are also systems that are impractical for day to day life in American and European culture.

While similarities exist, and will be examined, the *major differences* appear to be the following:

- 1) Indian yoga is aimed principally at liberation from the physical realm in as quick a method as possible. Western esoteric practices are aimed at the perfection of matter and the psyche within the material world, and not an abandonment of it.
- 2) Chinese yoga, or *Chi Kung*, is more akin to Western practices, in that it is aimed at perfection of the material world, and even the spiritualizing of the body into a “Body of Light”. It however, is more akin to Indian yoga, in that it starts at level of the etheric body (*nadis* or acupuncture points) and proceeds from there. This “from the bottom up, and inside out” approach is different from the Middle Pillars “top down, outside in” method. Because the etheric body is directly effected early on, the effects are more dramatic, as well as potentially traumatic for the unprepared. In the Middle Pillar, the etheric body is often the last thing effected. This is because the symbolism used, as well as the need to develop skills in concentration, visualization, and meditation effect primarily the mental outlook of the practitioner for a long period of time. Only after considerable practice, of a year or more, on a daily basis, do the effects of the Middle Pillar begin to sink into the astral body, and eventually filter into the etheric and physical bodies of the practitioner. It is stated in one source, that it takes a minimum of three years for even the most advanced yoga practitioner to release the Kundalini through special exercises. A ‘release’ which we have stated, is not a release per say, but the removal of obstacles to its natural expression. This is a critical point, since it is often said that to experience kundalini will often take twenty years of practice of esoteric exercises, or even Hatha Yoga, the same amount of time it took Nicholas Flamel to confect *The Philosopher’s Stone*. During a recent workshop, Jean Dubuis stated that it may be possible to complete the extremely dangerous Flamel Method in three years. It may be that for the alchemist, the *interior* creation of the Philosopher’s Stone is nothing short of the kundalini experience, and the exterior creation of the Stone is the ability to direct this Cosmic creative energy at will.
- 3) Tibetan systems run somewhere between the Chinese and Indian, in that they are concerned with liberation, but also with the creation of an etherial body made from their bodily essences. This *Diamond Body*, or *Rainbow Body*, is pure light and can materialize at the will of the adept. Like the Chinese and Indian systems, the Tibetan use a rituals for the purification of the mind and emotions of the practitioners, as well as the visual images in both anthropomorphic deities and abstract geometric forms. The Rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram fulfill this function when performing the Middle Pillar.

Thus, we can see, the major differences in Eastern and Western practices can be summarized in function and reference point of origin. The East seeks liberation through progressive untying of the knots of ignorance that bind humanity to incarnation. The West seeks to perfect the material world making material reality a reflection of spiritual reality. One accomplished, the adept can then proceed to dis-incarnate at will. The Western approach seeks to be more active in the world and to transform it, while the Eastern approach is to see the world as an illusion that is impermanent, and as such, is more passive. Such philosophies, like all beliefs and cultures, reflect the physical environment of their earliest origin. In tropical and sub-tropical zones the concern with time is less important than in the Northern hemisphere where a winter without food stores means death for the community. The cold, harsh realities of arctic zones produce a different theory and technique, and as such, different ideal (gods) than agricultural areas. Whether one is a hunter nomad or an established agrarian society is reflective of the physical landscape they

live in, and as such effects values, needs, and spiritual philosophy and technique.

This is of critical concern whenever one is considering adopting the esoteric practices on another land or culture. Why did it arise, and under what circumstances? Are those same conditions applicable today, and in the life of the potential practitioner? In view of current conditions, are the practices being considered progressive or regressive in nature? That is, are they forward moving, or simply an idealization of a mythical past 'golden age'?

Salt, Saturn, Sexual Ecstasy, and Spiritual Bliss

"The heart girt with a serpent is my Name!" Chaldean Oracles

Salt is a symbol of wisdom and learning. Saturn, is associated with *Ouroboros*, the Great Serpent biting its tail, symbolic of limitation. As such it is closely allied with the earth, but also all of material creation, and those things which border on non-being, or Eternity. In one 15th century manuscript, the serpent is made of two colors, red and green. Red is outside and green is inside. Green, the color of Nature and of Venus, is the beginning of the Work. Red, the color of the Stone, and Mars, is the end of the Work.

"Sapiens dominabitur astris." The wise shall exercise dominion over the stars. As we correct the astrological imbalances (i.e psychic centers or chakras) within ourselves, astrological conditions outside have less of a negative effect on us. We gain dominion over the 'stellar' forces and can "make the sun shine in our oratory when we will it so."

The seventeenth century pupil of Jakob Boehme, Gichtel placed the cosmic spiral, or "Wheel of Nature" within the human body. J.G. Gichtel's *Theosophica Practica*, 1898. Saturn is the crown, Jupiter the brow, Mars the throat, Sun with a serpent around it, the heart, Venus liver, Mercury the spleen, and Moon the sexual organs, or in straight theosophic decent down the Tree. It is the Heart with a serpent that attracts our attention. Here he also places the Element of Fire.

Egyptian initiates were also called scarabs because they pushed along the egg of their regeneration.

Mysteria Magica, vol 3 The Magical Philosophy: The brow included in the Middle Pillar (called: Clavis Rei [1st Formula] *The Rousing of the Citadels*) and the color scale varies with each center. An additional use of the rising twin serpents of the Caduceus are included at the end. The brow is attributed to Saturn, and is said to balance out the Yesod center, as well as add power to the remaining centers in the Middle Pillar as the *Golden Dawn* and *Aurem Solis* present it.

Alchemically, Salt is derived from the union of Elemental Earth and Elemental Water (or Assiah and Yetzirah), the Secret Fire is 'hidden' in the Salt (material body) and represents the unconscious, instinctual forces that seek release. It is sometimes called "Hellfire" in that if uncontrolled, or poorly released, it can wreak havoc on the body and psyche of the student, via its purifying effects. This is illustrated by the 31st Path, or Path of Fire, sometimes mistaken for "Purgatory" or "Hell" by the un-regenerated who pass through this Path after death. This Path is also under the direction of Mercury and Shin, the symbols of spiritual guidance and evolution. For those interested in *Notarikon*, Shin shares the same numerical value, 300, as the Hebrew phrase, "The Spirit of the Living God."

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matthew 3:11

The letter Shin is often used in meditation as a symbol of Divine light, life, love, or presence. It is imagined above the head, just touching the crown, then inside the head proper (as it is associated with intelligence and the energy of the nervous system in the *Sepher Yetzirah*), descending into the heart, and finally, expanding from there to engulf the meditator in a sea of fire. Because it consists of three flaming *Yods*, or tongues, it is sometimes associated with the flaming tongues of Pentecost, and a variety of Trinitarian concepts.

Several possible interpretations are available to use regarding this statement: One suggests that John the Baptist was initiating repentance as well as entrance into the watery world of Yetzirah, but that Jesus, was offering a path of initiation into the fire of the Soul, or full adepthood. A second interpretation is that John was offering initiation up the 29th Path, or the Path of Water; while Jesus was offering the harder and more rigorous Path of Fire, or the 31st Path to his disciples. Neither of these is a definitive answer, only a modern kabbalistic attempt to understand Scripture in the context of initiatic practices. The mention of the Holy Spirit is more informative however, as this phrase was adopted by the Jews during the period of the Babylonian Captivity and represents the origin of Persian and Chaldean influences on Jewish mystical beliefs.

The term Holy Spirit (*Ruach Elohim*) is derived from the *Zend Avesta*, and the phrase, *Spenta Mainyu*, or "Holy (Creative) Spirit". The creative power is implied and not stated in the original, an appears to be lost in subsequent translations into modern languages via Jewish and Christian traditions. This *Spenta Maiynu* is a purifying and regenerating energy and intelligence with a cosmic host of six or seven intelligence's at its command.

"It [Spenta Mainyu] is the self-realizing quality or activity of *Ahura Mazda* (the Good Mind); it is the self-generating energy that leads to the creation and evolution of the universe. *Spenta Mainyu* is dynamic and creation is an ongoing process. For Zoroaster, holiness meant also abundance, growth, and health. *Spenta Mainyu* represents

the principle of augmentation and development in the universe.” (F. Mehr, p.29)

This power and their beings comprise the *Mathrem*, or *Mathra*, literally, ‘the sacred word of power’, which is the basis for the development of the practice of mantra in India and “Words of Power” in the Middle East and Egypt. Manthrem or Mathra is in its own right held to be the supreme mantra from which all others are derived, in the same fashion as YHVH is the origin of all Hebrew Divine Names. This is mentioned because in Persia and Babylon, the convergence of what would develop into semi-independent Eastern and Western esoteric practices is complete. In one respect, it could be said to be the original home of yoga, kabbalah, alchemy, and magic as we know them. Period art and architecture shows winged creatures familiar to Jewish and Egyptian tradition, planetary diagrams, an early version of the Tree of Life, and several variations of the intertwined serpent motif.

The Cosmic Triangle of Fire

“The successful adept must be endowed with a knowledge of the material of the Great Work; also with faith, silence, purity of heart, and prayerfulness. After passing through the gate surmounted with the hieroglyph of philosophic mercury he traverses the seven angles of the citadel, representing the chief operations of the Great Work - calcination, dissolution, purification, introduction into the sealed Vase of Hermes, transference of the Vase to the Athanor [furnace], coagulation, putrefaction, ceration, multiplication and projection. And even upon reaching the *Petra Philosophalis*, he finds it is held in custody by a formidable dragon.”

Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae, Heinrich Khunrath

Saturn is related to Mercury in alchemical text, and is given the same ambiguous sexuality, or androgyny, and named it ‘*Mercurius senex*’.

In Tiphareth, the geometric symbol is the interlaced triangles of water and fire, or the Star of David. When expanded to connect the planetary sephereth of the Tree (with Saturn being attributed to Daath), the Triangle of Water connects the spheres of Mars, Jupiter, and Luna. The Triangle of Fire connects Saturn, Venus, and Mercury. Just as Orobouros is cosmic energy (the serpent) limiting itself (Saturn), Venus is the creative cosmic force multiplying itself in life (its vegetative nature) as a prism splits the light of the sun. Mercury, like Saturn in many respects, is androgynous, and controls the fire of creation, directing it in the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone. Mercury holds the Caduceus, or winged staff with two serpents intertwined around it. The Wings represent sublimation, the serpents the basic forces of creation. Their crossing over is the psychic centers, often given as seven in number, here representing the colors in the spectrum, plus white (Venus). Central to the diagram is Sol, which is the cosmic creative forces which unify, enliven, and harmonize creation, and which we can hope to contact. It is central, and directs and controls all of the other planets, psychic centers, or aspects of Cosmic energy.

By contacting the fire of the Sun, we can open the fire of the other psychic centers (via Venus), and more easily direct the restrictive and enlightening energy of Saturn, through the powers of the Mind, or Mercury.

To understand these multi-faceted aspects of the planets, particularly Venus and Mercury, it is important to have done the Pathworkings up to Tiphareth. While this is not required to perform the techniques later in this monograph, it is a help for an understanding of the theoretical part.

However, we can begin to understand the relationship of the Spheres to each other by undertaking a series of meditations based on the following idea:

Venus is the regenerating, sensual, active life force in its vegetative and unconscious manner. It responds to heat, light, and emotion. On the Path of the Decent, Venus splits the singular rays of the Sun into the many facets of the color spectrum, and as such, can lead us to a better understanding of the relationship between multiplicity and unity, the psychic centers and planets, and their unique natures. On the Path of Ascent, Venus re-unites the divergent energies, both planetary and personal (psychic centers) and harmonizes it into a singular force, although still multi-colored, until it returns to the Sun as pure light.

“This Stone rises in growing, greening things.” Wherefore when the Green is reduced to its former nature, whereby things sprout and come forth in due time, it must be decocted and putrefied in the way of our secret art.” *Splendor solis*, Trismosin

The Stone is made through the greening of nature (Netzach) and its returning to its source (Tiphareth) by putrefaction (Death card of the path connecting them).

Mercury gives form and meaning to the diverse energies made by the splitting actions of Venus, and re-unites them as fundamental forces, symbolized by the Caduceus. Mercury is *Psychopomp*, or Guide of the Soul, and directs the energies that Venus represents. Since both Venus and Mercury sit at the base of the Pillars of kabbalah, they access the material, astral, and mental realms, and can influence all three to some degree. On the Descent, Mercury creates form and structure, for the body, the mind, or the soul, and on the ascent, Mercury helps free us from the limitations of form, without forgetting its lessons.

The serpent is primordial force or energy, fire and water being the principle two of creation, with air and earth following them. Because it shed its skin, it is seen as a symbol of regeneration and renewal. It is also dangerous,

deadly, can be found often in 'guardian' roles near springs or water as well as deserts. When controlled or mastered, is seen as mastering a powerful and deadly, yet regenerating force, basic to creation, or possibly from which creation came.

The Secret Fire is directly linked to the sexual, (i.e. principle and most basic creative forces) in humanity. Here, the relationship between 'bliss' 'ecstasy' and the erotic impulse can be clearly seen and experienced. The development of a host of 'sexual yogas' and 'sex magic(k)' practices bear this out to some degree. However, it is the sexual desire in humanity that acts as its basic drive and evolutionary force. It also suggests that the ability and need for mystical experiences is biologically rooted. Only by ignoring the most basic of pleasures, sex, can we ignore the drive to ecstatic union on some level. The 'little death' or *petite morte*, is a forerunner of the 'big death' as we let go and experience divine oblivion.

Sexual power, linked to our innate drive for mystical experiences, is also linked to human evolution, and some kind of predetermined point or state to which we are being directed.

This is a significant point, in that almost all of modern Western societies psychological illnesses are focused around sexual repression and obsession.

If the Secret Fire flows freely, or with greater strength than before, without the proper purification of the Vital Energy of the physical body, it is possible that it will result in what appears to be extreme physical, but more likely psychological illness in the form of schizophrenia and psychosis; instead of psychic gifts, genius, and either transpersonal states, or simply altered states of consciousness.

Wilhelm Reich, the father of *Orgon Therapy* states that the basis for all mental-emotional disturbances are anchored in the physical body, and that these anchors can be released through breathing techniques, somewhat similar to pranayama. Since the body is the "Salt" of alchemy, and partially composed of accessible unconscious elements through its "Watery Element" all of our emotional and physical experiences become indelibly marked, associated, or stored in our physical body. If these blocks, or energy concentrations of emotional and physical trauma (composed of Vital Energy) are not removed before the Secret Fire begins to flow more intensely, the so-called negative side effects of 'Kundalini phenomena' will appear.

Abuse of drugs, alcohol, and sexual extremes only worsen the condition in that they inadvertently release the Secret Fire by weakening the physical body and its link to the astral, thereby damaging the etheric substructure, and create energy blocks in the end rather than diminish them, when the mind and body attempt to make repairs.

A nervous system damaged by substance abuse makes a tricky vehicle for the clear, clean, and powerful expression of the Secret Fire. It is through our nervous system (under the domain of Yesod-Luna) that we engage both the physical world, as well as our interior world. It links the body (Malkuth) with the Mind-Intellect (Hod) as well as instinctual, creative, and sensual urges (Netzach). If it is damaged, our ability to relate fully, creatively, and productively to these psycho-physical-spiritual parts of our self becomes endangered. If it is damaged, then our most direct and important link to our Holy Guardian Angel, and means of releasing the Secret Fire safely (via Tiphareth) is threatened in this incarnation.

"Listen, then while I make known the Grand Arcanum of this wonder-working Stone, which at the same time is not a stone, which exists in every man, and may be found in its own place at all times.... It is called a stone, not because it is like a stone, but only because by virtue of its fixed nature, it resists the action of fire as successfully as any stone....If we say that its nature is spiritual, it would be no more than the truth; if we describe it as corporeal, the expression would be equally correct; for it is subtle, penetrative, glorified, spiritual gold. It is the noblest of all created things...it is a spirit or quintessence."

A Short Guide to the Celestial Ruby, Philethes.

