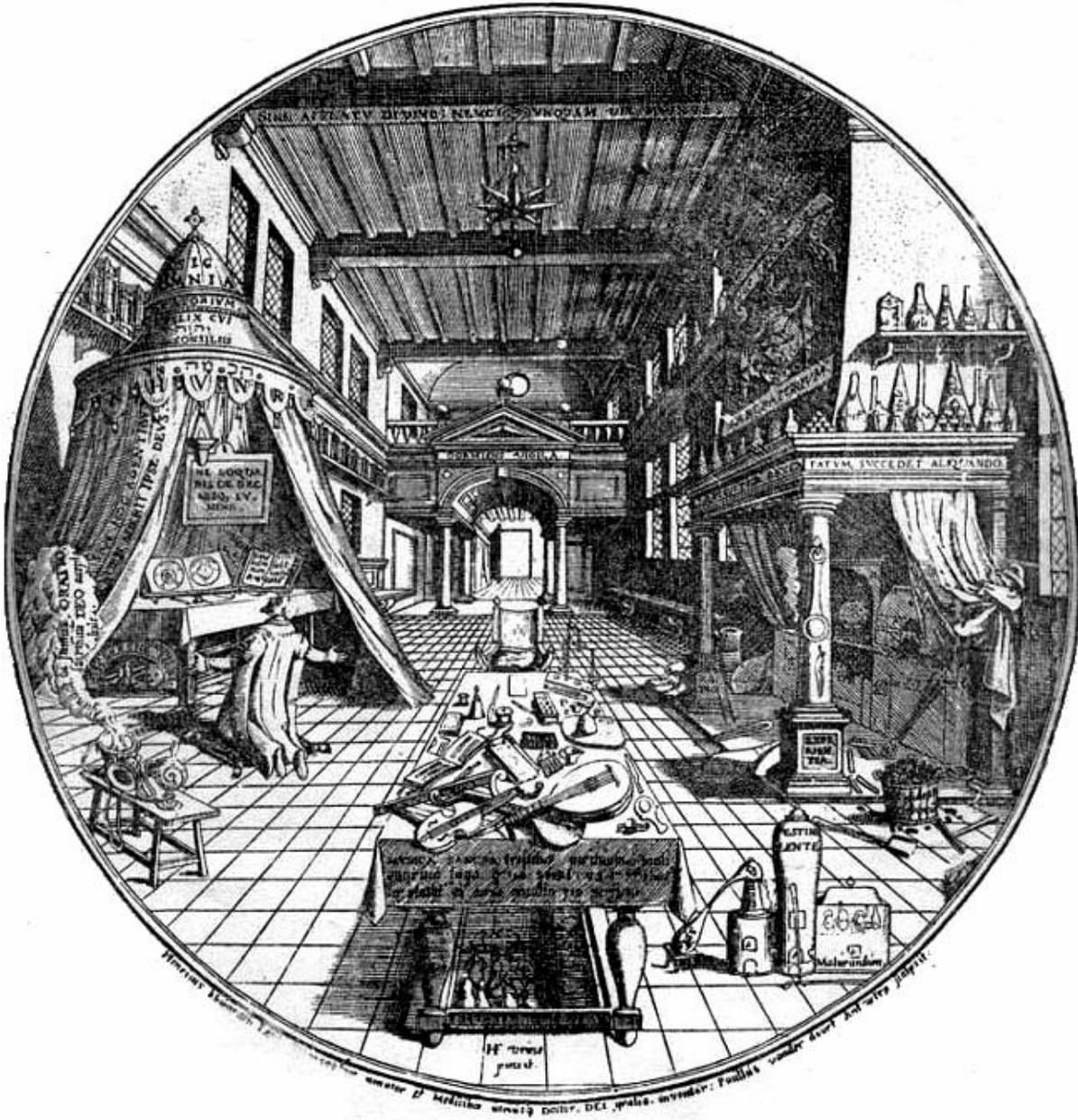


HERE IS ALCHEMY

By Jean DUBUIS



Newton spent 90% of his work on it. It is the very example of interaction between experimenter and experimentation.

But in 1984 and for our future, what can it still teach us?

