

THE TOWER OF

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**An Advanced Guide  
to the Great Work**

**David Goddard**

# THE TOWER OF ALCHEMY

An Advanced Guide  
to the Great Work

David Goddard

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 **WEISER BOOKS**  
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*Respectfully dedicated to His Holiness,  
Urgyen-Trinley-Dorje,  
the Seventeenth Gyalwa-Karmapa—  
Snow-Lion among the Sages.*

*Lovingly dedicated to  
Patrick Francis Coyne,  
a pure “voice” in the  
Nightingale’s healing song.*



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“I am a servant of the Secret Fire . . .”

—Gandalf, in *Lord of the Rings*,  
by J.R.R. Tolkien

“Mother of the Victorious Ones of the three times,  
we praise you and prostrate.  
Holding a hooked knife, skull cup  
and khatvanga in your hands . . .  
We prostrate to you who benefit beings. . . .  
Eternally brilliant, utterly empty, Vajra Dancer, Mother of All,  
I bow to you. . . .  
From the milk ocean of her blessing good butter is churned  
Which worthy ones receive as glory.  
May everyone eternally enjoy  
The lotus garden of the Co-Emergent Mother.”

—Praise of Dorje-Phagmo  
from the *Vajra-Yogini Sadhana*,  
by Rangjung-Dorje,  
the 3rd Karmapa



## PREFACE

This book is the result of what, in Qabalah, is called a *Tzorech G'voah*, a "Higher Need." As such, it is written under the mandate of the Masters of Service. In these pages are given the hidden teachings concerning the Science of the Sages. This "Higher Need" is for those spiritual aspirants who are karmically qualified to complete the Great Work at this time in history. And to these individuals, the Sages—those who have already attained it—are now opening the way in an unprecedented manner to assist them in attaining the Treasure of treasures. For, in every generation, there are always students just on the verge of becoming one of "Those Who Know." At this present time, there are many who stand upon the threshold.

This book is a manual to the science of Hermes, the Thrice-Great, and a true guide to that Sacred and Royal Art. It presents the specific teachings and guided practices that will enable the sincere aspirant to attain to the "secret of all spiritual works" that can culminate in the completion, the Great Work. For this work is *theurgy*—"Divine work"—the true Alchemy that is the practical application of the holy Qabalah. It leads to the attainment of the Philosopher's Stone, whereby the personal consciousness and the Primordial consciousness unite as one. That Stone—the Jewel of Eternity—overcomes all limitation, heals all disease, and brings an end to the need for death itself.

These secret teachings are the hidden essence of the *Sepher Yetzirah*, which was taught to the patriarch Abraham by Melchizadek after he initiated Abraham into the heavenly transmission, the Qabalah. Melchizadek is that mysterious being, who is King of Peace and Priest of the Most High God—Melchizadek, who is "without father or mother, knowing neither death nor end of days."

The old alchemists concealed the secrets of their Art in a bewildering array of symbols and motifs drawn from a wide range of sources: chemical processes, astrological symbolism, fabulous animals and mythic creatures, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin letter meanings, metallurgy, and gods from the Mystery pantheons of the classical and Hellenistic worldviews. Because modern education in the West no longer gives the seeker the information to "unlock" these secrets, practitioners can spend a lifetime just learning the coded "language" of the alchemists. Consequently,

modern schools and esoteric students of the Lesser Mysteries are, understandably, unable to utilize the practical Alchemy whereby the Goal may be achieved in a single lifetime. In alchemical symbolism, the theoretical aspect of the Art is represented by a bewildering maze, to signify the intellectual difficulties that the Great Work presents, while the *praxis* (the practical implementation) is shown as the "Tower of the Art"; hence the title of this book.

Some of those familiar with the Hermetic Art may object to the plain speaking and openness of this manual of the Great Work. But I have received a high dispensation to transmit these teachings: "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed" (Matthew 10:26 and Luke 12:2). Because until very recently, these teachings and techniques were only imparted "mouth-to-ear," from teacher to pupil, only dedicated souls were entrusted with these very real "occult" secrets. Even within these pages, these teachings cannot easily be abused, because only those women and men with the self-motivation and self-discipline to persevere will attain the "fruits" of the Work in their plenitude. Only dedicated practitioners who run the race to the end will manifest the signs of accomplishment. Yet the beauty of alchemical practice is that you can actually measure your progress; because working with the Secret Fire is not based on faith, it brings physical and spiritual results that are discernible. But as the *Zohar* rightly warns, "It is not fitting that a commoner should set hands upon the sceptre of the King." So Alchemy, the Royal Art, first perfects its practitioners, then makes them Lords of the Secret of Saturn, free of the Wheel of Birth and Death. By practicing Alchemy your spiritual growth is assured.

With the knowledge and potential experience that this book contains, Hermetic practitioners will hold the essence, the key, of the Royal Art. Should these practitioners refer to the ancient and obscure alchemical texts, they will appear to be "lit from within."

I have illustrated certain aspects of the alchemical process by making comparisons to the Tibetan tradition of Vajrayana (the "Diamond Path"), which is the esoteric heart of Mahayana Buddhism. These teachings originated from the great monastic university of Nalanda in Bihar, India, which flourished from the 5th to the 10th century of the common era. Probably the greatest adornment of Nalanda Monastery was the Sage Nagarjuna, who was an author, a philosopher, and an alchemist. Nagarjuna, the "Serpent Master," developed the Madhyamika philosophy (teaching on the Void or "emptiness") and recovered the Prajna Paramita Sutra. Through the practice of Alchemy, Nagarjuna maintained the entire

monastic community of Nalanda (some 500 teachers), developed high tantric teachings, and remained incarnate for several centuries.