Freeing the Dragon

How long it takes to un-block our psychic anatomy for a more complete and harmonious functioning of the Secret Fire is unclear. It is stated that even the most advanced yogis require a minimum of three years of special practice for this to occur. Since that kind of training takes place under specialized and supervised conditions, it can be assumed that modern Western life requires more time, as well as self-reflection and referral, since the average Western occultist, be they kabbalist, alchemist, or both, will spend the majority of their time working alone or at best in occasional small groups.

Certain schools of yoga as well as kabbalah and Sufi practices view the heart as the center of the individual universe, and the most important of all psychic centers. By opening the heart, we gain access to our Interior Master, or Holy Guardian Angel (*messenger*), characterized by a strong manifestation of intuition. This is the final resting place for the Serpent's Tongue after its ascent over the skull, and as Boehme and Hermetic imagery have shown, the "Heart girt with a serpent" is the ideal to which mystics aspire.

As one yogi put it, we approach the "Big King" first, and allow him to direct the activities of the serpent - language not unfamiliar to Hermeticists.

Adam Kadmon: Secret Fire and YHVH

“For our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29

While alchemy, kabbalah, and astrology have been homogenized in modern esoteric practices to create an almost seamless synthesis, this is not true of earlier periods. Traditionally, alchemy and astrology played almost no role in Jewish kabbalah[5], and while it has been put forward that many Jews were alchemists, and some great alchemists possibly Jews[6], no manuscripts of Jewish alchemical practices seem to exist in any great number. Even the most famed *Esch M'saref*, or “The Refiner’s Fire”, is a compilation of material, focusing mainly on gematria, and not a ‘chemical’ work in itself.

Early kabbalists imagined creation taking place in several stages, from which was generated the anthropomorphic image of the ‘primordial man’, or *Adam Kadmon*. This ‘first man’ was imagined as being crated out of the four-letters of the Divine Name stacked one on top of the other. Yod was the head, Heh, the arms and shoulders, Vau, the spine and sexual organs, and the final Heh, the hips and legs. A host of attributes and qualities came to be associated with each letter, and as a whole, it formed its own school of kabbalistic meditation. By adding other letters, altering combinations, and substituting letters based on numerological equivalents, additional Divine Names, names of archangels, angels, and other spiritual beings were generated.

The oral tradition of Adam Kadmon is similar to that of the Egyptian god Osiris, in that Osiris was dismembered and reconstructed, while Adam “Fell” to pieces, and it is the work of the kabbalist to reconstruct the Original Adam. Each of us is said to be a piece of this original soul, and it is our purpose to find our place in Creation, via kabbalistic methods.

Saint-Germain and the Most Holy Three-Fold Wisdom

The idea of Secret Fire in initiatic psycho-alchemical texts such as *The Most Holy Trinsophia* (Three Fold Wisdom)[7] illustrate the point of hidden fire, associated with volcanic power, and under the influence of Venus. Works such as this bear a strong resemblance to alchemical-kabbalistic texts, and either use mystical symbolism of these esoteric schools, or such symbols are used to interpret the texts meaning.

In the text, Saint-Germain reportedly recounts the details of his initiation through the twelve degrees of Cosmic Consciousness. The use of earthly fire in the form of volcanic eruptions, lava, and seas of flame symbolize the presence of an underlying matrix of living energy that pervades material and non-material creation, uniting and constantly renewing it through what can be seen as violent activity.

La Tres Sainte Trinsophie is comprised of twelve sections, each with its own illustration. The most obvious alignment that can be seen, is between the twelve sections, the zodiac, and the stages of alchemy. It can also be suggested, for our considerations, the seven major and five minor psychic centers.

The story begins with Saint-Germain on the lava beds of Vesuvius, later he passes an alter on which is a cup, with a winged serpent intertwined around it twelve times. Saint-Germain then enters into a vast realm of fire, in the midst of which is a greenish-gold serpent with ruby eyes which he must dominate with a sword, the symbol of an enlightened will. With this act, anger, hate, and pride are cast out of his consciousness, and the senses are brought under direction.

In one of the scenes depicted, Saint-Germain is in front of a triangular alter with an elaborate candlestick . It’s base is formed out of two intertwined serpents and terminates at a lotus, with the taper placed in the center. Two inscribed panels accompany the illustration. The first one reads: “To the strong is given the burden” and the second, “Kindle a fire upon the high place that the sacrifice may be borne upward to the Desired One.” The final illustration shows the heavens ablaze with light and a triangle surrounded by a square and circle. The initiate, here Saint-Germain, is accompanied by Isis Revealed, the goddess of life and Nature.

The pictures described illustrate that even at the end of the *Illuminist* era, classical alchemical and kabbalistic symbolism was in widespread use by esotericists. However, its direction was changed from classical, or laboratory alchemy, to ‘philosophic’ or ‘spiritual’ alchemy. Just as kabbalah had undergone a radical transformation at the hands of alchemists and Christian mystics, alchemy itself had also changed. While such manuscripts may be of dubious value for practical laboratory work, fortunately, they still are of value for interior spiritual initiation - an initiation that only the Secret Fire can bring.

Exercises

The Middle Pillar

The Middle Pillar is a well known exercise to almost every student of magic. The details of the exercise are clearly outlined in Israel Regardie’s book of same name, and will not be gone into here. Instead, exposition of those point relevant to the Secret Fire will be outlined. These points are:

1. The establishment of Malkooth.
2. Circulation of the Light
3. The Fountain of Light

4. Malkooth as Kether
5. Relationship of Tiphareth to Malkooth and Kether

Secondary considerations will be paid to:

1. The Ritual of the Pentagram
2. The Ritual of the Hexagram

Establishing Malkooth

Malkooth or 'Kingdom' is a complex sphere in that it represents several broad concepts simultaneously. It is at once, our feet when the Tree of Life is projected on the human frame (and the knees and base of spine when seated or kneeling); all solid matter, earth, and all material creation. It is our bones, and the marrow they contain is a personal aspect of the Secret Fire. It is important that we have a strong sense of foundation when we talk about Earth and Malkooth, so that in meditation we can remain grounded and secure. The stronger our sense of connection to the earth and our bodies we have, the more energy we can generate and the easier it will be to direct it. It is analogous to trying to build a skyscraper on a poured slab concrete for a foundation verses a four-story subbasement. The better the foundation, the stronger the structure.

Since the Secret Fire is hidden in the Earth, it is good to spend some time, even several years, working through the details of the Pentagram rituals. Cleansing, harmonizing, projecting, and withdrawing the energy represented there into yourself and surrounding area. The North is an especially important area for concentration, in that it is Earth of Earth, and is our hidden gateway to the Secret Fire. Buried in the solid nature of matter, is a underlying vibrant energy that is continually pulsating, giving rise to form and life, and turning energy in matter and matter into energy. This underlying nature is illustrated in the Sign of Taurus, the zodiacal sigil given to the North. In it we see the Moon crowning a circle with a dot in the center, or the Sun. This combined lunar-solar sign for earthly nature points to the theory that all matter is simply condensed sun light, or hidden fire.

By associating the heaviness of Earth and the underlying heat it contains (the molten, volcanic core) with our feet, knees, and base of spine (and eventually our whole skeletal system), we can begin to experience the literal network creation is formed from. This imagery is reinforced by the statement that Malkooth and Kether are one. By imaging that an unlimited stream of energy is pulsating into and out of creation from the Ain Soph Aur at Kether, and then imaging the same for material creation as you envision it, at Malkooth. All too often the spheres are imagined as being static beings or states, when nothing is farther from the truth. They are alive, dynamic, and constantly interacting with each other and the energy-matter matrix. This interaction is most clearly seen on the Middle Pillar and the central spheres.

Kether-Tiphareth-Malkooth Triad

In Western and some Eastern esoteric practices, all exercises begin with a drawing down of energy from the Crown, or Kether. This is done because Kether, is on the edge of "non-existence" draws energy into and out of being. This energy is then regulated, until it becomes manageable by our human consciousness, said to be somewhere around Chesed, on the Cosmic scale of things.

On the personal level, Kether, or our personal Crown, regulates the flow of energy into and out of our bodies. We then direct this energy through our brain and nervous system, until it becomes manageable by our consciousness. Just as Kether is the bridge between Being and Non-Being on the Cosmic Scale, our personal Kether is the bridge between energy and matter. In our personal being, this is the pineal gland.

Malkooth is the final condensing of these Cosmic forces, and on the Cosmic Scale is all of material creation. On our personal level, it our physical bodies, and as an intermediary, the environment we live and move in with others. Since Malkooth is a World, that of Assiah, as well as a Sphere, it has its own "Kether aspect" or ability to create matter that goes from the most dense to most subtle. These subtler forms of matter border on their own realm of "Non-Being" or that which crosses over from the *purely material* to the psychic. In our bodies this would be the prostate and sexual glands, perineum, and base of the spine.

The meeting place for these two polar aspects of our being and creation, is in the Heart Center, or Tiphareth. Here, all of creation is harmonized and brought into a state of dynamic tension and vitality around an intelligent center. This intelligence direct the other aspect of creation so that they work in harmony with one another for the good of all. This is our heart pumping blood to all of our organs, our pituitary gland, or "Master Gland" giving directions to all of our endocrine system, our Solar Plexus, regulating nerve energy in general; and the nucleus of each atom, cell, or the Sun in our solar system.

In its role of chief mediator of forces, Tiphareth is constantly sending vital energy to all area of creation, and transmitting energy from the Crown, or highest abstract realms, to Malkooth, or the densist levels of matter. It in many ways, is the regulator of this energy to such s degree, that it can be said that matter itself is actually made by Tiphareth. In physical terms this means that all matter is nothing but condensed light energy. In personal terms, its means that our bodies and environment are the creation of our deepest held thoughts.

To help develop a more conscious and functional relationship between these three centers of energy-matter-consciousness exchange, the following exercise is suggested:

Imagine a brilliant sphere of Light with a binding, almost point black center, just above or touching the top of your head. Inhale, drawing down a shaft of this sphere into your Heart. Exhale, sending the shaft of light through your body and legs out the soles of your feet, into the molten center of the Earth. Inhale again, visualizing the fiery energy of this Center of the Earth moving up in a golden reddish stream to your Heart. Hold it, energizing the heart in brilliant light. Exhale, seeing the light expand in heat, light, life energy, and power.

It is important at this point, that the energy not only be coordinated with the inhalation, but be 'breathed up' from the earth and not forced. This can be done by imagining a strong, flexible, hollow tube or canal running from the center of the earth, or feet, to the heart center. The energy can also be imagined running up the feet, *as a pulse*, entering the spinal column, and focusing energizing the heart area.

Imagine after a period of time, that it is in the heart of the universe, and the adept, that matter and energy meet and are created.

Just as our 'heart felt' feelings direct the limitless energy of Kether into manifestation, so do they direct manifestation back to Kether, or elsewhere, if we desire.

It is very important that the heart not be overheated, and that the energy once accumulated be circulated or discharged in some fashion. This can be into a talisman, a healing treatment, or into a glass of cold water which is then consumed. It can also be discharged out the solar plexus as a general circulation to the rest of the aura.

In addition, the vowel sounds associated with the Rose+Cross ritual, or A.I.O. may be intoned after competency in the basic techniques have been acquired. First, practice intoning the sounds as a single breath, resonating from the center of your heart. After a while, begin splitting the sounds so that A resonates with the head; I with the heart; and O with the Solar plexus. After a period of time, move the O sound down to the perineum where it will have a stranger affect on the 'Malkooth' sphere(s). [\[8\]](#)

Substantial resonating of the sounds in the perineum will open up 12 different channels that link the spine to the legs, knees, and feet, uniting these various 'functional' Malkooths. It also effects the prostate gland in men.

Yesod- Link Between the Selves

Yesod sits astride the gateway to the invisible, and is the repository for all that ascends and descends into manifestation. It represents several key elements of our being, including our nervous system and brain; psychic centers; unconscious yearnings and desires; and locus of memory. Through its sometimes dark and troubling, but always powerful waters, we can come into direct contact with our Holy Guardian Angel in Tiphareth. By imagining Yesod as a gateway that reflects up as well as down, we can learn to direct our psychic energies in either direction. This way, Yesod is more than just a doorway which we knock at and hope something is thrown out to us, but instead is a portal we can move through and *exist consciously*. While much of this early expansion will take place in dream states, such as lucid dreaming, and spontaneous astral projection, eventually a greater degree of control will emerge, in which consciousness is projected willfully and returns with full memory of its experiences.

This state can be quicken though, by reinforcing Yesod's link to Malkooth (for memory) and Tiphareth (willed consciousness). The following exercises are designed with these two goals in mind.

After performing the Middle Pillar, focus your attention on Yesod. Imagine it as a large sphere extending to the edges of your expanded aura, violet in color. Shrink it back to normal size and then imagine all of your physical energy, in malkooth, and through out your body, is moving up toward Yesod. This is your ability to move, manifest, and create in the material world. Imagine the spheres merge and become harmonious. Now, pull it up even further to Tiphareth, and bath the combined material and psychic-sexual energy of Yesod in the golden light of Tiphareth, and feel the three merge into one. After several minutes project them back to their original positions.

Imagine the light of Yesod as being simultaneously dual in nature, reflecting up toward Tiphareth and down toward Malkooth.

Move to Tiphareth and do the same, imagine its light reflecting down toward Yesod, and up toward Kether, the source of all energy.

Imagine the Elements as *pure and perfect ideas*, emanating from Tiphareth through a clear field of Yesod, and condensing into matter. Imagine your thoughts as pure and perfect ideas, being projected from your heart, with the combined sexual-creative energy of Yesod, into manifestation in malkooth.

Imagine the pure light and energy of Kether above your head, becoming accessible in Tiphareth, your heart, and manifesting as pure creations in Malkooth, beneath your feet. Feel the energy reverse this process, going from hard, cold, dense matter, to abstract energy forms, to pure, undifferentiated energy. In addition, the Clavis Rea Formula can be an effective illustrator of this point.

Circulation of the Light, after the establishment of the spheres should be vivid, clear, and deep in the body as well as extended out from it. This can be done in phases, with the first phases working gently on the outside, forming

broad bands of light, and increasing in density and power as they begin to reach deep below the surface of the tissue, to the bones themselves. This helps to anchor the power in the body, while expanding and clearing the aura. At all times, the energy should be palpable.

The Fountain of Light should move through the spinal column slowly at first, and with greater intensity and speed as experience progresses. The burst should be lively and bright, with a clear fluid like flame coursing around the edges of the expanded aura, at a radius of three to four feet on all sides. Lose your self in the flow of energy, as it passes through your body, out your head, into your feet, up your legs, purifying and energizing as it goes.

At the conclusion of the exercise, you may withdraw the energy into the sub-epidermal layer of your body, feeling it strengthen and energize the tissue, sinking into the bones and purifying the marrow, an essential element in long life and strong bones. This should also be done along the spinal cord, imagining that the soft tissue between the vertebrae are packed with energy and the nerve connections are strong and vital.

The Rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram

The rituals of the Pentagram re use for directing the principle Elements of the material world (Assiah), matter-energy matrix closest to our consciousness, and the outer-materially directed personality of this incarnation. It is through directing and purifying to some degree these Elements, that we can begin to turn our attention inward and have the Vision of our Higher Self, or Holy Guardian Angel, that exists in Kether, communicated with in Tiphareth, and reflected to us in the subconscious of Yesod.

The ego, or self-created image of self in relation to the material world is completely dominated by these rituals, and through them, we can adjust our sense of self, so that we may direct our energies toward Self. When this is done, we not only can converse with our Holy Guardian Angle, but realize that we and it are one and the same.

The pentagram rituals can also be used in this same respect for creating material conditions that are to our advantage, as well as spiritual advancement. They can be used to create an near material environment for the sustaining of planetary forces as well. In this aspect, the several rituals are often combined.