In it and through it, the transmutation of physical matter and psychic matter seeks realization. Spirituality, art and science, Alchemy has long known that experimentation is in interaction with the experimenter. Therefore, for its finest research, the spiritual quality of the experimenter must be commensurate with the depth and finesse of his experiment. On some level, experimentation is not reproducible by all and that is why Alchemy is not ready to be accepted or even considered by conventional scientific circles. It remains in the dark areas of the hermetic and metaphysics, and will long remain there until the consciousness of men can approach it without fear or derision. Isaac Newton did it in his time and his alchemical work, kept secret, represented 90% of his efforts. Only recently did his family agree that we could look into it.

Among various traditional disciplines, Alchemy is by far the least known, and most misinterpreted. Still today, its true goals are almost hidden. Many people belonging to esoteric or philosophical schools consider the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Long Life only as chimeras.

Admittedly obscure manuscripts from “puffers”⁽¹⁾ or alchemists are the main culprits for this mistake, along with keeping tight secrecy.

The hermetic secret

There have been at least four reasons which justified it as well as its role in Alchemy:

- **First reason:** in times of religious intolerance, it was necessary to hide the true purpose of alchemical operations: initiatory goal.
- **Second reason** is political. Dissemination of alchemical process in those days would have destabilized the social organization, risk that no king would incur.
- **Third reason:** it is initiatory. Most initiates believe these techniques should only be communicated to those who are ready. Ethically, we think that it would have been better that ways to prepare were revealed to all who wished. This error from the initiates comes largely from a misinterpretation of the hermetic adage: "Know, dare, do and be silent." The final "silent" does not concern knowledge per se, but the results of esoteric work, which concerns only he who does it. This error is not unique to Alchemy, it is still perpetuated by most philosophical schools and is probably the cause of various problems of today's societies.
- **Fourth reason:** experience shows that there are many "Troublemaker" books which mislead. Probably they are all expressing the revenge of "blowers"⁽¹⁾ who failed on the path.

Where is Alchemy today?

We believe that nowadays the above considerations do not have to play a role and therefore it is the duty of those who know to say how to prepare.

⁽¹⁾ Puffers or Blowers were fake alchemists seeking to fool their audience for personal gain

Another fact permits us to say a lot, because in Alchemy, knowledge does not automatically mean power.

We often hear, "*But if there is a hermetic secret, science with its modern means should have found it?*" The answer to this is simple: *science has not found it because it has not sought for it.* When its slow and painful "scratching" the surface of the laws of the physical world leads to the limit of metaphysics, then science will catch up to Alchemy.

Note: al chemistry or divine chemistry. In the Hebrew language, the letters aleph and lamed, or their equivalences in Arabic, joined to a word, give it a divine meaning. Ex .: Alla, Mikael, Raphael, Gabriel, and others.

The study and practice of Alchemy leads to a unitary knowledge, which overall includes both experimental and theoretical knowledge, a philosophy, and a worldview.

In addition, the practice is more an art than a technique.

Before addressing various aspects related to Alchemy, it seems useful to give the origin of knowledge presented here:

- **For the operative part** mostly from former German schools, namely: Isaac Hollandus Von Welling, Paracelsus, Weidenfeld, Von Bernus.

- **For the theoretical part**, essentially: The Golden Chain of Homer.

The rest comes from oral exchanges, direct conversations with foreign alchemists and from our own experiences.

Alchemical and philosophical conception of nature

Alchemy does not dissociate metaphysics from physics. It considers Creation as a whole, resulting in a double aspect of the work: "Ora et Labora" or "pray and work" or "Oratory - Laboratory", Spirit and Matter or more precisely Life and Matter.

.LIFE, Domain of metaphysics to date.

.MATTER, physical aspect of things.

Alchemy establishes the principle that everything is alive, everything evolves, and consciousness is in everything. The concept of incompatibility between modern science and Alchemy can be summarized as:

- Science seeks how matter created life;

- Alchemy says that life creates matter for the needs of its evolution.

Of course, Alchemy does not consider that life and consciousness are identical in the three kingdoms. There is a gradation between mineral life, plant life and animal life. Absolute death

does not exist for the alchemist. For example: the death of an animal is the departure from animal life, but in the corpse some plant life remains for a time coming from the food. There is also a mineral life which will remain fixed in the mineral elements of the body.