The Vajrayana teachings were brought to Tibet in the 11th century by the august and illumined Guru Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoché), who—like Melchizadek—is “without father or mother, knowing neither death nor end of days,” for he has transcended the need for mortal birth or death. The Tibetan teachings that especially relate to Alchemy are The Six Yogas of Naropa and those Dzogchen teachings which concern “The Rainbow Body of Clear Light.” These teachings are principally held by the Kargyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and are taught by the realized lama-yogis of that school.

My purpose in comparing Alchemy and Tibetan Buddhist Yoga is twofold. First, the old European alchemists referred to their “melancholia,” meaning the depression that besets all spiritual practitioners from time to time. In Alchemy this depression is pronounced and common, because its practitioners, more often than not, work in isolation and in a nonsupportive culture. Tibetan Buddhism on the other hand, has a continuous lineage of practitioners who have attained “signs of accomplishment,” thereby giving assurance to others that the Goal is attainable. Tibet also has a culture where the “fruits of the spirit” are valued above all else.

The second reason is to show that, despite the differing outward appearance of “Western” and “Eastern” esoteric traditions, there is one Planetary Tradition underlying the Great Work. It has been said that “All mystics come from the same land and speak the same language.” That land flows with the milk of Understanding and the honey of Wisdom; it is Malkuth ha’Shamaim, the “Kingdom of Heaven.” The “language” the Sages speak is that of Above, of higher consciousness: *conversatio nostra in caelis*, “our speech is in heaven.” Together, the Sages of both East and West constitute one great company of the Ageless Wisdom, variously known as the Great White Lodge, the true Sangha, the House of Israel, and the College of the Holy Spirit. Where we stand now—with all our confusion, pain, and selfishness—the Sages once stood. Moreover, they constantly assure us that we too may come to that height upon which they now stand, for the Eternal Light beckons and fails not.

In these times of profound planetary transformation, as the war-torn 20th century draws to a close, the members of both the Eastern and Western traditions—“they of the Andes and they of the Ganges,” to use the old Rosicrucian description—are working together to present humanity with the liberating teachings of the undivided Ageless Wisdom.

This perennial Wisdom, which transcends all cultural and sectarian aspects or subdivisions, is a reflection of pure and peaceful Wisdom which, as the Qabalah calls it, is a “pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty.” It is the Way that heals and perfects the human condition, leading to the Clear Light of Pure Mind, which simultaneously confers the Supreme Bliss, the ultimate Elixir of Life.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nothing comes to birth without assistance. This presentation of the Secret Wisdom is the result of centuries of labor and has had many coworkers. Here, I am privileged to offer honor to some of the spiritual elders and preceptors who, in the 20th century, have, each in their own way, pointed to the Transcendent Light of Great Bliss:

The Ba'al-Shem Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, Paul Foster Case, the 12th Tai-Situpa, W. Ernest Butler, Tony Willis, Chuje Akong Rimpoché, Dion Fortune, Marian Green, Brooke Medicine-Eagle, Lama Thubten Yeshe, Kalu Rimpoché, Joan Grant, Katherine Kurtz, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, Gareth Knight, Moyra Caldecott, and His Holiness, Tenzin-Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, holder of the White Lotus of Compassion.

To you all be grace and wonder.

And to the Vajra-Dhara, those enlightened Sages who, having traversed the path and become the living stones in the Temple of the Absolute, continue to guide and encourage us—the Victorious Ones, the Watchers, the Holy Ones, the Lords of Compassion.

To you all be honor and gratitude.



THE TOWER OF  
ALCHEMY





# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

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*Mystery is to God what privacy is to Man.*

—aphorism

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## THE GREAT WORK

“Alchemy” is the Arabic word for “the Matter of Egypt,” derived from the ancient name of the land of the Nile valley, *Khem*, meaning the Black Land. The use of the noun “Alchemy” to describe the Royal Art first appeared in the writings of Zosimos, who worked in Alexandria in 300 C.E. In Vedic India, Alchemy was known by the term *Nagayuna*, “Path of the Serpent.” In China the oldest known Alchemical text, *Nei-Ching* (*The Yellow Emperor’s Book of Internal Medicine*), is dated somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 B.C.E., so predating both the *I-Ching* and the *Tao te Ching*.

Alchemy is called the Royal Art, for it is the means whereby the divine potential within a human being is unveiled and manifested. Alchemy is of the Science of Sages couched in the cultural motifs of Western civilization, the path of the Greater Mysteries of the Spirit that leads to perfect Enlightenment. This process is often called the *Magnum Opus*, the Great Work, because it is the final ascent of the mystical Mountain of Attainment by which freedom from the Wheel of Birth and Death is attained. As a path of accelerated evolution, Alchemy holds many dangers (as does all mountain climbing), and its innermost secrets have always been concealed to prevent the unprepared, the spiritually “unripe,” from either abusing, or being burnt by, the high-frequency energies that practicing the Art necessitates. The completion of the Great Work confers upon those who attain it extraordinary control over physical conditions, including the transmutation of matter, the healing of all diseases, and tremendous prolongation of the span of human incarnation.

## 2 Tower of Alchemy

The liberated Sages—those men and women who have completed the Great Work—are spoken of in all esoteric traditions around the world. Three examples are given in the Bible: Enoch, he “who walked with God and was not”; Elijah, who ascended in a fiery chariot; and Jesus, who rose from the dead. In Taoism, which is the Chinese form of Alchemy, there are the Eight Immortals, human beings who, by treading “The Way” (Tao), have been liberated from all the restrictions of incarnate existence—birth, illness, and death. In Tibet, such realized Sages are called “immortal vajra-holders.” The mystical lore of the Russian Orthodox Church gives accounts of hermits whose lives span the centuries, calling them the Staretz of Methuselah. Roman Catholicism teaches, as an article of faith, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, did not “taste death,” being physically taken up into the Worlds Above at her Assumption. In Rosicrucianism, an esoteric form of Christian Qabalah, a fully-realized Sage is called an *Ipsissimus*, a Latin word meaning “he who is most him-SELF” (identical to the Hindu concept of the *Atman*, the Supreme Self). These men and women—these human immortals—are clothed with the Holy Life-Breath and have become super-conscious depositories of the power of God.