The planetary rituals of the Hexagram represent the manipulation of inner and outer planetary forces through our own psychic centers. They can result in direct physical manifestations of body or environment, or in interior experiences of an *initiatic* nature. Such initiations signify an expansion of consciousness, and increased activation of the psychic centers involved, and possible generalization of the effects to other centers. For example: a solar ritual will bring increased activity to the psychic 'heart' center, but also to the pineal gland in the brain as it is solar in nature. A lunar ritual will bring increased memory and mental clarity, but also will stimulate the nervous system, and psychic centers generally, as well as cyclic sexual impulses. A Venus ritual will stimulate the kidneys, sexual impulses, and increase ones sense of beauty, harmony, and artistic expression. It will also add power to all of the psychic centers as a result of Venus' 'prism effect' on psychic energy if directed properly, and increase the flow of love to the heart.

Thus, each planet has its specific and general effects, as well as manifestations on the mental, emotional, and material planes. As we increase in awareness, and contact more consciously the various planetary spheres *within us*, they will appear to take on an almost objective existence. In these semi-objective states, we can contact others of a similar vibration, or communicate with the various 'beings' of the invisible world. These worlds also have degrees of density, hence the use of Elemental attributes in the vertical mode of expression. The densest world is Malkooth/Assiah, with each of the planets having a 'home' in the Quarters, and Yetzirah is more subtle and given the attribute of Water, with its own special relationship to the Planets. Next, there is Briah, with its Airy, expansive nature, and peculiar relationship to the planets, and finally, Atziluths fiery nature, from with the previous worlds are but denser and more stable expressions. Just as our consciousness shifts in its relationship to things when it moves to the astral from the material, it shifts again when it moves from the lunar astral to the solar astral, or mental worlds; and again when the move is from the Mental to the Spiritual.

These shifts can best be explained as going from *object relationships* (material), to *subject relationships* (I-Thou), to *direct relationships*, and finally *identity relationships*. On earth we view things as objects separate from us. In the lunar astral we experience them a objects, but with a relationship to them. In the Solar astral, we experience a thing directly, that is we know it. In the Spiritual realm, we are it.

This helps to explain some of the statements made about kundalini experiences in yoga, as well as the mystical experiences of other esotericists. In kundalini, or Secret Fire experiences, the aspirant often talks of being 'one with creation', or having the ability to look inside the nature of things. This would indicate that the energetic impulses being released are expanding awareness to the level of Briah. When the final level is reached, Atzilooth, we become like the Biblical Enoch "who walked with God and was no more".

This framework also helps explain why many magicians succeed or fail at magic. The identity of 'another' doing the work for us, is a very materialistic approach to magic. Later on, after experiencing the reality and illusions of the astral worlds, the *direct*, or *personal relationship* is built, in which the magician sees the powers being directed as

aspects of his or her self, and not exterior to their being. This form of expression is more akin to the level of the adept, but also the mystic, and practitioner of yoga who visualized the *chakras* as inside their body and not exterior worlds, as in Western Pathworking. At some point however, all of these various viewpoints merge, and systems become blended in the experiences and evolving psyche of the disciple. The difference is more as a point of origin, not as a final destination.

Note of Caution!! It is very important that all of the following exercises are preceded by a period of prayer and devotion to the Cosmic and that their fruits be offered as gifts to the Creator. They must also be started by invoking the energy from above in some fashion, be it the Qabalistic Cross, the Middle Pillar, the Clavis Rei, or simply as a beam of light coming from above, entering at the Crown, and terminating at the base of the spine or feet depending on your posture. This is critical of any negative side effects are to be avoided or minimized, as only energy radiating from Kether can be contacted with out creating an imbalance in our system. Here, we seek to use this energy to repair imbalances, not forget it, and inadvertently create new ones. Also, at the end of each meditation, return the energy to the Cosmic either imaginatively, or by offering the fruits of your spiritual labor to God.

Triangle of Fire

The Triangle of Fire represents a specific aspect of Tiphareth and should be considered in relationship to the Middle Pillar, although it can be performed independent of it, or as we will see, as an adjunct exercise to intensify the effects of both exercises.

After establishing your working space, focus your attention on your heart. Imagine the great intertwined Star or Shield of David, in gold, associated with this sphere. Feel the upper triangle radiating a pulsing heat, and the lower one, a running coolness. Imagine them turn into a combined fiery triangle of Fire, and glistening triangle of Water. In the center is a brilliant dot, Yod, or Shin, as you decide.

The lower triangle of Water is our relationship of consciousness to the psychic and material worlds. The Upper triangle of Fire, is our relationship to the spheres of adepthood, spiritual illumination, and interior revelation. Imagine yourself as the center point, between these two living triangles. Turn your attention to the Fire Triangle. Let the Water Triangle fade from consciousness. Feel yourself in the center of a small pyramid of Fire. If you were to stand up, you could touch the apex. Seated or kneeling, you sense the great fire all around you. Surrounding the base of the pyramid is a giant serpent with its tail in its mouth. Close your eyes and feel with each breath, and heart beat, the fire pulse in unison and grow more intense. The fire radiates both outward from the pyramid, as well as inward to its center, where you are. Loose yourself in the pulsing, living, flame. Intone the Divine Name IAO, resonating it outward from the center of your heart to the edges of the universe. Feel the fire grow bright with each vibration and the serpent stir.

At some point you may feel, or imagine the serpent rising, and reaching a point of extension. Go with it, and view through its eyes. Return when you are done, by imagining the serpent coil back, placing its tail back in its mouth, the fire regulating, and the triangle merging with the triangle of water, both turning gold, and exiting to consciousness.

Saturn and the Secret Fire

This is special series of exercises relating to Saturn and its relationship to other planets, and the as manifestor of Creation. This exercise is directly related to the previous one, or The Triangle of Fire. When placed on the Tree of Life, the Hexagram connects the spheres of Yetzirah and Briah, giving a gateway to Atziloth, with Saturn where Daath is placed.

The Triangle of Fire is composed of Saturn at the apex, and Mercury and Venus at the base corners, with the Sun in the center. By meditating on the qualities of these planets, and their relationship to each other via this diagram, we can see that Saturn is the secret sphere, that offers us access to the energy-matter-consciousness continuum. Imagine yourself in the center of the Triangle of Fire again, pacing the Astrological signs, or godforms of Saturn, above, or above and before your, Mercury at your right, and Venus at your left. See them as living and vital, with a thin strand of fire, light, and love, connecting them.

Remember, Saturn is often given as the sign for matter, and Venus inverted as the sign for Antimony, or the Earth. Continue this meditation for several weeks, or once a week, for several months. Fifteen to twenty minutes is all that is needed.

YHVH

The following method of meditation is based upon the fundamental associations known to every student of kabbalah. It can be performed by experienced or novice students alike, although novices should spend more time on the fundamentals to insure success later on, without having to go back and repeat the basics.

This series of exercises relates to the stages and Elements of Creation and the nature of the Primordial or archetypal expressions of consciousness. Those who have experience working with Hebrew and/or the Elements as outlined in basic magical practices will be able to move more quickly through this exercise. Those who have little or no experience in magic will find it a suitable and powerful introduction to these concepts on a very personal level.

The Hebrew doctrine of Creation sets forth the idea that the Primordial Man, or Adam was composed of the four lettered name of God stacked in vertical form to appear as sort of stick figure being. In addition, all of creation could be found to have its origin in this sacred name, and its pronunciation was closely guarded, so much so, that it is now lost. The discovery of its proper intonation is said to bring power over everything, so much so, that there are schools of kabbalah that only work with the various manipulations of this Name as their form of meditation.

For us, the Tetragrammaton will be used as a visual and mnemonic guide for our meditations and exercises designed to release the Secret Fire in Creation.

The standard Elemental applications will be applied: Yod (Head, endocrine system) is associated with Fire; Heh (shoulders/chest, and cardiopulmonary system) with Air; Vau (Spine/Nervous system, including sense organs) with Water; and the Final Heh with the dot (the hips, legs and feet, and skeletal system) with Earth.

The dot in the final Heh symbolizes the secret, hidden point of light, life, and love in all of creation, and hidden in matter. It is this secret force that when liberated brings us to the heights of divine bliss and consciousness in the original Fire of Yod.

As with all exercises, begin by drawing energy, in some fashion, down from Kether to the Earth. This can be through the Kabbalistic Cross, the Middle Pillar, or the Psychic Pump as previously described. Once a calm center is established, and a sacred space to contain the energy, either through the Pentagram Ritual, or imagining a vast and empty dome sphere around you (about six to nine feet in diameter), you may proceed.

Imagine the Primordial Man in front of you, vast and towering. Merge with the image, growing in size as you do. See the flaming Yod as your head, and imagine that it, or a ray from it, projects itself downward through the Airy world. Forming the first Heh, and continues into the Watery world, gaining density and weight, forming the Vau, and finally, into the world of solid matter, forming it, along with the Final Heh. There, the flame grows small, flickering brightly, but only as a small spark, compared to its vast and brilliant place of origin, and to the dark, cold, solid world of matter in which it now appears trapped.

Identify with the solid earth. Feel your feet rooted to it. Imagine that they, your legs, knees, and hips, are all heavy, solid, and firm, immovable and dense. Feel and imagine the great strength and stability that this offers you and appreciate it, as it is the foundation of your being. Continue with this imagery, and sense a point of dense, brilliant, heat and light in the center of this dark, solid matter. See it grow brighter and stronger, as though it were the center of the Earth itself. Continue with this heat and light, and let a strand of it move up from the center of the earth, through the layers of solid matter and rock to your feet, forming a sphere of great heat and light.

After several days, pull the energy up to your knees. After several more days, pull it up to your hips. After about a month of practice, pull it up and focus it at the base of your spine.

Extend the solid earth imagery to include your skeletal structure as well. Breathe the fire up from the center of the earth, feel it focus around your spine, and move up to the top of your head. Imagine that your head is an empty sphere, waiting to receive the energy from below. Feel the energy course throughout your body, focusing on the bones. Breathe it into them, cleansing them of any weakness or disease. See the marrow inside grow, and fill them with its bright red power. Extend it across the skull, jaw, and teeth. As before, when you are done with the meditation, absorb as much energy as you can, and send the rest to the center of the earth, closing off the contact. After a month or two of this exercise, move on to the Vau. See the energy move through your feet, to the spine, and move up and through its narrow center column to the brain. Imagine that as it enters the spinal column, with each breath, the fluid contained therein, course up and across your brain, nurturing the tissue, and descending back down. Imagine your senses becoming stronger and more acute. Visualize the vast fiery energy coming from the center of the earth as increasing your psychic sensitivity and psychic centers. This can be imagined simply as the nervous system becoming bright and healthy.

Then, move on to the next, or First Heh. Here sense the energy as having moved up your feet, into the spine, and when it reaches the upper body and back of the head, it also fills the lungs with greater power and expansion. Feel yourself lifted up and expanded, as though your vision was made clearer, and sense of purpose, and destiny more definite. Imagine the lungs being charged with bright, warm healing energy, vitalizing the breath and blood.

After a few days, imagine the vital power moving from the middle of the shoulders, down the arms, and to the hands.

During this period experiment with projecting, circulating, and receiving energy through your hands. In general, the right hand should project positive, expansive, electrical energy; and the left should project magnetic, passive, and receptive energy. By holding the hands together, in the classic prayer position, in front of the chest with the back of your thumbs just touching the sternum, the heart center can be energized. In addition, the energy circulated creates a psychic 'belt' or 'dome' around the upper portions of the head and shoulders. Practice pulling energy down from the sun, moon, planets, and Cosmic through the left hand and into the earth or a talisman with the right.

Use the classic *Sign of the Philosopher*, or hands raised above the head with thumb and forefingers touching to form

a triangle, to pull energy down into both palms and out through your feet. Try storing it in your solar plexus (you may want to use the *Sign of Practicus* for this) and projecting it as previously described.^[9] Then, move to the Yod. Here after the energy has moved up to the brain, see the head grow bright and luminous. Feel it absorb the fire from below and rejoicing its return. Sense the center of your head growing powerful, warm, and bright. Focus on this single point of brightness, and then send it back down to the earth, while reaching out to the universe with it. Feel yourself lost in a fiery world of primordial power, wisdom, and love. Feel as though you are of vast stature, towering immensely through out the solar system. Feel as though the planets themselves are your psychic centers, and the sun is your heart, the Earth your footstool and the original point of creation your crown. When you are done, shrink yourself back, and shut down the meditation.

This energy once experienced has tremendous healing potential. By freeing our negative and destructive thoughts into the center of the earth for purification and renewal, we open ourselves to a more energy and expanded consciousness through the removal of psychological blocks. Through drawing up the fiery healing energy of the earth, and packing it slowly, smoothly, and methodically deep into our cells, form the bones and its marrow upward and outward, we can increase our psychic sensitivity to telluric currents, weather patterns, and magnetic conditions. In addition, we add strength, energy, and vitality to our physical bodies.^[10]

The Flashing Sword and the Rising Serpent

Yesod, Hod, and Netzach in the Secret Fire

This section examines the relationship between the sephereth of the Tree of Life to the Secret Fire, and the impact of two spheres in particular that govern the nervous system, early psychic awakening, and sexual power.

The rising of psychic power from Malkooth, effects not only the feet and perineum, but also triggers a response in the adrenals atop the kidneys. This is often accompanied by a surge of energy, as these glands are the seat of our 'fight or flight' response. They are also secondary sexual organs, and as the energy drops down, to enter into the base of the spine (also a Malkooth center) before rising up the spinal cord and energizing the entire body, it stimulates those nerves and psychic clusters associated with Yesod and Netzach. It is from this stimulation that images, fantasies, sexual potency and aggressiveness, and psychic awareness, sometimes bordering on schizophrenia and psychosis, are experienced. Intense heat and a sense of purging may also be experienced as a result.

When the energy reaches the area of Hod, or Mercury, usually prior to Netzach, but not always, it is said to be following the Path of the Serpent. This Path is illustrated by a Serpent climbing the Tree of Life, reversing the direction of the descent of the Lightning Flash. Here, the Secret Fire awakens the mind to magical possibilities and structures, but without power. It may energize the brain and speedup patterns of thought, insight, and association, but often this may be vented through excessive talking and verbalization, or routing it through the throat center. If the energy is not spent, but directed in its upward Path of Return, or ascent, then the very real problem of having to direct the will and consciousness in a singular fashion toward creating a pathway for the energy to flow is encountered. These pathways are the mental and astral constructs, or symbols, used in magical, religious, and esoteric rites.

The principle pathway, or map used to direct the Secret Fire is the caduceus of Mercury. Here, the twin serpents intertwine themselves around the central pillar, and themselves form two side or supporting pillars, leading to a winged apex, or crown, shaped like a pine cone, or the pineal gland.

When it reaches this point, then Crown, it bestows illumination, Cosmic Consciousness, and can be directed further towards greater spiritual activity, or toward material or psychic manifestation. This energy, or light, is like the rays of the sun (Tiphareth) being split into the many rays of the spectrum (Netzach) by the use of optical filters (Hod). In Hod we not only create, but also clean any existing mental filter, so that the energy rising back towards its source may be properly identified and experienced for what it is, prior to its being harmonized into a single ray of light by Netzach. Even after harmonization however, the energy may not have to be returned to the Tiphareth. If left to its own devices, it probably will, as that is its natural inclination. The sudden influx of power and energy may create a strengthening of the recently vivified astral worlds, of which Netzach is the symbolic apex.

The Death card which rules the Path between Netzach and Tiphareth signifies the task of the initiate at this stage of the journey, and of the sacrifice that lies ahead. Only by losing their individuality, or through 'death', can the separate forces under the direction of Netzach combine to lead the initiate toward adepthood. The reverse of this is also true in one sense, in that by leaving the collective behind, the individual is born, the true individual of Tiphareth. This suggests, that genuine initiation can only take place when we are no longer dependent upon the collective power of an egregore for our sense of protection, purpose, and illumination. The watery astral womb of Yetzirah must be left, for either the dry air of Malkooth's material life, or Tiphareth's spiritual renewal.

Along with the intertwined serpents of the caduceus, we find implied in the symbolism the chakras, or psychic centers, upon which the Secret Fire acts in its journey. These centers express modes of consciousness, loci of physical and psychic power, and are related in various ways to the nervous and endocrine systems as we have seen.