Nature has a single purpose: the evolution of the Essence of Life, the world soul or the *Materia Prima* of the Ancients. This is done through a unique process which is that of **life - death - rebirth** accompanied by purification steps or rearrangement of elements of things and beings. The operative part will be devoted to this aspect.

Since the alchemical process is primarily to change the levels of the energies of life, it is obvious that chemical technique alone is insufficient. Acting on life belongs to the field of Art, the Royal Art, which requires an inner quality that the alchemist student must acquire gradually if he wants to go through the stages of the Hermetic Path. Paracelsus said: *"No one transmutes matter if he has not transmuted himself."*

The level of consciousness in the mineral is small but its energies are gigantic. Its evolution is slow, so this reign concerns only the end of the Hermetic Path.

The plant world has a higher level of consciousness and lower energies, so it's the perfect kingdom for those who want to start learning the Royal Art.

The animal kingdom contains the most subtle energies, so it is evolving fastest. For alchemists, the animal kingdom is divided into two parts: animal and man. Indeed, in the three kingdoms nature acts according to strict rules and no derogation is possible. **In nature only man has in him an energy that is one of the secret fires of the alchemists.**

This energy gives man self-consciousness, or the sense of I. It is this energy that must be developed in the Oratory work as well as with the help of alchemical operations in the laboratory.

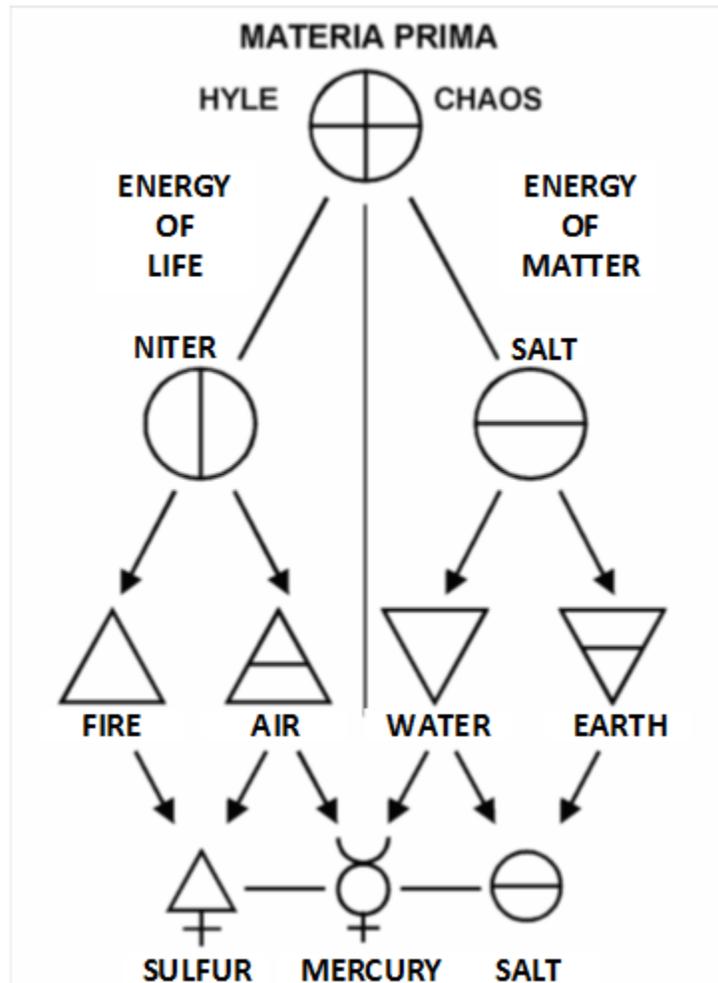
Theory of nature according to alchemists

For alchemists, all of Creation is energy emanating from a single source (for Qabalists this source is Kether). The Ancients call this energy many names: Chaos, *Materia Prima*, or Hyle. This energy transforms itself and creates everything.

Under the effect of a force (the Word, Power of the Being, etc.), this undifferentiated energy is divided into two phases, an active element, said positive, and a passive element, said negative. The positive is equal in amount to the negative. This can be repeated with the phases of differentiated energy.

In nature, from the beginning is a symmetry quite comparable to the matter-antimatter concept, but unlike this view, the complement of matter here are the energies of Life. Bringing together the two phases does not restore the primary energy, but an opposition phenomenon: the negative is used as an obstacle for the positive so that it can then manifest.