The esoteric books of Judaism speak of the *Lamed-Vav*, the thirty-six Just Ones on whose shoulders the world rests, and of the Seven Pillars of wisdom and righteousness, seven saints whose successive lives extend over the entire history of humanity. Tradition lists these seven as Adam, Methuselah, Shem, Jacob, Serah (the daughter of Asher), Ahijah of Shiloh (who was the *Maggid*, or Inner Teacher, of the Ba'al Shem Tov), and the prophet Elijah himself. In fact, all three “Religions of the Book,” Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, teach the resurrection of the dead, when all humanity, at the end of days, will rise in incorruptible physical bodies and reap the everlasting harvest of what they have sown.

The teachings of Alchemy were known in India long ago by the term *Nagayuna*. Swami Vivekananda writes in his book *Raja Yoga*:

There was the sect called the Rasayanas. Their idea was that ideality, knowledge, spirituality and religion were all very right, but that the body was only an instrument by which to attain these. If the body broke now and then it would take so much more time to attain the goal. For instance, a man wants to practice Yoga, or wants to become spiritual. Before he has advanced very far he dies. Then he takes another body and begins again, then dies, and so on, and in this way much time will be lost in dying and being born again. If the body could be made strong and perfect

we should have more time to become spiritual. So these Rasayanas say, first make the body very strong, and they claim that this body can be made immortal. Their idea is that if the Mind [consciousness] is manufacturing the body, and if it be true that each mind is only one outlet to that Infinite Energy, and that there is no limit to each particular outlet getting any amount of power, why is it impossible that we should keep our bodies all the time? We shall have to manufacture all the bodies we shall ever have. As soon as this body dies we shall have to manufacture another. If we can do that, why cannot we do that just here and now, without getting out? The theory is perfectly correct. If it is possible that we live after death, and make other bodies, why is it impossible that we should have the power of making bodies here, without entirely dissolving this body, simply changing it continually? They also thought that in Mercury and Sulphur was hidden the most wonderful power, and that by certain preparations of these a man could keep his body as long as he like.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation is one of the most forthright regarding alchemical theory and practice ever written. But alchemical Mercury and Sulphur are not physical substances; they are states of mind, aspects of consciousness. James Redfield, in *The Celestine Vision*, makes this very important point:

Throughout history the East has produced men who have likewise pushed the envelope of human ability . . . an astounding collection of documented cases of unusual bodily transformation, including the ability to levitate, spontaneous changes in form, and the performance of unbelievable feats of strength. Many thinkers in the Eastern tradition consider these attributes the optimal result of yogic practices, still rare perhaps, but the expected outcome of years of meditation and movement practices. . . .

The Bible tells us that Jesus was seen to appear and disappear at will, walk on water, and so forth . . . Later, the Christian Church explained these abilities as the mark of a deity, and certainly nothing that humans could possibly emulate.

Yet . . . examples of transcendent ability abound in both Western and Eastern history, and the awakening happening today

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<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda, "Raja Yoga" in *Vivekananda: The Yoga and Other Works* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1996), p. 679.

#### 4 *Tower of Alchemy*

includes a revision of what is possible not just for special adepts but for you and me as well.<sup>2</sup>

The alchemist Thomas Vaughan, published his *Coelum Terrae* in 1650, in which he wrote:

Man—say they [the Sages]—in his natural state is in the mean creation, from which he must recede to one of two extremes—either to corruption, as commonly all men do, for they die and molder away in their graves; or else to a spiritual, glorified condition, like Enoch and Elijah, who were translated. And this—they say—is a true extreme, for after it there is no alternation.<sup>3</sup>

Alchemy is therefore the Yoga of the West. The word yoga means “union”; our word “conjugal” comes from the same root. The aim of yoga and Alchemy is the same: union with That which is both the source and the goal of all that is. This ultimate attainment is represented in alchemical symbolism—the completion of the Great Work—by the serpent swallowing its own tail, signifying that the source and goal are become one, in the unending circle of eternity. This completion is also veiled under the alchemical term, *Azoth*. This artificial word is a verbal formula for the completion of work of alchemy. It consists of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*A* for Aleph and *Th* for Tav), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (*A* for Alpha and *O* for Omega), and the first and last letters of the Latin alphabet (*A* and *Z*): “I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.”

All previously published books on alchemy have been written by two categories of authors. The first is comprised of alchemical adepts who have committed their hard-won knowledge, under the veils of symbolism and metaphor, to paper to assist those who follow. These texts, written by the Sages themselves, are usually full of strange and exotic diagrams that function as the mandalas of the Art. The second category is made up of those students and scholars who, writing from the outside looking in, attempt to penetrate the secrets of the alchemical science or to “debunk” the whole endeavor as fraudulent. In this book, for the first time in the West, the Royal Art of Alchemy is presented from the stand-

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<sup>2</sup> James Redfield, *The Celestine Vision* (New York: Warner, 1997), pp.183–184.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes), “*Coelum Terrae*” in *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, A. E. Waite, ed. (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919), p. 217.

point of the Sages themselves—from within the sanctuary, from the inside looking out.