In Western esotericism, several methods of expressing these psychic centers exist. There is the use of the planetary names, or *mundane chakras* as they are called, for the sepheroth. Here, the planets follow the descent of *mezla*, or Divine Energy, down the Tree of Life and are placed at corresponding locations on the human body. Kether, Hockman, and Binah are in the head; Chesed, Geburah, and Tiphareth are in the upper chest and shoulders; Netzach, Hod, and Yesod in the hips and sexual organs; with Malkooth located at the feet. This works well as a mnemonic device and for the exercise known as the *Flashing Sword* and *Rising Serpent*, but is not very useful when it comes to attributing planetary powers to specific organs, as in alchemy.

Another set of attributes is to simply take the Middle Pillar and apply either its Elemental correspondences as given by Regardie *The True Art of Healing*, or the more well known planetary correspondences as he gives in his book *The Middle Pillar*. Along the same lines, it is not uncommon to apply the ascending set of Hindu *tattwas*, or Elemental signs in an ascending manner at each of the cross-bars and spheres on the central column of the Tree of Life.

While none of the above sets of designating centers of psychic force is perfect, each works in its own particular area, and as such, it might be better to simply accept the symbols given for each exercise without trying to create 'a grand synthesis' that will sound good, but be cumbersome or useless for practical purposes.

Looking at the ascent of energy from a more Western viewpoint, it is possible to view the psychic centers not as singular and specific organs, but in many instances as clusters of organs working in concert. Students of Eastern esoteric practices will recognize that the New Age system of seven chakras neatly arranged with an ascending chromatic scale is not easily found in yoga or tantra.

Instead, what is found, is just as much contradiction and confusion as in modern synthetic Western esoteric systems. Whether one uses a system of five, six, or seven psychic centers depends on which system is being practiced. The addition or subtraction of a particular center matters only in relations to the details of that particular practice and its aims. Thus, when viewing the psychic centers as objective realities, we enter into a realm fraught with danger.

Instead, we need to look at the centers in terms of *function* and *relationship* to each other. If in an exercise we notice that a center's activities are not limited to the feet, chest, sexual organs, or head, then we have entered into a deeper understanding of that locus of energy. If we find that other organs are being stimulated as well, then we will find that we have begun moving from a strictly symbolic and mental relationship to the psychic centers to a personal and experiential one. This transition to personal experience is what development is all about, and not simply neat and comfortable packages of occult lore and information as is given in endless tables of correspondences.

In one recent Golden Dawn publication^[11] a set of correspondences was given for four of the major psychic centers using *kerubic* attributions. The root center was attributed to the Calf of Revelations; the sexual center to the Angel; the Solar Plexus to the Lion; and the Eagle to the heart. No Correspondences were given for the remaining centers. Using this as a basis for discussion and experimentation, I would instead suggest the following listing as a more effective alternative:

1st Bull or Saturn^[12] or Moon^[13] with Fire in the Heart

2nd Eagle or Jupiter or Mercury Water in the liver

3rd Lion or Mars or Venus Earth in the lungs

4th Angel or Venus or Sun Air in the bladder

5th Spirit or Mercury or Mars

6th Luna or Moon or Jupiter

7th Sol or Sun or Saturn

This suggests that the order of the planets in the spheres is very relative to one's state of consciousness, and that the correspondences at the time of our descent into material consciousness may be different from the order during our re-ascent into Eternity.

If we consider what the alchemists say about Saturn, that it is the beginning and end of the Work, then this re-arrangement of the centers may be true.

In an article entitled, "From The Restored New Testament"^[14], the basic idea of four centers of the genitals, navel, heart, and head is used along with titles taken from *The Book of Revelations* of St. John.

Genitals 1st and 2nd centers The False Seer

Navel 3rd center The Red Dragon

Heart 4th center The Beast

Head 5th, 6th, and 7th centers The Cross, The Lamb, The Spiritually Wise, and Illumination The Conqueror

In an accompanying chart, the order of the planets is given from Saturn at the base, to Luna at the Crown, in straight kabbalistic fashion, with a slightly different color scale than usual: Yellow and silver-white (Saturn), pale blue (Jupiter), red (Mars), green (Sun), dark blue/indigo (Venus), orange-yellow (Mercury), violet, silvery opalescent (Moon). Each center is also associated with a zodiacal sign, a seal on the great scroll, and one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The remaining five signs of the zodiac are attributed to the Elements and Spirit.

The problem presented by the *Book of Revelations*, is that if it represents a pattern of *progressive interior initiation* linked to the ultimate experience of the Secret Fire, it is written in a highly symbolic format. Many of the keys to these symbols may be very local and period specific in origin, requiring extensive research into 1st century era Gnostic, Christian, Merkavah, and Greco-Roman initiatic practices.

This is not to imply that this is an impossible nut to crack, only that it is one wherein we must weigh the reward against the effort. To assist those who answer this in the affirmative, the above keys have been given. For this manuscript however, it raises more questions than horns on "The Beasts" head, to which the answers are not immediately forthcoming. The answers may be in some of the older and less accessible schools of Christian kabbalah found in Eastern Orthodoxy, more so than in those Christian kabbalists of Rome, as they are more focuses on the Gospel of John, and have not completely rooted out their mystical wing, or use of symbols for Illumination.

Exercise

After preparing your oratory, or place of working, imagine that your spine is the central pillar of the Caduceus. Establish it well, with a round bottom, wings at level of the throat, solar disk, and a pine cone or brilliant knob at the top. Visualize it in white or reddish-gold, with the left serpent in blue or black; and the right serpent in red. Their tails should meet or cross-over at the base of your spine and continue to overlap five more times with their heads facing toward each other, tongues extended, at the level of the throat accompanied by an extended pair of wings. The image should be mounted by a solar disk at the level of the head, surmounted by a pine cone.

After a period of several weeks with the above imagery, additional symbols can be added. In the center of each circle formed should be imagined in progressive order, the kerubic animals listed above. At the level of the throat should be akasha, or Spirit; and the Lunar qualities should dominate the back of the head, with Solar dominating the front. Both universal aspects are imagined as unified at the top, and entering and existing through the brilliant sphere or pine cone (pineal gland).

If possible, the left serpent should be imagined to have lunar, watery, passive, magnetic qualities. The right serpent, solar, electric, fiery, expansive qualities. The central column mediates, balances, and contains both simultaneously. After the above images are successfully imagined and maintained, the symbols can be progressively meditated upon. It is important to go in strict order from top to bottom or bottom to top. If a psychic blockage is encountered don't force it. Simply smooth it away gently as you progressively move through the set of symbols. Don't spend more than seven or ten days on any one symbol. Remember, that it is best to start new esoteric periods on a Saturday when the psychic power is at its height for the week. This means that it will take a minimum of seven weeks to move through the seven principle symbols on the central column, and an additional three weeks for the basic diagram and two serpents.

This is a strong exercise, so don't force it. If anything unpleasant is experienced, shorten the periods of meditation. Initially, no more than 15 minutes should be spent on this exercise.

The Serpent of Fire and the Spear^[15]

Of all the exercises in this work, the following are the easiest to perform regardless of the level of experience of the operator. Their basic concepts will already be familiar to many students, and are useful as guides in a fundamental understanding of the Secret Fire that exists in the West.

Visualize a vast point of brilliant light above your head, so intense that it appears black. Move it down to the top of your head, feel it sinking into your body and psyche, permeating your consciousness. Feel it move out, extending to form a sphere of golden light and fire around you to a diameter of four to six feet on all sides. Let this sphere of light grow in intensity and power, and know that it is a strong container for the Cosmic forces you are about to invoke. Imagine a shaft of fire, like a spear, blaze down from the point of light above you, penetrate your skull, and move through your body and into the center of the earth. Feel the earth reverberate with its impact, and imagine a stream of living fire, like a golden-red serpent, move in the reverse direction of the shaft, up your spine, and into the hollow of your skull. It is important that you imagine your skull as a hollow and vast receptacle of this creative and transforming energy. After several repetitions of this cycle, focus your attention on your heart, and imagine there, a chalice, stone, or other receptive symbol for your highest Self. Wait for a response, and then let everything merge into a vast sea of living golden light, fire, and love. At the conclusion of the exercise, draw the energy into yourself, and offer it as a gift to the Cosmic.

Basic exercises for its regulation

Solar Plexus as chief regulator of energy in the body

If after an exercise there is too much energy in your heart or head area, move it down to the solar plexus and imagine it being circulated out and around your body through that center. This will work after a few minutes, and is especially good for circulating energy that arises from sexual stimulation after these exercises.

Grounding out

It is important to establish firm points of Kether and Malkooth in these exercises. If Malkooth is insufficiently

established, the risk of flightiness and disconnectedness from everyday life is possible. More importantly, if a strong sense of connectedness is not established at Malkooth, much of the energy will have no where to go, and will be wasted. If it appears that too much energy has been generated and is causing problems that simply circulating it out the Solar Plexus will not solve, then consider the following:

1. Imagine the energy streaming out of your hands and feet into the earth.
2. Place your hands in a bowl of cold water and imagine the energy pouring into it.
3. Walk on the grass or earth with your feet in direct contact.
4. Drink a cold glass of water.

These suggestions are for the discharge of energy accumulations that may be unpleasant. Consider them a sort of psychic first aid. The nature of these exercises generally, is to increase the amount of energy we can handle, and to direct it wisely and slowly for the purification of our psyche and body. Discharging it repeatedly will slow that process, however, maintaining a state of irritation, frustration, and perterbability as a result of esoteric practices is also a drawback.

Circulating the Light

Simply put, always circulate the energy when you are done with an exercise. The suggestions of the Middle Pillar, or out the Solar Plexus and around the edges of the extended aura work well.

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Additional Notes for Consideration

Crowley states that the 24th Path is attributed to the Goddess Kundalini in 777. Knight has the caduceus with the sign of Scorpio at the bottom. Scorpio is the sign of the 24th Path.

Square breathing is to be done with the exercises whenever possible. On the inhale, pull the energy down from the crown; hold in the feet, earth, and/or base of spine; exhale to head; hold on the exhale. Repeat. This adds a great deal of energy to the exercises and limits the amount of time they can be done in any one sitting.

Each sphere has its own Tiphareth, i.e. Great Star, uniting the smaller “spheres within a sphere” on the Tree of that particular level. Thus, when we direct our attention to the harmonizing influence of Tiphareth we effect all of the planets it touches. When we direct our attention to the Triangle of Fire of Tiphareth, we effect the Fire aspect of all of the Spheres connected to Tiphareth. *However*, Saturn, Mercury, and Venus, *may have* a greater response. This of course means, karma (Saturn), creative energy (Venus), and intellect/energy conduits (Mercury).

As such, it then is easier to regulate planetary energy with the hexagram than the septagram. The hexagram regulates energy via Tiphareth, the septagram via Netzach.

In alchemy, Fire and Air are the matrix of Energy; Water and Earth are the matrix of Matter. Earth ‘energy’ is essential for sustaining health; Water for sustaining initiation; and Fire for initiation itself; Air makes Fire accessible.

Salt is the lower yetzirah and assiah; Mercury is Higher Yetzirah and Lower Briah; Sulphur is Higher Briah and Lower Atziloth.

Salt is prone to lunar impulses. Mercury is prone to solar impulses. Sulphur is prone to zodiacal and Cosmic impulses.

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- [1] See: *Magical States of Consciousness* by Dennings and Philips; *Inner Landscapes* by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki; or *The Philosophers of Nature, Qabalah Lessons* 35 through 44.
- [2] *Mysteria Magica, vol. 3 of The Magical Philosophy* by Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips. Llewellyn Pub., St. Paul, MN. P. 57-59, and 69-73; or, *The Philosophers of Nature, Qabalah Lesson* 62.
- [3] See: *Problems on the Path of Return: Pathology in Kabbalistic and Alchemical Practices* by Mark Stavish, M.A. *The Stone - The Journal of The Philosophers of Nature*. Issue 19, March-April 1997. Included as an appendix to this article.
- [4] See: *A Kabbalistic Approach to Lucid Dreaming and Astral Projection* by Mark Stavish, M.A. *The Stone - The Journal of the Philosophers of Nature*. Issue 20, May-June 1997. Included as an appendix to this article.
- [5] *Kabbalah* by Gershom Scholem. New York. Meridian. 1974. P. 186.
- [6] *The Jewish Alchemists* by Raphael Patai. Princeton, N.J., University Press. 1994.
- [7] Saint-Germain is also said to be the author of *La magie sainte revelee a Moysse* (The Holy Magic of Moses Revealed). No date is given.
- [8] *PON Qabala Lesson 63*, suggests that the sounds be resonated in the heart, solar plexus, and perineum. Regardie make no attribution of the IAO sounds in *The Golden Dawn* (5th ed.), and omits them in *The One Year Manual*.
- [9] For the Elemental Grade Signs of the Golden Dawn, see: Regardie, p.134-135.
- [10] This will be explored further in an upcoming essay on “The Diamond Body in Western Esoteric Practices”.
- [11] *The Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn* by Pat Zalewski. Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, MN. 1993. P. 89-125.
- [12] This list of planetary correspondences is taken from *The Philosophers of Nature, Spagyric Course Year Two*, Lessons 32 and 45. .
- [13] Taken from a painting by Johann Georg Gichtel, a student of Boehme, of “man in his corrupt state” after the Fall from Grace, prior to any spiritual initiation.
- [14] *Kundalini, Evolution, and Enlightenment*, ed. by John White. Anchor Press. Garden City, New York. 1979. Article by James Morgan Pryse, pgs. 418-440. See: *The Apocalypse Unsealed*.
- [15] See: *Experience of the Inner Worlds* by Gareth Knight. Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, Maine. 1993. Pages 1-119. Or see, *PON Qabala Lessons* 12 through 16.

Portae Lucis Method of Jean Dubuis

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Portae Lucis Method of Jean Dubuis

as presented at the 6th Annual [Philosophers of Nature](#) Conference, Colorado Springs, Co. 20 July 1997
Summary by Mark Stavish, M.A., Director of Research, ORA Project for *The Stone*

Introduction

Over the past several years, Jean Dubuis, founder of LPN and author of its lessons, has been developing a new technique of initiation. Since this method, known as *Portae Lucis* (Portal of Light), has been a powerful, yet evolving process, some of PON's members are unclear about the particulars of how to prepare themselves for accessing those interior states *Portae Lucis* promises.

The purpose of this article is to clear-up some of the confusion some members have regarding *Portae Lucis*, as well as present the most recent version of the technique in clear and precise terms.

Theoretical Overview

The description of *Portae Lucis* involves three key components: astrological timing, passivity on the part of the aspirant, and the use of psychically loaded, or charged, talismans to assist in filling our energetic requirements for the experiment.

The fourth, or final component, is one which we can have no control over - Divine Grace, or a Cosmic response to our inner desire, preparations, and readiness to experience a "Contact with Eternity".

This "Contact with Eternity" takes place on the level of Saturn, and makes us aware of our place in creation, and relationship to all things. It is a difficult state to bear, and as Saturn is the planet of melancholy and despair, it can bring a profound state of sadness, depression, and even suicidal tendencies for those who make the contact.

However, along with it, will come an influx of energy that awakens our Heart Center, or gives us an initiation at Tiphareth. Here, our relationship to our Inner Master is realized, or what is often called, "Conversation with our Holy Guardian Angel". After a period of time, this develops into a relationship by which we can dialogue with our Inner Master, but only after a long probation of silence and listening to what it has to say to us for our evolution. Thirdly, our mental faculties of the brain and nervous system, via Yesod, are charged, and we can bring this Experience of Eternity, and Knowledge of the Interior Master, to the material realm, or Malkooth.

Physical Preparations

To assist in increasing our chances of success in "Contacting Eternity", we need to increase our energy levels and reserves, as such high contacts can be physically and psychically draining. For this, we need to acquire several sets of 'products' or objects to be loaded (i.e. charged) with the appropriate psychic influence for each of the three levels - Saturn, Sun, and Luna.