In what follows, the words Niter, Salt, Fire, Air, Water, Earth, Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt, do not designate the bodies as we understand them today but generally imperceptible energies, such as electricity, or the material support one of them.



We see on the diagram that Hyle or Chaos differentiates into two energies, on one side Niter, active energy, which will be the basis of all animating energies of life; on the other, Salt, the passive energy that will give matter, support of life.

Niter then differentiates and gives two energies known as alchemical elements: Fire, Active, and Air, passive.

Salt also differentiates and gives Water, active energy, and Earth, passive energy.

The opposition of Fire-Air creates a kind of spiritual body, the soul of things animated by Fire, built by Air, and the alchemists call it Sulphur.

Water and Earth generate the Salt or more accurately the energetic matter of physical forms. Air and Water engender Philosophical Mercury or the Spirit of things. Mercury is the Key of Alchemy because it is the only of the three principles that can access on one side the energies of life and on the other energies of matter. For alchemists, a body, a matter to be used must be alive, and in this case are called philosophical. And this implies that the three principles are present, namely: Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt, or: Soul, Spirit, and Body. In man, Mercury allows the soul to animate the body. Hence the ancient symbolism of Mercury, messenger of the Gods.

No one can "open" one of the kingdoms of nature if he does not have the Mercury. Physical media containing Mercury are:

- Blood in the animal kingdom
- Alcohol in plants
- An Hydrocarbon (vinegar of the Ancients) in the mineral kingdom.

Note: the mineral kingdom has two sources of "Mercury":

- The **Philosophical Mercury** extracted from metal ores of the seven traditional metals, and
- The **Alkaest** extracted from other virgins minerals.

In nature as in alchemical operations, there is always **involution** and **evolution** of energy: according to the Ancients, the essence of things is actually Fire more or less "**coagulated**". The energy involution is incessant in the cycle Fire, Air, Water, Earth, and its evolution occurs in the Earth, Water, Air, and Fire cycle.

Hydrogen, Fire element, is the only element straight from the Prima Materia and the whole series of elements appears only by the accretion of hydrogen atoms.

Reaching the density of carbon, manifested life becomes possible since all the animating Mercuries contain C and H.

At our stage in the cosmic evolution, the accretion of hydrogen stops at lead. Beyond that Sulfur-Mercury incorporation no longer occurs and these bodies are alchemically dead. Radioactivity decomposes them and returns their energies to Chaos.

A body totally deprived of its Sulfur and its Mercury becomes radioactive.

To illustrate the difference between alchemy and modern techniques, let's consider the case of nuclear transmutations. Nuclear transmutation, whether in batteries or bombs, is due to nuclear and electrical energies of the Water and Earth elements, in the realm of matter. These reactions are the same domain as the physical body and are dangerous for it but they have little, if any, direct effect on the psyche. On the contrary, the alchemist acts on matter through the life elements, Fire and Air. There is no more risk of serious psychological disturbances in case of error.

Operative methods in Alchemy

All operative processes are imitations of Nature since the Royal Art aims only at accelerating natural processes.

The first process, the life-death one, is to change the level of life in a liquid as the operation is repeated many times. Distillation is the simplest method, it mimics nature. Indeed, sea water evaporated by the sun dies and becomes steam, its revival is condensation in the form of rain.

The Artist distills in different ways according to his needs: either in the conventional manner for the separation of impurities; or by cohobating: in this case the residual impurities are calcined and the distillate then poured back on the calcination residues: in this case there was distillation-purification-evolution. Seven cohobations-distillations are at least required for a decent result. Another way is to distill is called circulation: a specially shaped flask in a proper environment ensures a slow but continuous distillation in a closed circuit; one month to one year or more of circulation is often necessary. "**Patience**" is the word written on the door of the laboratory.

The second major process, first truly alchemical achievement, is the separation of the three principles Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt. This can only be done if one possesses the Mercury of the reign.

For example, let's consider the caraway seed. Even dry, life is in it since it has the ability to germinate. Mercury, here absolute alcohol from red wine, is relatively easy to obtain. We load a modern extractor called Soxhlet, with both plant and Mercury and after twelve hours, we get a colored liquid, a tincture, which contains Sulfur, Mercury and impurities; a solid residue called feces that contain the Salt. Feces will be calcined, leached, and we get some white Salt.