The complexity of alchemical diagrams and formulae, their changing appearance from century to century, is not due to some lack of consistency on the part of the sages. Rather, like the numbers of Buddhist Tantras in Vajrayana that grew over time, the depictions and terms for the alchemical process multiplied. This was not due to emotion and imagination searching for ever-new objects of veneration, but rather to the tendency to replace religious speculation with practical, esoteric experience. Just as a new discovery in science not only contributes to the wealth of data and the widening of our field of knowledge, but leads to further discoveries and to a re-appraisal of former data, just so each new experience of meditation opens new horizons and creates new methods of practice and realization. The human mind cannot stop at any point on its way toward knowledge. Standing still means death, rigidity, and decay. This is the law of all life and consciousness. And it is the law of the Spirit, from which life and consciousness flow.

### ***The Mysteries***

The working esoteric tradition of the West is often referred to as “the Mysteries.” The term “mystery” is used in the theological sense, where a mystery is a spiritual reality that transcends normal reasoning. The ultimate goal of the Mysteries is divinization: our complete and utter identification with the All-That-Is, the One Reality. In many Eastern traditions, this is called enlightenment. In the Western tradition, it is called illumination.

When we speak of “paths” here, we are not referring to religious paths, to that framework by which an individual chooses to worship the Absolute. By “path,” we mean the way, or the method, by which we approach. In the esoteric traditions of both East and West, there are two principal approaches: the *direct path* (or the formless path) and the *indirect path* (or path of form).

The direct path is sometimes called the “mystical” path. This, and the fact that its practitioners are often called “mystics,” is misleading. Essentially, this approach attempts to enter into union with the Source of being by rejecting all appearance of otherness. It focuses completely upon the One Reality. No visualizations, rituals, or ceremonies are employed on this path. All “appearances” are regarded as distractions from the Goal. Whenever attention wanders to anything other than the Absolute, it is brought back to its focus. Eventually, the real nature of consciousness, the awareness that transcends all phenomena (sometimes called samadhi), is attained. Examples of this type of approach are

Zazen in Zen meditation, Tibetan *Mahamudra*, and the *Via Negativa* of Christian mysticism.

The Indirect Path is also called the “ceremonial” path, which is just as misleading as the term “mystical” because this path does not involve constantly performing ceremony or even the performance of ritual, *per se*. The practitioners of this path are often called “mages” (a term preferred to the strictly masculine “magician”). The path is called indirect because its *modus operandi* is similar to that of pool or snooker, where some shots are made by bouncing the ball off the cushioned table rim, and so reaching the goal indirectly. This approach begins with how things appear. It is similar to the martial arts in that it turns the opponents’ own strength against them rather than employing counterforce. This method uses images and forms, hidden mental powers, emotional drives, and the physical body itself. The indirect path skillfully turns the table on the very appearances that bind us to the illusion of separateness and transforms them into useful tools for our liberation.

Reflection will show the potential pitfalls of either of these approaches. Neither is “higher” or “better” than the other. “Direct” doesn’t mean quicker, nor does “indirect” mean that you reach the Goal incidentally. It comes down, in the end, to personal temperament and environment. Very, very few individuals are exclusively suited to one path or the other. Practitioners walking the direct path often use liturgical (ceremonial) devotions as part of their daily routine. Practitioners treading the indirect path find that states of consciousness, at first attained in ceremonial settings, later no longer need a ritual impetus to be experienced and that they can now enjoy these states by the direct path.

Nor should you think that you are not a mystic if you tread the indirect path, or that you are not a mage if you use the direct approach. These names are inaccurate terms put upon practitioners by the uninstructed and they carry little weight. Bear in mind that, in both cases, we are speaking of true practitioners, not of individuals who read spiritual books and speak piously of “higher things,” nor of those who indulge in ritual as an alternative to a fulfilled career, entertainment, or relationships. The Tibetans have a saying about religion that can equally be applied to its esoteric aspect: “Many people profess religion, few practice it.” Or, as one of the masters of the Western tradition said: “Many are called but few are chosen.”

Eventually, both the direct and indirect paths are subsumed and integrated in the sage. As W. E. Butler wrote in his pioneering book, *The Magician: His Training and Work*:

For the adept-magician, though he may use the age-old ceremonies, does not depend on them. The observances which were the outward, visible symbols of inner states of emotion, mind and spirit, have, through the training he has undergone, been withdrawn into and made components of his inner consciousness. Then the Preparation of the Place is effected within the Ring-Pass-Not, the limiting boundary of his own aura, the Angel of the Operation is invoked therein, and the mystical temple is built in his mental sphere. Then into this "temple not made with hands," there descends the divine Shekinah, the Glory of the Eternal, and She abides over the seat of Justice between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies of the magician's heart.<sup>4</sup>

In Vajrayana, the indirect path is known as the tantric path. Its practitioners are siddhas, tantric-yogis, those who actualize the practices of the tantras. *Tantra* is not, as many Western students have been led to believe, an Eastern system of sex magic. This erroneous concept was put into circulation by certain dubious teachers of sorcery trying to justify their own sexual needs, which are often nothing more than the outward manifestation of a continued adolescent obsession and rebellion. I am not condemning sex magic per se, provided that it is practiced between consenting adults. But let's call it what it is. Tantra, like alchemy, is replete in sexual symbolism that leads practitioners to acquire skill in the practice of sublimation. As one yogi said, "What need have I of an outer consort who have the Goddess (Kundalini Devi) within me?" In Mahayana Buddhism, there are two classes of scriptures: the sutras and the tantras. The sutras are the moral and ethical teachings of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni. The tantras are the written practices, manuals in meditation and yoga. So this book is, by its very nature, a Western tantra.