Each level has four product, one for each of the four Elements of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, for that particular level. Thus, we have a container that holds a charge for each specific quality of energy presented, and they are progressively charged and released for the execution of the experiment.

Once the products are used in the experiment, their energy is discharged and they need to be recharged before being used again. Since there are several periods of optimum opportunity for a successful contact, it is suggested that we have *three sets* of charged products *for each level*.

Additional Effects of the Technique

In addition to the awakening of the three central *sepheroth* (or psychic centers) of the Tree of Life, the side 'spheres', or levels as Jean calls them, are also effected to some degree. These awakening take place according to the planetary order of the week: Mars on Tuesday, Mercury on Wednesday, Jupiter on Thursday, and Venus on Friday, just as the previous levels were awakened in descending order starting on Saturday, then Sunday, and completing the initiations on Monday.

Here again, energy, knowledge, and love, can be contacted on a higher level, via the new awakenings.

The Technique of Portae Lucis

The technique described by Jean involves a fairly advanced level of astrology and its relationship to magic and alchemy. However, for the sake of simplicity and easier availability, the use of planetary genius' can be substituted.

However, information on both methods of timing will be explained, allowing members to choose the methods best for themselves.

In addition to astrology and/or planetary genius', the technique involves the use of A) classical Renaissance talismanic magic; B) a modified version of the Tree of Life C) a passive approach on the part of the experimenter, as opposed to a more active and involved system of mechanics. It is this extreme passivity that appears to be a problem for many who have been exposed to the *Portae Lucis* technique for the first time.

Unlike Qabalistic or Enochian magic, where energies are imagined and directed, here, the products to be charged are simply exposed to the planetary power during an astrologically favorable time, or simply unwrapped during the correct planetary hour, and allowed to absorb the energies in an a gentle and natural fashion. It is no more complicated than dropping a sponge in a basin of water and allowing it to slowly absorb the water to its fullest capacity on its own. The same products are then exposed several times to insure maximum harmonious charging, and are stored in silk, plastic, or other non-conductive materials so that they maintain their psychic charge. Once charged, they can be seen and touched only by their owner or they will lose some or all of their energy. The only exception to this is married heterosexual couples working together on the technique. In this instance, both partners must be present for the charging of the products a majority of the time.

The modified version of the Tree of Life being used for this method involves the positioning of Saturn where Daath is located on the Tree, and placing Hockmah and Kether directly above it. These latter spheres are seen as aspects of Eternity, or Unity, however, for it to be digestible to our human minds, we perceive Unity has having three aspects: Eternity or Timelessness (Binah/Saturn), Spacelessness (Hockmah/Zodiac), and The Black Point of pure being (Kether).

Some people will experience the Black Point phase before they experience Eternity.

Creation of Matter and Consciousness

According to Qabalistic and Alchemical theory, matter is created by the increasing density of human consciousness during the so-called "fall" so that we can obtain experiences of individuality. This individuality allows us to obtain experiences and knowledge. It is this knowledge that allows our human seed in potential to grow and return to Unity as a human in fullness of wisdom, knowledge, and love. We go from conscious being in potential to conscious being in manifestation.

The "Fall" is our conscious descent from Unity into the Creation of Duality and matter. The "Return" is our conscious re-ascent through matter and expansion of consciousness, as an act of free will on our part.

The higher realms are cut-off from us, and we can then only contact them through dreams, initiation, or the creation of archetypes.

The first matter that we create is the Mineral realm, or our Mineral Tree as it is called in *Portae Lucis*. Here our consciousness descends and increases in density, thus limiting its expression, through the mineral world. Once it reaches maximum density, it returns up the mineral tree, increasing in consciousness and decreasing in density of matter. This same process is repeated for each of the three additional Trees - Water, Air, and Fire.

It is at the Fire Tree that human consciousness is attained, as we know it, and the beginning of the Path of Return begins. Thus, only Fire Element can allow us to expand in consciousness as human beings.

However, the three other Elements are used, so that we may correct any energetic corruption's that might exist in those Trees within us. To take maximum advantage of our Fire Tree, our Earth, Water, and Air Trees must be in order.

To maintain or achieve these energetic conditions, we use a talisman for each of the four Trees on each of the three levels.

These talismans consist of the following elements:

Saturn:

Mineral - Diamond or graphite

Water - dry herb/tea or tincture of horsetail

Air - Sea Salt

Fire - Rain Water

Sun:

Mineral - Native gold or sulfur

Water - tincture or dry herb/tea of Eyebright or Celandine (**the Lesser**)

Air - Sea Salt

Fire - Rain Water

Luna/Moon:

Mineral - Native Silver

Water - tincture or dry herb/tea of Veronica

Air - Sea Salt

Fire - Rain Water

The rain water can be collected in a glass or plastic container and filtered prior to use. It should however, never come in contact with any metal or it will lose its charge. The native metals are metals that have not be processed or come in contact with other mineral compounds or agents during their extraction. The sea salt must also be natural sea salt, unprocessed, usually gray in color, and highly hygroscopic. When exposed to the air it should become hard and solid as it absorbs moisture from the surrounding environment. A health food or natural food store should be able to order it for you if unavailable.

If the salt is white or granular, it has been processed and will not be as useful for the experiment. This is based on the basic alchemical principle that when a crystal is dissolved, its energetic qualities are lost. If it is properly charged sea salt will have strong purification qualities.

Natural products are what are used in this initiatic Path, as they offer the greatest potential of energy storage and release.

Since sea salt and rain water are used on each of the levels, three separate containers of each will be needed. If three sets of products are used for each level, then additional containers will be needed.

Charging the Products

The simplest and easiest manner to charge the products is using the planetary hours and their genius'. This manner takes several repetitions to insure maximum charging, however, it avoids the problem of astrological timing during the year.

If you are unsure what a planetary hour or genius is refer to the *Fundamentals of Esoteric Knowledge* course material and look it up. In general however, each day is ruled by a planetary energy as previously described. It is in its purest power for a period of time immediately following sunrise. This period of time is known as an 'hour' however it represents a cyclic pulse of energy, and not a sixty minute hour. Depending on the time of year, the 'hour' could be as much as an hour and forty-five minutes or as little as forty minutes in terrestrial time.

Consult the course material for information on how to calculate the length of these 'hours', or *The Philosophers of Nature* website for a program download that will do it for you.

First Method: Using Planetary Genius'

On the first planetary hour of Saturn (immediately following sunrise) on the day of Saturn (Saturday) place your objects before you in your oratory. Your oratory should be illumined by a single candle, and no electric lighting. The windows should be covered as well to prevent any light from entering.

For the first quarter of the planetary hour, or between ten and fifteen minutes have your mineral product in front of you. Seek to obtain a empty and receptive state of being. Attune yourself to the energy present, but do not invoke it or attempt to direct it in any manner. Seek only to experience it as it courses though your sanctum, charging the object in front of you.

Then, when sufficient time has passed, place the mineral product in a plastic bag, or wrap it in silk, and place the Water product in front of you. Repeat the process or receptivity. Continue with each of the following Air and Fire products for ten to fifteen minutes each. When all four products have been separately charged, they can be wrapped in the same silk or plastic bag, and stored away.

Once charged they should never be exposed to sun, moon, or electric light, and only handled by the persons or couple charging them.

The process is then repeated on Sunday for the solar products, and Monday for the Lunar product.

It will take two to three months for a sufficient charge to build in each of the products. If you are charging three sets for each level, then they can be charged simultaneously. Once a product is used, it must not come in contact with charged products or it will draw off their energy.

Second Method: Zodiacal Configurations

Following the same method of passive charging, the products can also be loaded during astrologically favorable times of the year. This method has the advantage that it charges more quickly, but the disadvantage that it takes an entire year to do it, and if a cycle is missed, so is the opportunity for charging for that year.

Saturn product are charged after the winter solstice, around January 10th.

Solar products are charged thirty minutes after sunrise, with the moon under the horizon, forty days before or after the Winter Solstice. Solar products should not be loaded during the above mentioned time frame as the Air and Fire Elements are weak.

Lunar products are charged when the moon is above the horizon and within three day before or after the day between the head and the tail of the dragon. The sun must be under the horizon however.

Times to Avoid

The period of two weeks prior to and following the Winter Solstice is to be avoided for all Alchemical, Qabalistic

work, or the charging of these products. Thus, we stock energies via astrology or planetary genius' when the energies are strong and easily available.

The Technique of Experiencing Eternity

The period of two prior too and following the Summer Solstice is the best time to attempt a "Contact with Eternity". Thus, as stated, several attempts can be made, so long as several sets of charged products have been prepared. The attempted contact can be made without such preparations, however, its effects may be more strongly felt, and period of weakness experienced for several weeks if the contact is successful and the supporting materials are not used.

On Friday Night, prior to the chosen Saturday, at midnight, light a candle in your oratory and contemplate your desire for a "Contact with Eternity".

On Saturday at sunrise, unwrap your Saturn products and place them in front of you. You may ingest the tincture is your desire, or dissolve a bit of the herb in water an drink it. Put a bit if the sea salt on your tongue and rinse it down with the filtered rain water. You may even place a little of the salt in the water and put a drop or two on your forehead, as this is aimed at stimulating the true inner baptism. Be passive and receptive to the energies of the moment. If a strong shock or sudden uneasiness should overcome you, then wrap your products and end the session. The feeling of uneasiness may come within a few days after the attempted contact, or a strong depression may be felt. If so, then the contact was established.

If several sets are being used, be sure to keep the discharged products away from the unused ones.

On Sunday about a half hour after sunrise, with the sun above the horizon, light your candle and repeat the process with the Solar products. A cardiac response may be felt, along with a terrific love, even unto weeping, for humanity.

On Monday, the same pattern is repeated using the Lunar products. A strong intuition, memory, or knowledge may occur.

On the week following the contact, if it is successful, each of the days following offers unique opportunities: Mars gives strength to replace what was lost; Wednesday occult knowledge, of a more technical nature; Thursday give wisdom of occult and religious organizations and philosophies; Friday assists in transferring the love of the heart to the world, and knowledge of the Seven Secondary Principles.

The contact can be attempted one week before and after the Summer Solstice, for a total of three contact periods offering maximum opportunity for success.

However, this is just a guideline, some have experienced the "Contact with Eternity" spontaneously as directed by their Inner Master. All we do is prepare ourselves, and present ourselves for initiation when the energies are most favorable. Several attempts may be needed for the contact to be successful, but once it has been, we can as Sendovious the Pole wrote, "Burn all your books, including this one!"

Alchemy, It's Not Just for the Middle Ages Anymore

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Mark Stavish's web site at <http://www.hermetic.com/stavish/> contains many more of his articles.

Alchemy, It's Not Just for the Middle Ages Anymore

Mark Stavish, M.A.

For: Atlantis Rising Spring 1997

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Mention alchemy to someone and what do they usually think of? The Middle Ages with old men in some forgotten attic, laboring over bubbling flasks filled with some unknown fluid; or in front of an oven, trying to turn molten lead into gold. These are the images of the alchemist that time, mythology, and prejudicial history have handed down to us.

It is true, that many of the early alchemists were the forerunners of the modern sciences. Physics and chemistry are indebted to these early 'puffers' as they are despairingly called, for from their hours of sweat and travail, a host of modern advances came: porcelain, alcohol distillation, acids, salts, and a variety of metallic compounds, are the results of early alchemical experiments.

But if alchemy wasn't just a foolish waste of time in the search for a means to turn base metals into gold, what was it?

Egypt, The Mother Earth of Alchemy

Alchemy, or "Al-Kemi", is said to be derived from Arabic or Egyptian meaning either "divine chemistry or possibly 'black earth referring to the silt deposits from the annual flooding of the Nile river. However, regardless of where the word 'alchemy' began, it has come to mean a very special form of *spiritual development*.

From Plato's Greece to the European Renaissance, ancient Egypt was held to be the land, if not the origin, of all things mystical. The Egyptian god *Thoth*, called *Hermes* by the Greeks, was said to be the father of all magical arts and sciences, with numerous books on the laws governing creation being attributed to him. These books became the basis of most Western occult teachings, and are known as "The Hermetic Corpus or the 'Body of Hermes", and refers to the total collection of works attributed to the 'scribe of the gods'. The teachings and practice contained in these writings are called "Hermeticism", and in the Renaissance came to include aspects of Jewish mysticism (*kabbalah*), alchemy, the use of ritual, and communication with super-celestial beings, or angels.

It is important to remember, that in the ancient world and until end of the Renaissance (16th century), magic was seen not as superstition, but as a logical and coherent means of understanding the universe and controlling ones destiny. *Magic, imagination, and magnetism* are all related, both through their root *-mag*, as well as how they are seen through the mind of the magician or alchemist.

For the magician, or even the alchemist, the universe is perceived as a reflection of the imagination of the Godhead. Its laws are consistent and logical, and if we are created in the image of the Creator, then we can also create as the Creator has - through the power of imagination. Intense imagination creates a stress on the 'fabric' of the universe, drawing to it magnetic power, thus bringing our images to fruition.

The *fundamental ideas* of Renaissance magic and alchemy are also found in Eastern yoga, and are the basis for the New Age movement, as well as hypno-therapy, guided visualizations for mental health or cancer treatment, affirmations and an assortment of other psycho-spiritual practices.

Until the last half of this century, though, most of these spiritual practices were kept secret or hidden, mostly out of fear of political or religious persecution. Hence, they became known as *occult* or "hidden". Since many of them used the same signs, symbols, and literature as contemporary religions - Christianity, Judaism, and Islam - the hidden, occult, or Hermetic arts and sciences became known as *esoteric* or the secret meaning behind 'exoteric' or everyday religious practices and dogma.

This fear of imprisonment or death, limited instruction in esoteric practices to a trusted few, and only through a process of slow, careful, symbolic rituals and cryptic teachings known as *initiations*. Each of these initiations, or *gradus*, symbolized a step, or grade, in the students *inner journey* towards illumination.

During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries dozens of initiatic orders and societies were established across Europe for the dissemination of spiritual teachings. The most prominent of them being the Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and Knights Templar. Some of them taught their members through moral instruction, such as the Freemasons. Others, such as the Rosicrucians, taught practical mysticism, the use of ritual, the structure of the universe through *kabbalah*, as well as *laboratory alchemy*. Many of these organizations exist in Europe or the United States in some form today. In alchemy however, each of its steps or phases, represents not only a interior awakening (initiation), but also a physical, practical technique performed in the laboratory. The physical, laboratory work becomes a means of verifying spiritual and psychic expansions in consciousness.

"Alchemy is an initiatic system in which you have no delusions. It is the only initiatic path where there is an objective control in the laboratory. So if your experiment shows you've gone beyond the ordinary material laws of the universe, it shows that you're an alchemist that has had an interior awakening, and that corresponds to the rule which says, 'You will transmute nothing if you have not transmuted yourself first.' Says Jean Dubuis, founder and first president of the French alchemical organization, *The Philosophers of Nature*.

Dubuis, has actively practiced alchemy and related esoteric arts for nearly sixty-five years. His spiritual path began when he had a spiritual awakening at the age of twelve in the island cathedral of Mont Saint-Michel off the coast of Normandy. This awakening has led Dubuis to a lifetime of activities and intimate involvement in European esoteric circles. He has held positions in the French speaking branch of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, presiding over its *Illuminati* section of higher degree students; as well as various esoteric orders and societies.

After tiring of the various levels of secrecy and often self-aggrandizing use of the power such vows bring, he renounced his memberships and established *The Philosophers of Nature* (PON) to open the paths of alchemy and *kabbalah* to everyone of good heart and mind. This is expressed in his view of the basic philosophy behind alchemy: "Alchemy is the Science of Life, of Consciousness. The alchemist knows that there is a very solid link between matter, life, and consciousness. Alchemy is the art of manipulating life and consciousness in matter to help it evolve or solve the problems of inner disharmony. Matter exists only because it is created by the human seed. The human

seed, the original man, created matter in order to involute and evolve. You see, if we go beyond what I said, the absolute being is an auto-created being, and we must become in its image auto-created beings. Dubuis stated during a recent interview at the annual conference of *The Philosophers of Nature*.