Through distillation, the tincture gives Sulphur and Mercury separately. Several distillations are required to purify these and evolve them to a sufficient degree.

A long circulation of the three principles will give a living elixir with energizing therapeutic qualities.

The last process we review will be fertilization or alchemical marriage. Sulfur is considered male, and Mercury female, Salt will be the matrix. The three are enclosed in the Philosophical egg itself placed in an incubator at a temperature of about 40 C (104F). Circulation will start in the Egg.

With the three principles of the previous process, a Stone Plant is obtained which property is to immediately extract the elixir of simple aqueous maceration.

Action of Alchemy on the alchemist

Operations in the plant realm.

It is certain that Alchemy laboratory work is work performed alone, because of the operator-operations reactions. Operations on elements of life are delicate and can be contaminated with useless presences; an operating room discipline is necessary at these levels. But if the alchemist

wants to undertake experiments of the metal realm, a physical and mental preparation is necessary, one must clean up his Sulphur, his Mercury, and his Salt. In an alchemical schools of German origin, this preparation is based on the concepts and symbolism of Hebrew Qabala.

This tradition says that man has in him ten energy levels, ten levels of consciousness called Sephiroth. For seven of these levels, there is similarity and even identity of function with the seven chakras of yoga. As for them, the preparation consists of a preliminary cleansing of these centers and energy paths that connect them.

The Qabalists and Alchemists who use the symbolism of the Qabalah place the ten Sephiroth or the ten levels of consciousness of man, on a diagram called the "Tree of Life ". This Tree of Life is divided in two different ways:

a) vertically into three columns

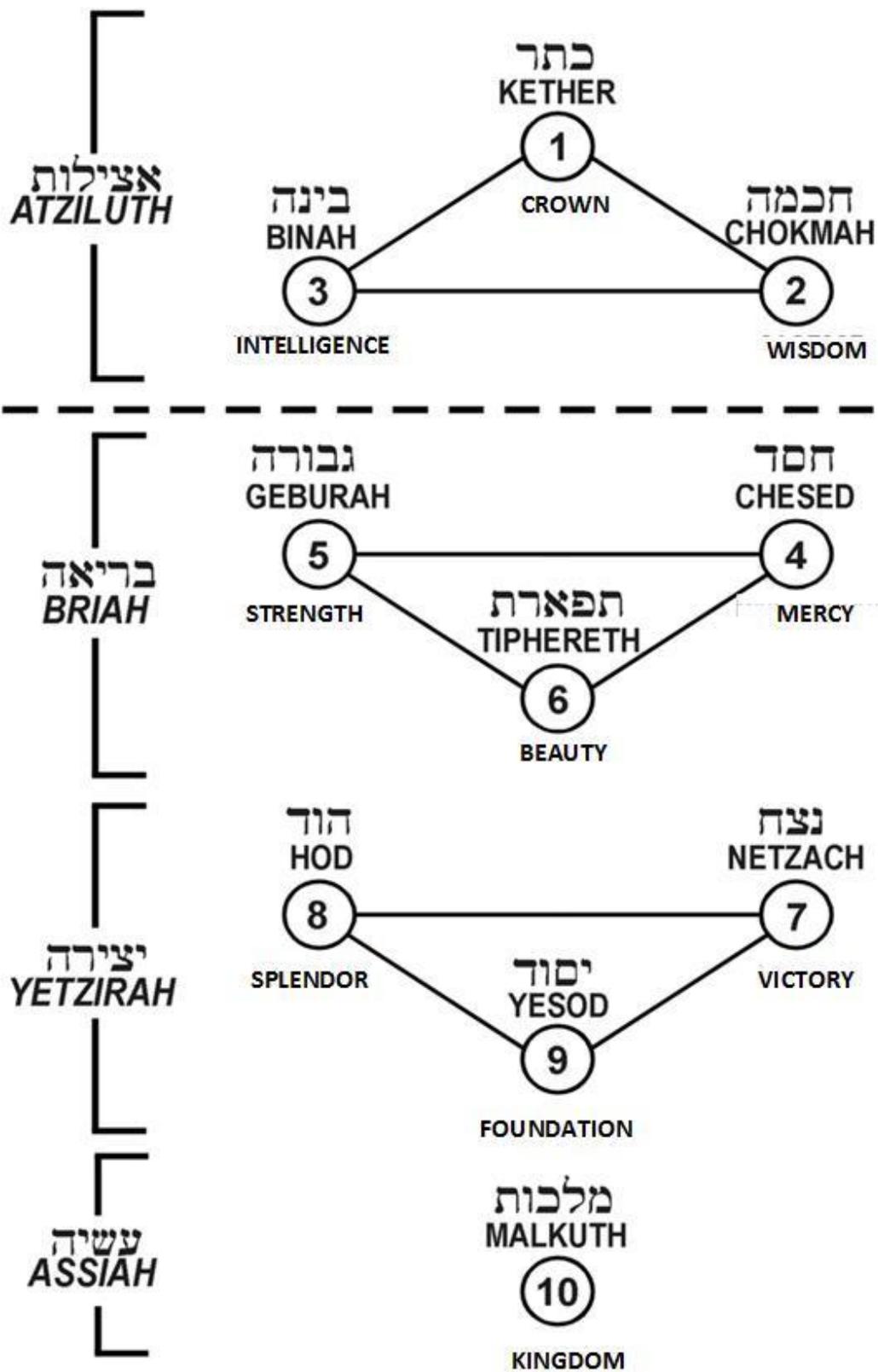
- 3 Sephiroth form the left **Rigor** column
- 3 Sephiroth form the right **Mercy** column
- 4 Sephiroth form the center **Equilibrium** column