In this book, our method will be that of the indirect path, using potent associative symbols from the collective unconscious, that will lead our awareness into direct apprehension of the Uncreate Realities that these symbols represent, so that we can look with the Eye of Time into the Eye of Eternity. For it is vital to realize that symbols, of themselves, are empty forms, cups awaiting the wine. They are the signposts that indicate the direction of our journey, but not the journey itself. A symbol becomes connected to the spiritual force it represents through study and meditation. Part of the purpose in the teaching sections of this book

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<sup>4</sup> W. E. Butler, *The Magician: His Training and Work* (London: Aquarian, 1970), p. 152.

will be to inform readers about the symbols used, their purpose and function. This will fulfill the “study” requirement. The practices given in the book constitute the meditation aspect, building the symbols into the subjective consciousness of the practitioner. And so spiritual force will be united with astral form, and the irradiated symbols (visible signs of inward grace) will be capable of exalting consciousness and effecting transmutation and a veritable transubstantiation. The “Contemplation” section of each chapter helps to link practitioners with the historical lineage of sages who have attained.

### ***The Gold***

The best-known image of Alchemy is the transmutation of lead into gold. This is both a fact and a symbol of something greater. The ability to transmute metals (and other aspects of physicality) is actually acquired through the practice of the Art. This ability, however, is only outwardly effective in bringing about the completion of the Great Work. The initial transmutation is that operation performed by practitioners upon their own being, where the “lead” of ignorance is sublimated into the refined “gold” of illumination. But the work does not stop there. As in Eastern teachings, Alchemy holds that the physical body itself is the product of consciousness, that Mind is the creator and sustainer of form. The principal alchemical operation is thus to transmute a transient, mortal, and gross body into a deathless, physical body of pure Enlightenment. Similar to the transformation the Rasayanas undertook.

The Western teachings refer to this sublime vehicle as the “solar body” or the “resurrection body” (since the risen body of Jesus after his crucifixion is one of the best-known examples). In Vajrayana, the same type of body is termed the “rainbow body” or the “body of pure bliss.” It is the Sambhoga-kaya of the Bodhisattvas, the body of the highest universal consciousness, nourished and sustained by bliss and experienced only in the highest stages of meditation, absorption, and Enlightenment. This body alone penetrates all the other vehicles, spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. The Sanskrit term used in Hindu yoga, is *Ananda-maya-kosa*. The solar body integrates all the levels, and thus also the organs and faculties of the individual, into one complete whole. In this process of alchemical integration lies the secret of immortality. The solar body exists as a seed, *in potentia*, within the heart chakra, surrounded by the rainbow halo of compassion. The seed appears as a still, golden flame. In the West, it is sometimes called the “solar-drop.” The Vajrayana texts call it the “indestructible drop.” It is variously called the Atman, the Christ-Within, the Buddha-Nature; it is the Divine Immanence.

The physical body cannot penetrate the other bodies, as yet, but is itself penetrated by the other bodies. Thus it becomes the natural stage for all spiritual actions and decisions and the starting point for all spiritual unfoldment. Qabalistically, it is in Malkuth that the divine presence—Shekinah—is revealed for the healing of nations. This is the esoteric meaning of the “coming of the Messiah,” when That which lies dormant in every heart becomes fully manifested.

### ***The Mythic Symbol Chain***

The association of images that we use in the practices of this book are drawn from the Arthurian mythos of the Grail. The “Matter of Britain” is not only a racial story of the Blessed Isles (Great Britain), it is a tale from the immemorial past, with links to all Europe and to the Near and Middle East. It is present in the collective unconscious of all people whose racial heritage stems from Europe. These archaic images are used in the Work because they have “weight” in the collective unconscious and, more importantly, in the subconscious mind of practitioners. The modern mental equivalents of archaic images such as castles or dragons (skyscrapers or laser-beams) are too recent to produce the changes in consciousness that the old symbols do.

This is not peculiar to Alchemy. All spiritual systems that are able to “deliver the goods” recognize the need to utilize ancient symbolism. Vajrayana, for example, employs symbolism drawn from the ancient civilization of India. It is a fact of inner, psychological dynamics that, whenever the mind builds thought images to represent “eternity,” it always draws upon images of things from the far past.

In the Arthurian mythos, the symbolism of Camelot, the castles of the Grail, Carbonek, the City of Sarras, the fairy woods, the lands of wizardry, the spellbound Land of Logres, and the Wastelands, all have resonance in Western culture. Even more important, however, each of these images is also found within us. Arthur himself—the once and future king—represents that immortal part of us that lies sleeping in a concealed and sacred place—the heart of hearts. He symbolizes that “sovereign power,” the Higher Self, who will come to heal the land and bring all into the light of endless day. Arthur is the alchemical metaphor for the potential of the solar body.

Deeper yet, these images represent the macrocosmic energies that are likewise within us. Ultimately, those forces comprising the macrocosm, the universal nature, transcend any cultural or historical settings, just as the adepts and Sages, who have attained to that level of Reality, transcend family, society, race, culture, and external creeds.

The use of the Arthurian mythos in this book does not mean that would-be practitioners must become scholars in Arthurian lore and legend. In practical work, we only use the key elements of the myth, the essential symbols. But for those who do wish to study the entire array of Arthurian legends, the writings of John and Caitlin Matthews will be found invaluable, full of valuable insights and suffused with spiritual integrity.

### ***The Magic Mirror***

Those readers who are unfamiliar with esoteric work may be bewildered by the use of detailed visualization in both the practical applications of Alchemy and of Vajrayana. The ancient science of visualization is foreign to our modern mental structures, yet we use it in fantasy every day. However, the theory and practice of visualization has been confirmed by research and the discoveries of depth psychology. It is a technique of self-knowledge and of the re-integration of forces that are active in our subconscious. It is, above all, a direct support for the process of Liberation.