A similar statement was made by fellow Frenchman and alchemist Francois Trojani, during an interview with Joseph Rowe in the Summer 1996 issue of *Gnosis*.

“It (alchemy) is the dimension of interiority and of meaning in the deep sense: the meaning of life, the meaning of my life, questions about the relationship of spirit to matter, of the purpose and value of my own actions - the questions “where did I come from? , “why am I here? , “who am I? I’m not saying that alchemy provides precise answers to these questions, but that it operates in the dimension where these questions arise.

Because of Dubuis extensive professional career in electrical engineering for a major international electronics firm in France, and work in the field of nuclear physics with Nobel Prize winner Jollio-Curie, he has been described by fellow alchemists as one of the few people easily at home with either a periodic table of the elements or a kabbalistic diagram. This interest in electronics has led Dubuis to invent several devices designed to assist in experiencing out-of-body journeys and assist people in having a general initiatic experience.

“In ancient times, as human evolution was going, we passed from kabbalah to alchemy. Now, I think that with the evolution of the world, perhaps we can put in the initiatic path electronic methods. It doesn't stop people from having to work themselves, but initiatic work will be easier. This corresponds to the fact that the whole evolution of the world must be accelerated. Dubuis stated.

Dubuis stated that his ‘boxes’ are more advanced than consciousness altering devices currently on the market. His work through light and sound synchronization as due existing machines, however, through a complex series of mathematical computations, Dubuis says, that he can specify the experiences one will have with his invention. The author has experienced two generations of Dubuis ‘mind machines’ as they are called, and can attest to their superiority over existing ‘off the shelf’ equipment. The clarity, impact, focus, and lasting effect of them was quite astounding.

Alchemy and Modern Psychology/Jung

Just as esoteric initiation seeks to repair the psychic damages in humanity, so does its step-child, modern psychology. As a result, most folks today are familiar with alchemy through the extensive writings of Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung. Jung was attracted to alchemy through a series of dreams he experienced, as well as those of his patients, and their resemblance to alchemical symbols representing the stages of self-development, or *individuation*. However, for Jung, the entire alchemical work, or *opus*, was viewed from strictly psychoanalytic perspective. Transmutation was not the changing of physical matter, but of *psychological matter*, from destructive problems, into life enhancing attributes.

Some of Jung's, seminal works outlining the process of human individuation, or self-becoming, are found in his *Alchemical Studies*; in which he interprets the meaning of the key stages and symbols of alchemy to explain the internal stages of human evolution, or what alchemists call, *interior initiation*.

Laboratory alchemists cautiously point out that despite his contributions, and the critical aspect of psychological work in alchemy, Jung is not considered a *real* alchemist.

According to Dubuis, and others, for alchemy to be real alchemy, it must work on all levels of creation - spiritual, mental, emotional, *and* physical. While one or more can be left out and a transmutation of some sort effected, the results are not considered to be alchemical.

“It is true that Jung made some additions to symbolism and gave people a means to look at their interior life. As regards to alchemy, Jungian psychology shows that alchemy is a universal art and science, and can lend itself to anything, but to reduce alchemy to a theraputic allegory is a mistake. stated House.

Russell House, of Whinfield, Illinois, is the current president of *The Philosophers of Nature*, and has studied alchemy with, Jean Dubuis, Orval Graves, “Fratr Albertus , and Manfred Junius, several of this centuries leading laboratory alchemists. From 1989 to 1993, House also co-instructed the alchemy classes taught at Rose+Croix University, sponsored by the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, in San Jose, California.

Alchemy and Alternative Medicine

Along with psycho-spiritual growth, and physical transmutation, alchemy has long been associated with creating cures for ‘incurable diseases’ as well as near physical immortality. Dubuis has suggested that a carefully prepared *tincture*, or alchemically prepared medicine extracted with purified alcohol, made from acorns *might* prove useful in fighting cancer and some auto-immune diseases.

However, at least one of the major contributions of alchemy to alternative medicine is a little more accessible than either of these, that is, *homeopathy*.

Available in most drug stores and super markets, homeopathic medicines are based on the alchemical practices of the Swiss 16th century alchemist *Paracelsus*. However, it was not Paracelsus that created homeopathy, he only

supplied the theory that “like cures like and that smaller doses of medicine could cure more easily and quickly than large doses. Alchemical tinctures, like homeopathic medicines, are created from plants, minerals, and metals. Homeopathic treatment was formulated in 1796 and introduced to the United States in 1825. In Europe alchemically prepared and homeopathic medicines are available to the general public.

According to House, “For the genuine alchemists, healing, like alchemy, must be on all levels and treat the whole being or person, and within the context of nature and evolution. The intent of the healer must offer encouragement in the interior world of the patient and not work against nature's plan of evolution. Like homeopathy, Bach Flower Remedies, or aromatherapy, alchemical medicines work on a subtle level and a crude one at the same time.

Alchemy and Quantum Physics/Time Travel and other Weird Stuff

Since its inception alchemy has been associated with the idea of transmutation, or the fundamental changing of one thing, usually a base metal such as lead, into something else, in this case gold.

But is transmutation possible?

For alchemists past and present, the answer is a resounding “yes!

Trojani is quoted as saying that transmutation has taken place and continues to be done. The reason given is that alchemical operations do not take place on the level of the periodic table of elements, but instead on the fabric of time and space itself. That this work on the elements on space and time energy constitutes work directly on oneself. In fact, Dubuis, Trojani, and their predecessor Francois Jollivet-Castelot all agree that not only is transmutation possible, but that it might not require much of the high-tech, high-energy equipment we have come to associate with sub-atomic physics.

Jollivet-Castelot wrote book for the aspiring alchemist, *Comment on devient alchimiste* (1897), or “How to Become an Alchemist”, outlining the range of Hermetic disciplines required, and gave practical advice on purchasing laboratory equipment, as well as the *moral* requirements of the alchemist.

Harvey Spencer Lewis, the founder and head of the American *Rosicrucian Order, AMORC*, was familiar with Jollivet-Castelot and his work. In 1915, Lewis himself is said to have transmuted a piece of zinc into gold using little more than an open flame and a crucible. The accounts of this public demonstration have been re-published several times in the organizations magazine, *The Rosicrucian Digest* (March 1942). In addition, in the August 1926 edition of, *The Mystic Triangle*, AMORC published Jollivet-Castelot's account of his own transmutation of base metal into gold, as well as the recipe for carrying it out.

In more recent times, alchemy has been investigated as a means of supplying cheap energy and for the potential creation of ‘super metals’. At the *Palladian Academy's* conference in January 1997, near Vichenze, Italy, Professor Christopher McIntosh, author of *The Rosicrucians* (Samuel Weiser Publications), and member of UNESCO's Educational Office, Hamburg, Germany, mentioned that the United Nations had recently sponsored a conference of its own in which alchemy was considered as a possible tool for the creation of new alloys.

Along similar lines, Dubuis offered some insights into the phenomena of UFO's.

“First of all, there are two hypothesis for extra-terrestrials. The first hypothesis says, that on earth, if you are close to the North Pole, there is some kind of fraternity of advanced people that checks on the global functioning of humanity, and that the flying saucers are theirs. The second hypothesis is that you cannot come from distant systems to earth in everyday physical conditions, so I think that things happen thus. In the system that they start from, they put advanced people onboard, and the speed of energy is multiplied by a hundred thousand or a million, they can come here rapidly, and when they enter the aura of the earth, they are brought back level by level and re-materialize. I don't know, and don't want to know if the Rosswell (New Mexico) story is true, but the details that have been given lead me to believe it is true, because they found material that go back to the invisible where they should be. They said the brain of the person had no barrier, this means that they are people that have no barrier between the visible and the invisible worlds. I don't know about the other organs. If it is a fake, then the people who have produced it have a very big knowledge of the occult. Dubuis stated.

On Becoming an Alchemist

If you are interested in becoming a laboratory alchemist, then get prepared for a long haul. The experts say that to become involved in the “Royal Art involves the synthesis of several Hermetic disciplines, among them, traditional kabbalah, astrology, tarot, and Renaissance magical theories and practice. Plant work is the first ‘matter’ worked on, because the principles used are the same as in the more famous, and dangerous, metallic and mineral experiments. There are few organizations offering courses in practical alchemy, although several graduates of the famous, but now defunct, *Paracelsus Research Society*, teach what they have learned, if you can find them. PRS was established by Albert Reidel, or “Frater Albertus”, author of the now classic work for beginners, *The Alchemists Handbook*. Manfred Junius, has combined Indian Ayurveda and Western alchemy in his more technical book, *A Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy*. Although his techniques require a little more laboratory equipment than those of Albertus'. Other texts exist, but are either difficult to obtain, or deal with metallic aspects of alchemy.

Those wishing more personal instruction can contact the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC in San Jose, California. However, their summer course in alchemy is often open to members only and is run irregularly. *The Philosophers of Nature* (PON) offer a correspondence course covering all aspects of "the Great Work including a highly informative two-year course on plant work, followed by a six-year course on metals and minerals. PON also sponsors an annual week long conference, in the spring or summer, offering practical instruction, as well as a 'traveling seminar' for interested groups. Both organizations can be contacted via their Websites or traditional correspondence.

The Philosophers of Nature

<http://www.mcs.net/~alchemy/>

email, alchemy@mcs.com.

125 West Front Street, Suite 263 Wheaton, IL 60187.

AMORC

<http://www.rosicrucian.org>.

Rosicrucian Park, San Jose, California 95191

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Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part One

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Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part One

Mark Stavish, M.A. Copyright Mark Stavish, M.A. 1996

Alchemy, or "Divine Chemistry", has for centuries fascinated practitioners and armchair enthusiasts alike. The possibilities of experiencing an actual transmutation of a base metal into gold, achieving long and healthy life, or immortality, are the legendary promises that await the successful alchemists in their search for the Philosopher's Stone.

The Gross from the Subtle

Despite numerous misconceptions about alchemists and their practices, both in ancient and modern times, the true art of alchemy is best described by Stanislas Klossowski de Rola in his pictorial work on the Great Work: "Alchemy is a rainbow bridging the chasm between the earthly and heavenly planes, between matter and spirit...alchemy, the royal sacerdotal art, also called the hermetic philosophy, conceals, in esoteric texts and enigmatic emblems, the means of penetrating the very secrets of Nature, Life, and Death, of Unity, Eternity and Infinity.

Viewed in the context of these secrets, that of gold making is, relatively speaking, of little consequence: something comparable to the super-powers (*siddhis*) sometimes obtained by Great Yogis, which are sought not after for their own sake, but are important by-products of high spiritual attainment." - *Alchemy* by S.K. de Rola.

The Stages of the Work

The Great Work, or *Magnum Opus*, of spiritual and physical regeneration as suggested by the works on alchemy say that the process consists of seven or twelve stages, which are repeated over and over again until perfection is obtained. These stages are first done in the World of Plants, the Metals, and finally Minerals. Some schools, including that of Paracelsus, suggest work in the animal realm, however, this is often shunned by many practitioners. The stages are said by many to represent the stages Nature herself took during the initial stages of creation. This is also represented in the Cosmos by the twelve signs of the zodiac, in the human organism by the seven major, and five minor (for a total of twelve), psycho-spiritual centers called *chakras* in Sanskrit. These centers are also linked to the endocrine and nervous systems in human beings.

Thus, both the study of astrology, the astrological timings of experiments (at least in the beginning), and esoteric meditations, similar to yoga, for the rising of spiritual energy known as *kundalini*, are part of the alchemists discipline. The alchemist is in essence, a mystic, astrologer, and magician.

This is the critical point, for to attempt to separate out the physical actions of the alchemist without the interior exercises and projections of them on or into the physical realm of the laboratory, is to reduce it to mundane chemistry.

For alchemy to be alchemy, the *Al*, or divine aspect, must always be present in the consciousness of the operator.

The Early Years

While Egypt is attributed with being the home of alchemy, and its god Thoth, or Hermes in his Greek incarnation, being the Father of Alchemy, other lands have contributed as well. China and India both have highly developed laboratory alchemical traditions that have been practiced in unbroken lines since their inception.

It is in the West however, that we see some of the most fascinating aspects of the Art developed. Here, Babylonian, Chaldean, Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic methods were worked side by side. Through Arab trade, Chinese and Indian methods most likely were also introduced into the Middle East, and ultimately Europe. These diverse traditions were ultimately amalgamated in an attempt to discover the process for creating the Philosopher's Stone. This is the Stone of the Wise said to confer the ability to transmute base metals into gold, prolong life, and cure all diseases. With it, the Elixir of Immortality could be attained.

This idea of a Stone, of actual physical object as a means of bringing about dramatic changes in the health and well being of an individual, is the basis for most experiments in all three Kingdoms that the alchemist will progressively work through.

Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury

In alchemy everything is composed of three parts: Sulphur (Soul or individualized essence), Mercury (Life Force), and Salt (Physical Body). It is the Work of the alchemist to separate and recombine these three basic principles as often as necessary until are in perfect proportion and harmony with each other. When this harmony is achieved, the creation of a 'stone' of physical object used in the transformation of the alchemist, or another, via a medium, such as water, wine, or direct contact will be produced.

In the Plant Kingdom, the physical body of the plant itself is the Salt, its essential oil are the Sulphur, and alcohol (and occasionally water) is the Mercury.

Thus, the aspiring alchemist seeks to separate these three parts and recombine them, giving rise to the phrase used by Paracelsus, *spagyrics*. Spagyrics is Greek for "separate and recombine" and is the term given to plant work, or the Lesser Circulation. The Greater Circulation consists of metallic and mineral work, its process follows the same principles as plant work, and is generally undertaken only after a certain degree of plant mastery has been attained. While much can be gained from the theoretical study of spagyrics, it is only in the actual conducting of experiments that any meaningful degree of insight and growth can be attained. For this reason, the following experiments have been given so that would be alchemists can try it for themselves, without the heavy investment in laboratory equipment during their trial period. The methods given and time for completion reflect this simple, low-tech, approach. In some cases, however, with proper glassware and heat source, the time required can be dramatically reduced.

Experiments for the Beginning Student of the Art

The production of a spagyric tincture is the first and easiest of all operations. It requires no special equipment, and can be done by anyone anywhere, needing only patience and perseverance as its primary tools.

For the sake of brevity, an example of a tincture will be given, with a specific herb - Lemon Balm (*Mellissa Officinalis*), although any plant can be used. Careful consideration must be taken into account as to the plants toxicity; as such, those listed at the end of this work are those most commonly used and are non-toxic.

For each operation one (1) ounce (52 grams) of the dried herb will be needed. Unless otherwise stated, the bulk herb will consist mostly of leaves, some stem, and occasionally the roots of the plant specified. If you are unsure as to the content, either ask the herbalist you are purchasing it from, or grown you own and pick it yourself. I say grow your own herbs, then you will know positively the identity of the plant. While very few people die each year from plant mis-identification while wild crafting, picking plants in the wild, it does one no good to be among those dozen or so who make a fatal error. Be safe, buy it dried, or grow it yourself.

If dried herbs are not available, fresh plants may be substituted. Alchemists have personal preferences as to when and where to use fresh versus dried plants. Experience will help you sort this out later on. For now, either plant will suffice for this experiment.

In addition, four (4) to eight (8) ounces of pure grain alcohol will be needed. In some states purchasing grain alcohol is illegal, and in others, only 190 proof, or 95% pure alcohol, is available. The 190 proof is sufficient, and the most commonly used in plant work for beginners. If neither of these is available, vodka can be substituted, or alcohol can be distilled from red wine, or strong brandy.

Note: Distilling alcohol from wine maybe illegal in some states. Check if you think this may be a problem.

A wide mouthed jar, such as used in canning, along with a lid, and plastic food wrap, aluminum foil, fine mesh filter, and/or coffee filter and funnel. A mortar and pestle are optional, but desirable. A coffee grinder is also helpful.