b) Horizontally, the Tree is divided into four worlds

- **Atziluth** the divine higher world
- **Briah**, the world of creative ideas
- **Yetzirah**, the world of the materialization of things
- **Assiah**, the physical world.

Each of these worlds is a human plane of consciousness. Except for the physical world, Assiah, man has three levels of consciousness in each plane.

True Initiation is the possibility for man of the earth to link these levels of consciousness to his ordinary physical consciousness.



The initiation mechanism is to restore inter-Sephiroth links.

Assiah is the ordinary consciousness.

Antique Initiation called minor Mysteries was to restore consciousness in Yetzirah.

Antique Initiation of major Mysteries was to restore consciousness in Briah.

The three Sephiroth of Atziluth are neither affected by initiation nor Alchemy.

The Atziluth world is a timeless world and is not accessible through physical processes. The dotted line is the symbol of this inaccessibility and, consequently, is named the threshold of the Abyss. Crossing this threshold is the Ultimate Initiation. The only character affected by this passage in the Bible was Enoch of whom is said that "he saw God face to face and did not return."

Ancient alchemical and qabalistic traditions (Hollandus, Paracelsus, Trithemius, Vigenere) give a symbolic equivalence of these centers and assign each a planet and plants, namely:

Binah	Saturn	horsetail
Chesed	Jupiter	Melissa
Geburah	Mars	Madder
Tiphereth	Sun	Eyebright
Netzach	Venus	Lady's Mantle
Hod	Mercury	Caraway
Yesod	Moon	Speedwell

When we managed to produce satisfactory plant elixirs, or better plant essences, the procedure is as follows.

Once the seven elixirs are manufactured a dose of a few drops of an elixir each day of the week will initiate the desired cleansing. We believe that 18 months of this regimen are necessary for cleansing centers to make them suitable for metal work.

This process is the first part of alchemical initiation. Well performed it is equivalent to the actual minor Mysteries initiation.

Operations in the metal realm

Alchemists never work on common metals, which are alchemically dead. If these still possess Sulphur, they no longer have Mercury. The work is therefore on virgin minerals coming from the mine. These must be chemically purified without melting fire and without mineral acids, otherwise they die. Antimony alone can confront the union without alchemically dying.

The separation of the three metallic principles requires possession of either the philosophical Mercury, or of an Alkaest.

The Alkaest is the philosophical Mercury extracted from a non-metallic mineral. Its alchemical properties are less universal than that of Mercury, but is easier to obtain (dry distillation of wine tartar or native sulfur).

Note: Native Sulphur.

This sulfur is in the earth generally in crystallized form. Volcanic sulfur loses its alchemical life by fusion, and it cannot be regenerated but by a long stay in the ground. Only the volcanic sulfur from ancient volcanoes can be considered native because of the very old age of extinguished volcanoes. In ancient texts, we do not find the native word but they said philosophical meaning contains alchemical life.