Since all is ultimately consciousness, “mind” (as Buddhist metaphysics terms consciousness) is the builder of all and the source of the illusion of separateness. It is by the skillful use of the image-building faculty of consciousness (imagination) that we fashion the tools for our liberation. The subjectivity of inner vision does not diminish its reality value. It is real on its own level. Such visions are not hallucinations, because their reality is that of the human psyche. They are symbols in which the highest knowledge and the noblest endeavor of the human mind are embodied. Visualization is the creative process of spiritual projection, through which inner experience is translated into visible form, comparable to the creative act of an artist whose subjective idea, emotion, or vision is transformed into an objective work of art which then takes on a reality of its own, independent of the creator.

Alchemical adepts and Tibetan yogis build up their spiritual creation, piece by piece, to realize their vision. This is not a matter of emotional ecstasy or unrestrained imagination, but a consciously directed creative process of realization in which nothing is left to chance, and in which there is no room for vague emotions or confused thinking.

### ***God Is and Is Not***

In exoteric religion, there is an ideological conflict between religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that portray God as a “being” and religions like Buddhism and Taoism which are “God-free,” and conceive of

the "Supreme" as a state-of-being. This paradox has led to much misunderstanding.

Thinking of the One Reality as either a person or a state can have potential drawbacks. Because all images are concepts based on finite experience, they have certain subconscious associations we need to undo through right reasoning. Conceiving of the Absolute as a person carries the implicit idea, in the subconscious, that some things may be given or withheld by that person; that some beings are favored and others are not. On the other hand, conceiving of the One Reality as a state can imply that there is no personal relationship and that you must reach It, unaided by the Ineffable, solely by your own efforts.

This paradox is resolved by the esoteric core of religion. Some Christian mystics have taught that even the three persons of the Trinity are finally absorbed into the Godhead. The Qabalah teaches that even divinity (Atziluth) is but a "garment" worn by God. In other words, any human-made image of the Absolute is bound to be finite. Those who know have assured us that the Absolute is essential, pure beingness (there is none other). Consequently, those who recognize It within themselves and unite with It enter into a state of pure being. The Buddha himself, in the Pali texts, did not refrain from calling the meditative practice of the highest spiritual qualities (love, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimaty) a "dwelling in God" (*brahmavihara*) or the experience of a divine state. All true Sages and spiritual Masters have declared, by word and deed, that the Eternal is compassion itself, an absolute love that ensouls the universe.

### **Atlantis**

This book makes occasional reference to Atlantis. It is irrelevant for our purposes whether Atlantis had any kind of quantifiable existence. Geological findings show that there have probably been quite a few "Atlantis-es." For our purposes, Atlantis is a metaphor, a symbol of alchemical Art. The true Atlantis is inside you, as it is inside us all. It is a spiritual memory, of what the Qabalah calls the Supernal Eden. Tales of the sunken land lost beneath the dark sea are stories and myths that break upon the shores of our surface minds. Atlantis is the shadow-place, yet also the birthplace of civilization. It is that fair land in the West where gods walked with humanity. It is now lost to us, but remains forever reachable. Atlantis is the true birthplace and true goal. It is Ruta, Lyonesse, Avalon, the Jerusalem on high, and Hy-Brasil. It is the sacred mountain crowned with the City of the Golden Gates, the birthplace of the wisdom teachers, of Hermes, Melchizadek, Osiris, Merlin, and Quetzalcoatl.

### ***Preparation for the Work***

Readers will notice that, throughout this book, those undertaking the Work are referred to as practitioners. This is done to emphasize that this manual is written for those who have some experience of this study, or more accurately, those who have acquired skill in esoteric discipline. It is not designed for “students,” newcomers to the mystical teachings.

Students need to know at what stage they are eligible to undertake this Work. In Vajrayana, before attempting the Tantras, disciples must first have acquired a spiritual integrity, a moral uprightness, through following the Sutras, the ethical teachings of the Lord Buddha that are distilled in the “Eight-fold Noble Path.” In Alchemy, would-be practitioners should also have achieved a state of integrity.

Western civilization is based primarily upon the moral code given on Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments received by Moses. These laws underpin the conduct of practitioners.<sup>5</sup> This has been distilled into what is sometimes called the morality of the masters, stated as a “right relationship to the Source of life and right relationships to the rest of life.” The Ten Commandments also have inner, or esoteric, implications related to the Ten Sephiroth that are just as binding upon those who would receive the divine wisdom:

1. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Kether: No being is revered before the primacy of the Absolute. An initiate’s dedication is made to the Absolute; all other beings invoked are “witnesses” to that offering.
2. “Thou shalt not make any graven image.” Chokmah: Do not mistake images of the mind or of the tradition for the Transcendent One.
3. “Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Binah: The Divine Names or words of power shall not be used for acts that transgress the Universal Good.
4. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Chesed: Show devotion to the things of the spirit.
5. “Honor thy father and thy mother.” Geburah: Respect all beings as manifestations of the Divine, fundamentally related to one another by the universal law of interdependence.

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<sup>5</sup> Although the Sixth Commandment is badly translated. It is, in fact, “Thou shalt not murder,” meaning the premeditated taking of life. All creatures have the right to self-defense.

6. "Thou shalt not murder." Tiphareth: Do not deliberately kill another being, except in self-defense or to protect others. Do not be a "permitter of evil."
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Netzach: Do not adulterate the spiritual life by seeking power.
8. "Thou shalt not steal." Hod: Do not misuse esoteric knowledge to steal unfair advantage over others.
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Yesod: Do not delude yourself or others with false teachings or false information, or speak of sacred things merely to aggrandize your Yesodic ego, the lower self.
10. "Thou shalt not covet." Malkuth: Do not covet (blindly lust after) possession of anything in the universe.