Basic Spagyric Tincture

Begin the operation in the planetary hour of the ruling planet of the herb. Here, that is Jupiter, since *mellissa* is traditionally ruled by that planet. While planetary hours come several times a day for each planet, the first, and often easiest, is to begin with in a few minutes of sunrise on the day of the ruling planet. Since *Mellissa* is ruled by Jupiter,

and Jupiter rules Thursday, the first planetary hour of Jupiter would occur immediately after sunrise on Thursday. Start with prayers to God that the mysteries may be revealed to you and your place in the Universe restored. After interior preparation has been completed, take the herb and begin grinding it by hand, or in the small quantities in the mortar and pestle. Make it as fine a powder as possible, focusing on the idea that you are releasing the Divine Power in the herb as well as within yourself through the Work. If there is not enough time to grind all of the herb by hand, or it is too tough, such as a seed or root, then grind it partially in the coffee grinder. Here it is important that you spend some time with the herb in physical contact with you, as well as in the beneficial contact with your energy field or aura. If you must grind it entirely by machine, then place it in the mortar and grind it with the pestle anyhow, focusing on developing the energetic relationship between yourself, the herb, the planet ruling it, and that planet's counterparts in your psyche and body.

When the powder is finished, place it in the jar, and slowly, with concentration, pour the grain alcohol over the herb, until it is saturated with fluid and an additional equal to that (2-4 'fingers') is also in the container. The jar should not be more than $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ full of fluid at most, as room is needed for expansion as the contents heat during the maceration process.

The fluid inside will evaporate as it heats, and condense as it is not capable of escaping. This will cause the fluid to get darker with each passing day. This coloration, or *tincturing*, is the extraction of the Sulphur-Soul property, from the Salt-physical plant matter, by the Mercury-alcohol medium.

The fluid should not touch metal, and if needed, cover the mouth of the jar with food wrap prior to sealing it tightly with the lid. Wrap it in foil, as it can see no light, and place it somewhere warm, and shake it vigorously once or twice a day. Continue this process for one to two weeks, until the color of the tincture is dark.

Remember, that this is your 'Philosophical Child' and must be treated with love and respect. Each time you handle it, for inspection, shaking, or in any fashion, remember that it is a physical representation of your soul-personality. Treat it no different than you would treat yourself, or better, a small animal, child, or house guest. As you separate the Sulphur from the murky sludge of the herbal mass, so are you separating your Soul from the constraints of physical life and incarnation.

It is the attitude of the operator, more than the process itself, that makes alchemy divine. This attitude is literally transferred to the matter being acted upon, just as if it were a patient receiving magnetic or spiritual healing. When the final product is then consumed, we are taking into ourselves a veritable consumable talisman, like that which is suggested by the Christian Mass, only this our Body (Salt) and Blood (Mercury) regenerated, to receive the power of Christ (spiritual power, or Sulphur).

Each time we repeat the process, we are regenerated by minute degrees closer to perfection.

After the color of the liquid is sufficiently dark, pour it off, being careful to strain or filter it, then press out the remaining fluid from the plant matter.

This tincture now contains the Sulphur (essential oils, waxes, and vegetable fats) and the Mercury (alcohol and some water) of the Lemon Balm.

Take the plant mass, or *feces*, also called the *caput mortuum* or *dead head*, outside and ignite it in a heat resistant container outside. Place the container upon some bricks if needed, to act as a heat shield for the surface area underneath, such as grass or even exterior carpeting. Have on hand a pair of oven mittens and a large pot lid. The pot lid is to smother the flames if necessary, as well as to protect the dried ash from blowing away in a sudden breeze.

For this operation, a large, deep container used for baking, is ideal. Metal can also be used here, as our concern is not with what may be drawn out of the ashes, but out of the tincture.

The smoke released from the burning plant residue will be significant, as such, if it is done inside, make sure that the exhaust fan on your stove is functioning.

After the matter (Salt) has cooled, place it in a heat proof dish, covered if possible, and heat it in the oven at 500 or more degrees Fahrenheit until it has turned to a grey-white, or completely white powder. Frequent grinding of the Salt will assist in this process. The finer the particles during the maceration process, the more Sulphur extracted; the finer the particles during the heating, or calcining, process, the easier it is to get the grey-white or white stages of purification.

Keeping the Salt separate, place a few grains of it in a teaspoon (or 1-2ml/10-20 drops) of the tincture, in a glass of distilled water. This should be during the planetary hour, on the planetary day ruling the herb, in this case, Thursday. While the Salts need not be consumed with the tincture, they will assist in the overall effects of the operation.

Above all, remember the sacredness of the operation you have performed. Its intended regeneration: physically, psychologically, and spiritually, through the assistance of the tincture as a manifestation of your spiritual power. Some alchemists combine this aspect of the Work with kabbalistic or astrological invocations, similar to what is done for talismans, to intensify the desired effects.

In our next article, we will examine the preparation of the Ens Tincture, another simple and highly beneficial experiment. In our third and final article in this series, we will explore the preparation of the Vegetable Stone.

The articles in this series are excerpts from the forthcoming title, *A Short Course in Plant Alchemy* by Mark Stavish.

Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part Two

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Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part Two

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The Ens

According to Paracelsus, the Ens is among the most powerful medicines, and yet one of the easiest to make. The *ens*, or *entia* (plural), is an influence, or principle that effects us, and is a definite spiritual, psychic, or physical thing. While five such principles are designated as creating illness within us, the ens tincture, created from the Vegetable Kingdom, can be used to correct these imbalances and bring us physical and psychic health.

One author writes, "The Ens manifests the highest initiatic virtue of the plant it is made from."

Spiritual Initiation

"The only initiation which I preach and seek with all the ardour of my soul is that by which we may enter into the heart of God and make God's heart enter into us, there to form an indissoluble marriage, which will make us the friend, brother, and spouse of our Divine Redeemer. There is no other mystery to arrive at this holy initiation than to go down into the depths of our being, and not let go till we can bring forth the living vivifying root, because then all the fruit will be produced within us and without us naturally." -*Louis Claude de St.-Martin*, 18th century French mystic and philosopher.

It is this initiatic aspect then, that we seek when we create and ingest the Ens of a particular plant. Authorities seemingly disagree on the nature of spagyric medicines when it comes to this point. At least one authority claims that initiation is the sole goal of alchemical product. Others, particularly Frater Albertus, Bacstrom, and Manfred Junius suggest that powerful medicines for physical illness may be produced using the alchemical process. A middle ground has also been offered, stating that the creator of the product realizes more of a spiritual benefit from its ingestion, while another may realize more of a physical benefit from its use. Hermetic tradition and tales also suggest this, as well as the possibility of the recipient, who has not assisted in the medicines creation, reacting much more strongly at the sudden increase in their overall vibratory rate, some even violently in the case of the higher and more potent metallic and mineral medicines. As a qualifier, it might be that anyone who does not involve themselves in spiritual or esoteric activities on a regular basis will find either a more physical reaction, or a more violent shock to the effects of the medicine.

If initiation then is the goal objective of the ens, what then is initiation? Why should we seek it?

The nature of esoteric initiation is often mis-construed by those who seek, and even often, by those who would pretend to grant it! It suffices to say the initiation is the beginning of a new aspect of our interior development. One may have interior experiences, initiation however sets them apart, by making them progressive in their function, intensity, and purpose. Thus, one can say, that the whole of initiation is to assist us in having and understanding our *progressive interior experiences*. This however can be a bit of a stumbling block. Many schools, orders, and societies offer initiations into their various degrees, complete with beautiful rituals, titles, and what not. However, the student of alchemy, will most likely have realized by the time they begin their alchemical studies, that these exterior initiations are but ritualized shadows, imitations, promises of things to come, for real, true, and lasting initiation is only had from within.

But then we ask, are the two always separate? Are all external rituals essentially poor imitations of an interior state? No, by no means is that an absolute. Unfortunately, for a ritual initiation to work, to have its intended effect, the initiator, or initiators if it is a large ceremony, must be higher in psychic vibration than the one receiving the psychic impulse. In our modern society, this is rarely the case.

Since alchemy has no set rituals, no lodges, or methods of advancement other than the Work itself, all initiation is said to be interior in this form of esotericism. We initiate ourselves into the Work, and the Work initiates us to higher (and deeper) levels of consciousness. To those who would object to this statement, ponder just this one question: "Are we not always our own initiator?" That is, are we not solely responsible for our starting, progressing, and finishing the Path? Is it not our own Higher Self that prompts us onward? It is from this Higher Self that in meditation, dreams, and sudden flashes of lucidity and clarity that we are initiated; initiated that is, back into the presence of our True Self, the center and origin of our Being.

In this light, an initiation may come to us, and it may be completely devoid of ritual or ceremony. It may be a sudden event that changes our life completely, and directs inward. It may even be a veritable incarnation of a kabbalistic or alchemical pathworking, unfolding around us. In the end however, as the word implies, initiation is only the beginning of the new stage of development, and that phase is only completed when we have been initiated into the next phase, at the hand of our Interior Master, our very Soul. It gives us little good to go around collecting ritual initiations at the hands of would be, or even authentic masters, as these are not things which one can hang on the wall like a diploma. It is best if we focus our energies on a singular path, and complete it, instead of running around looking for short cuts, and getting nowhere.

We then, as ego's seeking the interior state of the spiritual, can only prepare ourselves for initiation, present ourselves at the door of the interior Temple, and knock. It is said, "Knock and it shall be opened to you; ask and it shall be given." We may knock, ask, wait in patience and silence, but never demand. True interior initiation comes but once, and is experienced only once, for that is all that is needed, as it creates within us a permanent change in consciousness. A permanent change that is at once expansive, unitarian, comprehensive, and evolutionary in nature. It is an ever expanding upward spiral of what Israel Regardie called, Light, Life, Love, Law, and Liberty. How many initiations we experience is dependent upon our chosen path, be it alchemical, kabbalistic, or both. But even here, the idea of division is more of a function of our exterior consciousness than our interior awareness. We consume both spiritual food and material food in small doses so that we do not choke or get indigestion, yet at the end of the meal, all of the needed food for our growth and survival is consumed. Initiation is the same, in that it is a small chunking of a larger piece of Life Consciousness. We receive in interior initiation exactly what we need for our growth, no more, no less. How many of these small spoon fulls of life we swallow depends on our chosen interior Path and the degree of progress we make on it. Thus, once again, the obligation and responsibility is ours. In summary though, it might be said that we can be expected to experience an initiation for each plane of Awareness, and one for each of its sub-planes. How this works out mathematically is up for debate. One school of thought suggests that there are twelve planes, seven major, five minor, with each having its own sub-division of five planes, for a total of sixty levels of Being progressively available to us. However, each time we experience an initiation, there is in reality only One Being that is experienced, and our awareness of that One is expanded. To be concerned with the numbers or one's place in creation before it is revealed to you is to feed the ego, not the soul. Kabbalistic schools suggest ten planes of awareness, as do some Buddhist schools, with each one divided into four sub-planes, with a singular unifying plane at the end. Thus, each sphere can be said to have its own Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Spirit aspects. Each plane corresponds to a planetary level, quality, or power, with the exception of the first two. In kabbalah, they represent the original primordial unity, and its expansion as the first phase of creation. Hereafter, they take on the symbolic planetary titles of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon, and the Earth.

The nature of spagyric tinctures, and in particular the *ens*, is to clear out the blocks in our psychic makeup and anatomy, similar to what is called *nadis* in yoga or the *meridians* in acupuncture. This subtle anatomy allows for the exchange of information between the dense physical world of matter, the end point of creation, and the subtler psychic world of which it is an extension. In creation there are no breaks, gaps, or holes, such exist only in our knowledge or realization of Nature. By effecting change on this subtle in-between level, often called etheric, we can increase the flow and quality of energy from these slightly finer worlds 'above', to our physical world 'below'. With each corresponding increase in intensity, an initiation can be said to have taken place, if of course, the energy become permanently available to us, and is no just a temporary jump to a higher level.

W.E. Butler states that these psychic nerve channels exist in the planet as well as humanity, in the form of ley lines. The natural power of creation, or *kundalini*, as it is called in Sanskrit, is the force which continually changes all of creation, moving it forward to more and more refined levels. When we create and ingest spagyric or alchemical products, we are assisting Nature, in the quickening of our personal evolutionary process.

"Kundalini works in the pre-matter on the etheric levels; and, as all substances, and all elements have their bases in this pre-matter, they can be approached from that angle if you know how to adjust and direct Kundalini."

Elsewhere he adds:

"Kundalini power allows us to have control over what we call inanimate nature. Not that there is anything really inanimate. There is life in all matter; nothing is dead. There are simply degrees of life: it's in a trance in the rock; it sleeps in the vegetable; it awakens in the animal; and it becomes consciousness in mankind. One Life behind all things. So you see we carry a lot of potentiality within us."

Creation of the Ens

Like our basic tincture previously described, an Ens tincture can be made for each of the seven planetary rulers, for each day of the week. Thus, it is through the herb, ruled or influenced by a particular planet, that we seek initiation into the sphere or world ruled by that planet. However, unlike a plant stone, which we discuss next, the Ens has a

lesser initiatic power, although it is still quite surprising. In the plant stone, the four aspects of or elements of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire are in balance. In the Ens, the Fire element is predominant, for reasons which we shall see. The advantage lies however, in the simplicity of their creation, allowing anyone, regardless of their level of experience, to create and Ens tincture.

From another perspective, the Ens may be seen as comparable to Elixers, in which the tincture has been 'exalted' through repeated processing and in which its calcined Salts have been added to the procedure. However, elixers almost always contain several species of plants as well.

While several methods exist for the creation of the Ens, the following method is easy, safe, and requires no special equipment.

The same materials are used as previously described. In addition, about 1 ½ pounds of potassium carbonate will be needed, and a glass dish no less than one inch deep.

Spread the potassium carbonate in a thin layer inside the glass dish, no more than ¼ of an inch thick (1-2 cm.).

Caution should be taken to avoid exposure to the potassium carbonate in either its dry state or when it becomes liquified through exposure to the night air. It is toxic and can cause a rash, or burning of the mucous membranes.

Wash your hands thoroughly after handling to avoid any accidental exposure or contamination of your eyes or other sensitive areas. The potassium carbonate will also etch the sides of the glass container it used during this experiment.

Place the tray in an area where it will be exposed to the night air. As potassium carbonate (or Salt of Tartar) liquefies (becomes deliquescent), it absorbs the water carried in the night air. This water, or humidity, is the vehicle of Universal Fire, called *prana* (in Sanskrit), and is most easily obtained in the spring and summer months.

This Universal Fire is what sets both our personal and planetary Kundalini into action on various levels.

Those with kabbalistic training in ritual magic will see a similarity in the idea presented here with the Elemental attributes of the so-called magic circle. The Prana, (Ruach in Hebrew, Spiritus in Latin) is the Vital Life energy carried in the Air (the East) from which we extract the vital principle, or experience it as Fire (the South) by means of Water (the West) and capture it in the physical medium of the Earthly herb (the North).

Decant or filter off the liquid each morning, being sure to avoid its exposure to the sun, or a direct water source, such as rain. To do this, use either a syringe, large dropper, turkey baster, or lab pipette.

Caution: Never pipette by mouth!!

When four to five ounces (150-200ml) have been collected, you can begin the first ens tincture. To avoid too much loss of this precious liquid, through filtering, you may want to collect it in a jar or flask and then filter it all at once prior to use. **Remember:** it will etch the glass it is stored in as well. Make sure you seal the storage jar tightly to prevent the liquid from absorbing any additional fluid from the surrounding air.

Place one ounce (52 grams) or between 50 and 60 grams of finely ground herb in a fresh jar and pour in the clear fluid you have collected and filtered. Once again, remember that beginning the operation on the planetary day and/or hour of the planet ruling the herb will assist you in your Work. Pour in enough fluid to cover the top of the herb and to allow for thorough shaking. Depending on the dryness absorbent nature of the herb chosen, this can be from 100ml to 200ml of the collected "Oil of Tartar" per herb for adequate coverage. If any "Oil of Tartar" remains save it for future use.