Possession of Mercury ensures the philosophical dissolution of purified ore; simple distillation separates the three principles. The big difficulty is in handling highly volatile philosophical Mercury that boils at room temperature and keeps only in flame sealed glass flasks.

We will not go further into these explanations because handling metallic tinctures is dangerous. It is necessary to prepare the seven tinctures, namely of **galena, cassiterite, marcasite, gold, "blue vitriol"** (copper ore), **cinnabar**, and **silver**.

These tinctures do not have a cleaning effect but with a certain dose they induce a release of spiritual energy in the operator. This corresponds to major Mysteries initiation already mentioned.

According to Paracelsus in these metals there is a hierarchy of powers, and we believe this to be accurate from experience. The hierarchy is this: starting with the most powerful: **lead-tin-iron (gold) copper-mercury-(silver)**. Each of these metals give a stone. Each marks a stage on the way to the ultimate initiation.

In conclusion...

Is a massive disclosure of Alchemy desirable? Is it possible? What would be the scientific, philosophical, religious, and why not social or political consequences? Meeting with members of the scientific community led us to see three different types of behavior: **conformist, double, and courageous**.

- The "**conformist**" in general work with the theory of scientific disciplines and do not delve into experience or work on matter.
- The "**double**" are officially conformists, but in private come out of comfortable conformism.
- The "**courageous**" express their curiosity, their nonconformity and therefore are more or less marginalized by the scientific community.

But what is scientific conformism?

Scientific knowledge is like a gigantic puzzle of which many pieces are missing. This jigsaw is not limited on the edges, but it seems the start of coherent forms can distinguish.

When a researcher offers a new piece, the official community begins by looking if we can include this in the puzzle, even if they have to trim, file, to twist the piece. Otherwise, they keep the piece under wraps until it "accepts" to enter the puzzle. But they will do everything not to alter or modify the established puzzle. If someone has a piece that fits on the edge of the puzzle, but extends it in metaphysical directions: spirit, soul, or psyche, then the piece is thrown into "*the dustbin of silence and ridicule.*"

This is probably the path that would take a massive revelation of Alchemy as experimental metaphysics and, in addition, would clash with religious and philosophical environment. Our position as a research group is this: give knowledge to those who want so they can carry personal self-transformation that make an alchemist from a layman.

As for the teaching that the alchemist can draw from his study of nature or from his own study, it will strongly collide with concepts of current materialistic societies.

Alchemy is the science of a spiritual civilization.

To exceed the limits of revelation, the question that arises is this:

- Is there an experience, or a series of experiments that would be proof positive of alchemy?

At this point, the alchemical domain is divided into two parts. One area where experience is possible regardless of the status of the operator. One area where the operator's proper spiritual state is needed: case in point transmutations. We will not speak of experiences that require an inner transmutation of the alchemist; they are not reproducible by all, and collide with *a priori* refusal to consider from the scientific community.

However a recent statement by US researchers destroyed a major objection opposed to transmutation; their argument:

- Chemically we can only affect the outer electrons of the atom, not influence the nucleus, the seat of transmutations. The nucleus is therefore not accessible by this route.

The statement in question says that a transfer of energy between the outer layers and the nucleus is possible and the theoretical impossibility of transmutation per action on the outer layers **is no longer a certainty.**

It is probably in this area that the psyche of the alchemist can act. **Therefore, no one can transmute without having transmuted himself.**

The psychic and spiritual effect of Alchemy on the alchemist is the point that would trigger fierce opposition from all forces of the current materialistic societies if alchemy was developed

on a large scale. Alchemical revelations would destroy current false religious dogmas as well as bring down the materialistic philosophical systems, and systems that accompany them. Indeed, Alchemy leads to a true initiation, that is, to a level of consciousness and knowledge that transcends all that can be acquired through a physical intellect whatsoever.

Access to experimental metaphysics shows the unreality of all dogmas of religions and most contemporary sects. Only a metaphysical teaching like Qabala or some oriental equivalent is acceptable.

Inner realization leads to a state of "good will" and the finding of the existence of higher realities in man changes the direction of his will; in a word, his ethics becomes "**no longer self-serve but serve**".

It is difficult to believe that current structures of societies can support this human transmutation.

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N.B. This article first appeared in the journal "3^{ème} Millénaire".