Before commencing the direct application of the practices in this book, would-be practitioners need to be versed in the philosophy and metaphysics of the holy Qabalah. Most Western esoteric schools use the Qabalah, as Dion Fortune put it, because of "its purity and common-sense." Alchemy is, in fact, the practical aspect of the Qabalah (as distinct from the theoretical aspects), the means by which Qabalistic teachings are actually attained.

Paracelsus wrote, in the second chapter of his book, *Tincture of the Philosophers*:

If you do not understand *the use of the Cabalists* and the old astronomers, you are not born by God for the Spagyric Art, or chosen by Nature for the work of Vulcan, or created to open your mouth concerning Alchemical Arts.<sup>6</sup> [my italics]

The exponents of Alchemy identified the Qabalah as the sole key to their Hermetic Art by various pictorial devices. They often portrayed a pair of crossed keys over a tree growing inside the alchemical vessel, thereby signifying that, unless the Tree of Life was seeded and grew within practitioners, and the Qabalah was understood and actualized by the alchemist, the rest was in error and therefore, useless. Another symbol used to depict this was a fullgrown tree with a gold crown around its trunk just above the roots. The position of the crown on the tree coincides with

<sup>6</sup> Paracelsus, "Tincture of the Philosophers," in *Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus the Great*, translated by A. E. Waite (Edmonds, WA: Holmes Publishing Group, 1974), p. 22.

where the Buddha sat beneath the “World Tree” when he attained enlightenment. Alchemical treatises speak of the *arbor philosophica* that grows upside down. The alchemist, Canon George Ripley describes this *arbor inversum* (inverted tree) as having “the root of its minerals in the air and its head in the earth.”<sup>7</sup> To those familiar with the Qabalah, the symbol is obvious. The Tree of Life is shown upside down, rooted in the Worlds Above and growing downward into physicality. Kether, meaning “The Crown,” is the first Sefhira of the Tree and is therefore the “root” of the Tree of Life. By drawing a crown above the roots of the tree, alchemists informed viewers which Tree they meant. The Qabalistic Tree of Life is the same as the “World-Tree” of the Shamanic, Hindu, Egyptian, Sumerian, Toltec, and Norse traditions, also described in *The Upanishads* as “a tree eternally existing, its roots aloft, its branches spreading below. The pure root of the tree is Brahman (the Absolute) the Immortal, in Whom the three worlds have their being, Whom none can transcend, Who is verily the Self . . .” The spiritual rebirth of the world starts in human consciousness—in the mind of the alchemist. The Tree of Life grows out of the alchemist’s own heart, the center of his or her world. Spreading into ever-new infinities, into ever-higher and purer realms, it becomes the Tree of Enlightenment.

The fundamental Qabalistic teachings that should be learned before commencing the practices given in this manual are those regarding the Qabalistic four worlds (in the Qabalah, a “world” implies a particular mode of Divine activity). To this end, I highly recommend the works of Z’ev ben Shimon Halevi, especially *A Kabbalistic Universe*, *The Way of Kabbalah*, and *The Work of the Kabbalist*.<sup>8</sup> The required visualization skills are those concerning the twenty-two Major Arcana of the tarot. Practitioners need to be so familiar with the details of these tableaux of the Ageless Wisdom that they can summon up the mental image of any one of them at will. For the purposes of advanced Qabalah and Alchemy (its secret heart), I can recommend the deck designed by Paul Foster Case and published by The Builders of the Adytum.<sup>9</sup> As a second choice, the Rider-Waite deck may serve, but it is esoterically inferior to the Case deck. For the performance of the Great Work, all other tarot decks, whatever their artistic merits, are of no use.

<sup>7</sup> George Ripley, “Ripley Revived” in Philalethes, *Alchemical Works*, compiled by S. Merrow Broddle (Boulder, CO: Cinnabar, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> All published by Samuel Weiser. See bibliography for complete publication information.

<sup>9</sup> These decks are available from most metaphysical bookstores. If you have difficulty finding them, they can be ordered through Samuel Weiser.

Throughout history, “seekers for light” have made long journeys, undergone terrific hardships, expended all their wealth to learn less than what practitioners following this book may acquire. Herein lies the means to gain the transparent Jewel of the yogis, the Stone of the wise, which is the Treasure of treasures.

## THE CONTEMPLATION—THE EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES-TRISMEGISTOS

True, without error, certain and most true; that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, for performing the miracles of the One Thing; and as all things are from one, by the mediation of one, so all things arose from this one thing by adaptation; the father of it is the Sun, the mother of it is the Moon; the wind carried it in its belly; the name thereof is the Earth.

This is the father of all perfection, or consummation of the whole world. The power of it is integral, if it is turned into earth: Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, with much sagacity; it ascends from Earth to heaven, and again descends to Earth: and revives the strength of the superiors and of the inferiors.

So thou hast the glory of the whole world; therefore let all obscurity flee before thee. This is the strong fortitude of all fortitudes, overcoming every subtle, and penetrating every solid, thing. So the world was created. Hence were all wonderful adaptations of which this is the manner. Therefore am I called Thrice-Great Hermes, having the three parts of the Philosophy of the whole world. That which I have written is consummated concerning the Operation of the Sun.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Many years ago I received a copy of this translation of *The Emerald Tablet* from a course called “Tarot Fundamentals,” written by Paul Foster Case and published by the Builders of the Adytum in Los Angeles. It was part of a diagram depicting the twenty-two tarot keys and has been in my notes ever since. There have been many translations of *The Emerald Tablet* over the centuries, but I have kept to this translation out of respect for Dr. Case’s contribution to the Great Work in the 20th century. All other references to *The Emerald Tablet* in this book come from this same source. A slightly different version of *The Emerald Tablet* is available in M.A. Atwood’s *Hermetic Philosophy and Alchemy* (New York: Julian Press, 1960), p. 8.