Pour in an equal amount of grain alcohol and shake daily to insure the two liquids mix as the lighter alcohol will float on top. This **alcohol** will be the Ens tincture that is removed after the fluid turns a dark reddish color.

Remember! The "Oil of Tartar" is caustic and will be unpleasant if swallowed.

Because of the magnetic nature of the deliquescence, it is important that the lid be non-metallic, or that the mouth of the jar be wrapped in plastic food wrap prior to sealing. You may also wish to wrap it in aluminum foil to limit or reduce the amount of psychic contact the liquid receives.

How to Use the Ens

Take ten or at most twenty drops in a glass of preferably distilled water on the day ruled by the planet of the plant in the hour following sunrise. If this is not possible, then in any of the other three planetary hours occurring that day. As before, you may consecrate it prior to consumption with kabbalistic or astrological rituals, as you would do for a talisman.

Because the ens is an initiatic product, it will have an effect on subtle or astral body of the user. Note carefully your dreams in a notebook, as well as the phases of the moon, and any other psychic or coincidental occurrences that may happen.

How to Pick a Plant

For those not wishing to create all seven of the Ens at once, the following may be taken into consideration when picking a plant for your first time.

You may pick a plant based upon its planetary sign, such as one for a quality that you are deficient in.

A Moon ens will open up the psychic world, that of Yetzirah, and Yesod in particular. It may also be used with Pathworkings involving the Moon, the 32nd, 30th, 28th, and 25th.

An Ens of Lady's Mantel (*Alchemia*) will open up Netzach-Venus, and give information regarding plant alchemy, hence its official name - *Alchemia*.

An ens of the Sun will assist in awakening intuition, self-mastery, and the sphere of Tiphareth in Yetzirah. It may even give glimpses of the Briatic World (the World of Archetypes/Higher Mind). It may also be used in Pathworkings involving the Sun.

An ens of Saturn, particularly Horsetail, may be used in the 32nd Path, opening of Briah-Saturn in Yetzirah, and may even give glimpses of the Briatic World and Eternity itself.

Notes on the Ens attributed to Paracelsus

In his biography of Paracelsus, Franz Hartman quotes an unknown manuscript, allegedly in private possession, in which Paracelsus described the creation of the Melissa Ens and its virtues.

"But the Primum Ens Melissae is prepared in the following manner: Take half a pound of pure carbonate of potash, and expose it to the air until it is dissolved (by attracting water from the atmosphere). Filter the fluid, and put as many fresh leaves of the plant *melissa* into it as it will hold, so that the fluid will cover the leaves. Let it stand in a well-closed glass and in a moderately warm place for twenty-four hours. The fluid may then be removed from the leaves, and the latter thrown away. On top of this fluid absolute alcohol is poured, so that it will cover the former to the height of one or two inches, and it is left to remain for one or two days, or until the alcohol becomes of an intensely green color. This alcohol is then to be taken away and preserved, and fresh alcohol is put upon the alkaline fluid, and the operation is repeated until all the coloring matter is absorbed by the alcohol. This alcoholic fluid is now to be distilled, and the alcohol evaporated until it becomes of the thickness of a syrup, which is the Primum Ens Melissae; but the alcohol that has been distilled away and the liquid potash may be used again. The liquid potash must be of great concentration and the alcohol of great strength, else they would become mixed, and the experiment would not succeed."

In a footnote to the above material, Hartman quotes Lesebure, a physician of Louis XIV of France, and his "Guide to Chemistry" (*Chemischer Handleiter*, printed in Nuremberg, 1685, page 276), in which Lesebure describes the following account of an experiment he claims to have witnessed regarding the extended use of the Primum Ens Melissae.

"One of my most intimate friends prepared the Primum Ens Melissae, and his curiosity would not allow him to rest until he had seen with his own eyes the effects of the this arcanum, so that he might be certain whether or not the accounts given of its virtues were true. He therefore made the experiment, first upon himself, then upon an old female servant, aged seventy years, and afterwards upon an old hen that was kept as his house. First he took, every morning at sunrise. A glass of white wine that was tinctured with this remedy, and after using it for fourteen days his finger- and toe- nails began to fall out, without however, causing any pain. He was not courageous enough to continue the experiment, but gave the same remedy to the old female servant. She took it every morning for about ten days, when she began to menstruate again as in former days. At this she was very much surprised, because she did not know that she had been taking a medicine. She became frightened, and refused to continue the experiment. My friend took, therefore, some grain, soaked it in that wine, and gave it to the old hen to eat, and on the sixth day that bird began to lose its feathers, and kept losing them until it was perfectly nude, but before two weeks had passed, new feathers grew, which were much more beautifully colored; her comb stood up again, and she began again to lay eggs."

According to one modern manuscript on alchemy, a similar experiment with *melissae* using a different method of extraction, produced a milder and less violent reaction in the hens it was given to, while increasing their egg weight and production.

While this is not being said to encourage extended use of the tincture, it is from stories such as these that we have the legendary healing and rejuvenating qualities of alchemical products.

This is part two in a three part series of articles on simple and practical plant alchemy adopted from the forthcoming book *A Short Course in Plant Alchemy* by Mark Stavish, M.A.

Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part Three

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Practical Plant Alchemy -- Part Three

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Creating an alchemical or spagyric product is among one of the highest and most rewarding activities that a student of esotericism can accomplish.

In the creation of a "Stone" even in the Vegetable Kingdom, the symbolic balancing of the "Elements" is the basis for the functional reality.

With the harmonizing of Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury of the parent plant, the herb is perfected in its potential use as a medium of etheric and astral energy.

A Vegetable Stone

In the creation of a "Stone" even in the Vegetable Kingdom, the symbolic balancing of the "Elements" is the basis for its functional reality. With the harmonizing of the plant's Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury, the herb is perfected in its potential use as a medium of etheric and astral energy.

There are many ways of making a Vegetable Stone. Some of them run from the simple to the complex, each with its own advantages and drawbacks. For brevity, and the increased possibility of success, several brief methods will be outlined.

The effects of the Stone, as suggested previously, are initiatic. While physical health may be effected, their primary purpose, at this stage, is to open up a wider range of consciousness to the student. They also represent, in their own fashion, a certain degree of mastery of the 'Vegetable' (or animal-Nephesh soul) nature of the individual who created them. They can be a profound and powerful gateway to the astral-Yetziric realm, and take us to the doors of Briatic (Solar-Archetypal) initiation.

The creation of all seven planetary stones, and their perfection, represents a physical demonstration of the student's mastery of the Astral-Yetziric World.

The process of making a vegetable Stone is similar to that of making a spagyric tincture as previously described.

However, instead of having the option of disposing of Salt, here it must be calcined, and kept for future use. If the Salt obtained from the plant matter is insufficient, in some instances, Sea Salt may be used.

Leaching of the Salt may also yield up greater progress in the final stages of balancing the elements. Leaching is accomplished by placing the Salt in a moderate amount of distilled water, and allowing it to evaporate naturally, or with the assistance of a heat lamp or toaster oven. The Salt is then scraped off the container, ground, and re-calcined. Experience has shown that leaching can be done in 15-30 minutes if the Salt is finely spread, and the heat source is close by. A simple desk lamp, with as low as a 7 1/2 watt bulb, will be sufficient.

The Sulphur and Mercury which have previously been together in the tincture, in some instances are separated into their respective aspects. Thus, in the creation of a Stone, we have three separate materials that we will recombine in the alchemical laboratory.

If separation of the Sulphur-oil and Mercury-alcohol is not possible because of equipment limitations, then they may be used together, but this may effect the quality of the Stone produced. An 'artificial plant Stone' may also be made with Sea Salt, alcohol, and high grade essential oils of the desired plant. Above all, it is important to note that a Vegetable Stone takes time to produce, in some cases up to several months, and will change in color and texture after it is created. Patience, dedication, and confidence are the needed attributes at this stage.

Method I

Preparation is the key to success in alchemical work. Preparation of the materials needed, the place of working, and above all, of the attitude of the worker. The attitude must be a mixture of humility and unswerving confidence in the ultimate success of the undertaking. An image, if possible, and a feeling to accompany it, of the final moment the product is realized, from beginning to end can only help in its final material realization.

Remember the words of Khunrath, "*Ora et Labora*" - Prayer and Work; and the aphorism on the fourteenth plate of the *Mutus Liber*: *Ora, lege, lege, lege, relege, labora et invenies* - Pray, read, read, read, reread, work and (you will) discover (it).

Note the order of the directions: Prayer comes first, then reading and re-reading, and finally the material operations.

While the alchemist works alone, or at best with a mate, they do the Work not for themselves alone, but to assist in the relieving of pain and suffering. Their motive is well expressed in the motto of the Knights Templar. It is taken from the 115th Psalm and was sung by them in victory: "Non nobis Domine! Non nobis, sed nomini tuo da Gloriam." That is, "Not unto us, O Lord! Not unto us, but unto Thy name give Glory."

The Stone

The Salt may be calcined ahead of time, or you may wait until the planetary hour on the day of the ruling planet of the herb.

The process of calcining is more complicated than it appears, as the simple burning off of the alcohol will not produce enough heat to ashen the residue. The embers must be made to glow by gently blowing on them, until they are bright orange. Be very careful not to blow hot ashes into your eyes or hair if you chose to increase the heat in this way! Safety goggles should be worn if you are unsure of your ability to control the ash, and a small, fine wire mesh screen placed over the dish used for calcining will help hold the ashes down. This is important as the finer, lighter ash will easily be blown away, and this ash is important for the creation of a Vegetable Stone.

You may also place small amounts of the ash in a crucible and allow the heat from your gas stove to envelope the crucible. Tongs will be needed as the crucible will grow very hot.

Several kitchen hot pads and gloves will also be helpful to have on hand.

Let the ashes cool, then grind them. Soak them in alcohol again, and repeat the process. By the fourth or fifth burning you might achieve the proper white, or grey-white color needed to proceed.

If the Salt has been prepared ahead of time, that is before the planetary hour, place it in a heat resistant dish or crucible on a low heat source. The heat may be modulated, but under no circumstances let it burn or scorch the herb. Slowly, drop by drop begin to place the tincture into the heated Salt until it is completely absorbed. This is called imbibition, or imbibing the Stone with life (Mercury) and Soul (Sulphur). You are in essence, reincarnating the vegetable power of the plant.

Continue this process for as long as you like, or stop after one full hour, either planetary or secular. Begin again either next week, or on another day, preferably Saturday, on the planetary hour of the plant. If this is inconvenient, then any hour when the Work can be done. Between the phases of imbibition, keep the Stone in a place away from prying eyes, and if possible sunlight. Whether it be in the womb or under the earth, many good things like to grow in the dark.

When the Stone will accept no more liquid then place it where you can observe the changes that may take place over the next few months. If possible, store it near a heat source, such as an incubator, or even a gas range oven with a running pilot light if it is available.

If the Stone suddenly jells, quickly pour it out of the crucible into a thimble, as it will harden and difficult to get out of the porcelain crucible. This is desirable, over the softer, easily consumable Stones that may appear. If the Stone is soft like liquorice, then it may be ingested in small slivers under the tongue, or with a glass of distilled water.

If the Stone is hard, then place it in a glass of distilled water for several minutes so that it may transfer its power to the water, then drink the water. If the Stone is perfected, repeated immersion will not degrade or 'attack' the Stone. Otherwise, expect it to dissolve over time.

It is imperative that you keep a careful record of the days, times, and phases of the moon, during which the Work is done. It is strongly urged that Work not be done during the 'dark phase' of the moon. New and full moon periods are most beneficial, as with most psychic activities or projects.

In this regard, Dion Fortune states:

"It is the light of the moon which is the stimulative factor in these etheric activities, and as the Earth and Moon share one etheric double, all etheric activities are at their most active when the Moon is at its full. Likewise, during the dark of the Moon, etheric energy is at its lowest, and unorganized forces have a tendency to rise up and give trouble. The Dragon of the Qliphoth raises his multiple heads. In consequence, practical occult work is best let alone during the dark by all but experienced workers. The life giving forces are relatively weak and the unbalanced forces relatively strong; the results, in inexperienced hands, is chaos.

While Dion Fortune was a Qabalist and a ritual magician and not a laboratory alchemist, her words are still applicable. As we will later see, the relationship between kabbalah and alchemy is very close.

Method II

If Salts from the plant used to make the tincture are not available, then an 'artificial Stone' may be made in its place using a similar process.

In place of the calcined residue, sea salt is soaked in rain water and dried several times, being crushed with mortar and pestal between cycles. The aura and energy radiating from the hands of the alchemist are most crucial in the Work. That is why during the handling of the Salt and tincture, the attitude of the alchemist is so important; as well as why alchemists work alone undisturbed by inquisitive and disruptive thoughts of others.

While it should not have to be said to someone interested in alchemical, kabbalistic, or hermetic work, we will state again to drive the point home: thoughts are real things on their way to becoming tangible in our material world. It is for this reason that we mentally wrap ourselves in a blanket or veil to psychically isolate ourselves from the disruptive psychic energy from others, and our products in aluminum foil when they are completed. Alcohol is very susceptible to psychic vibrations, as is cold water, and both act as storage mediums for those concentrated energies. Consider this the next time your are in a bar, or drinking an alcoholic beverage. In Alcoholics Anonymous, it is said that the recovering addict must avoid 'stinking thinking' as that is what drives them back to drinking and drugging. When you consider that many alcoholics sit and stew over what is bothering them, ice cold drink clutched between their hands, deep in an inner contemplation of failure, anger, and self-destruction, and then consume their 'desecrated talisman's' one after the other, is it any surprise that alcohol and drug abuse is so destructive to the body and soul of individuals and society?

If you chose not to soak the sea salt, then crush it, imagining that it, like the plant Salt, is opening itself up to the creative powers of the tincture, or Cosmic Energy and Consciousness.

On the appropriate planetary day and hour, begin the imbibing process with a dropper, first with grain alcohol until saturated, and then essential oil. Repeat several times, and proceed as discussed in the previous method.

Sea Salt and Alchemy

Modern salt refining techniques are indebted to the ancient alchemists for much of their methods. The sea and its symbols have been rich inspiration for alchemist and mystics of all periods. It is not surprising then to learn, that the ocean itself, the very source from which our physical bodies have arisen, is also the source of much of our food stuffs, as well as potential medicines. The salty waters of *Eaux-Meres*, or "Mother Waters", is the basis of our plasma, amniotic water, and all of our body fluids. For this reason, only sea salt, and only sea salt which is naturally refined and collected (i.e. organic) is suitable for this work. Salt mined from deep inland, or strip mined off the beaches is "alchemically polluted" and will not do for this work of rejuvenation. Salt produced in the slow, natural manner contains over 84 trace minerals, many of which are absent when the speedier more economically methods of mass production are employed.

Suggestions for Study

Before engaging in any of the experiments outlined here, read and re-read the material several times with a notebook nearby. Outline the steps in each technique, and place them on the front page of your notebook. When performing the experiments, pay attention to your notes, and write down each step as you take it. Compare your list with master list your notebooks, as well as the steps listed here. This may seem trivial, but it is designed to get you in the habit of noting down what you do, as you do it, so that later on, if you decide to do more complex experiments, the required safety and notation habits will have already been formed. As stated earlier, plant work is relatively safe, if you mislabel something you can throw it out or test it under your tongue, metallic work is much less forgiving. Good habits formed early last a lifetime. Not to mention, they save a lot of work later!

Conclusion

Alchemy is a lifelong process. The procedures outlined here are sufficient to keep an aspiring spagyrist busy for at least a year or more. Spagyric medicines when taken over time have an accumulative effect. While the individual dose may wear off after a week or so, each time it is ingested the organs of spiritual perception are flexed a little more. Like any study worth undertaking, patience, confidence, faith, and Grace are the tools needed. In the, it is ourselves we transmute, the plants are just our helpers along the Way of Return.

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The articles in this series are adapted from the forthcoming title, *A Short Course in Plant Alchemy* by Mark Stavish, M.A.