# THE FURNACE AND THE BELLOWS

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*You must know, O good King, that this Magisterium  
is the secret of secrets of the Most High God;  
He has confided it to His prophets, whose souls  
He has placed in Paradise.*

—Morien the Hermit<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

Alchemical books speak of the Great Work as comprising two principal stages, called the “White Work” and the “Red Work.” Together these culminate in the completion, the alchemical Gold of Attainment. The White Work is undertaken first and is focused upon the subtle vehicle of the soul, while the Red Work focuses on the physical body itself. In actual practice, no work is done directly upon the physical body—except for relaxation, posture (asana), and breath (pranayama)—because direct concentration on the organs of the body, particularly on the ductless glands (the physical equivalents of the chakras in the etheric body), can easily lead to an imbalance of the fine electrical and chemical functions and result in disease. These millions of physiological functions are controlled by the subconscious mind. In the actual practice of Alchemy, we use an indirect route (through the White Work) to make the necessary changes within the astro-etheric body, so that the subconscious will proceed to implement those alterations in a perfectly normal manner as it continually builds and maintains the physical body. This is why the mode of consciousness figured by the 18th tarot key, “The Moon,” is called “the corporeal” or “incarnating intelligence” in the Sepher

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<sup>1</sup> Morien the Hermit reputedly addressing the Omayyid caliph, Khalid ibn-Jazid, 7th century C.E.

Yetzirah. It is this power of mind that sustains embodiment. It is through the constructive and eliminative functions of the corporeal intelligence that the physical body is gradually transformed into the deathless body of a Sage.

The skills needed for all the practices which follow—the preliminary exercises—are divided into two categories, physical and mental. These preliminary exercises precede all the other practices. They are the groundwork and the foundation. Unless they are done well, the rest will be of poor quality and so yield poor results. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!”

### THE PRACTICE: THE RED WORK

The Lion that swallows Sol says, “I am he who was the green and golden lion without cares, within me lie all the mysteries of the Philosophers.”

—Alchemical meditation

The posture adopted for meditation is similar to that of the statues of the gods of Egypt. Sit poised on a stool or a straight-back chair, with your chin slightly inclined toward your chest, so that your neck vertebrae are straight (trained dancers and experienced yogis habitually carry their heads in this manner). Keep your thighs horizontal, your legs vertical, your feet (either bare or wearing socks) in line with your hips and firmly planted on the floor. Your elbows should be at right angles with your hands, resting lightly on your thighs. There should be no undue muscular strain. This posture allows the forces contacted in meditation to flow freely throughout your body and aura, uniting Heaven and Earth.

#### **Relaxation**

The ability to relax at will is essential for occult work. All meditations should be preceded by relaxation. At first, it may take some time, but practice will increase your skill. Relaxation makes your body a clear channel, transparent to the in-flowing light, and so enabling energy to flow unimpeded. When seated in the meditation posture, focus first upon your feet. Tense the muscles of both feet for about four seconds, then allow them to relax.

Next focus on the calves of your legs: tense and relax. Continue this process upward through your entire body: thighs, buttocks, abdomen,

chest, hands, forearms, upper arms, shoulders, and neck. Tense your facial muscles and scalp by "pulling a face," holding it for four seconds, and then relaxing the muscles. This flexing and relaxing of muscles frees pockets of energy that have become trapped in your muscles by tension. Upon completion of a relaxation exercise, your body will feel united and poised.

### ***Breath***

Breathing is a vehicle of spiritual experience, the link between the physical body and the mind. It is the first step in the transformation of the body from a more or less passive and unconscious functioning physical organ into a vehicle for or tool of a perfectly developed and enlightened mind, as demonstrated by the perfection and radiance of the Buddha's body.

Breathing is an important means for absorbing the radiant energy from the universe. We are constantly breathing; it is an automatic process under the control of the subconscious mind (as are all body processes), yet it can be directed from the self-conscious level as well. By inhalation, we absorb prana, vitalizing energy; by exhalation, this energy is distributed throughout our physical organism via the bloodstream. To utilize this energy to its fullest, we must breathe correctly. This does not mean that we have to walk around all day focused upon our breathing; in fact, that would be detrimental. It means, that during meditation sessions, we establish good breathing. Our subconscious will take it from there. Another reason why we establish the practice of deep breathing during meditation is to prepare for advanced work. During deep meditation, during trance work and astral projection, the body has the tendency to breathe shallowly. By making it a habit to deepen our breathing each time we prepare to meditate, we build an automatic habit that will stand us in good stead.

To obtain the maximum benefits from the air, we need to breathe from the diaphragm, a muscle situated below the rib cage in the abdominal muscles. Remember, you do not have to pull in the breath; atmospheric pressure will take care of that. Simply push out your diaphragm. Your rib cage will expand and air will rush into your lungs. Please do not make the mistake of trying any forcible expansion of the chest. This can cause damage to fine blood vessels in the chest. Let the muscles below your ribs do most of the work. If you do this properly, you will feel an expansion at the small of your back and at your sides, as well as in the front of your body. Always try to ensure that you commence any cycle

of deep breathing by first contracting your diaphragm, in order to expel the old, tired air from the bottom of your lungs.

The breathing cycle for meditation is as follows. Empty your lungs, then inhale deeply to a count of four. Hold the breath for a count of two, then exhale completely to a count of four. Retain the tightened diaphragm for two counts, then inhale to a count of four. This number-count should be your own, matched to your lungs' capacity. One person's breath cycle may be quicker than another's. Listen to your breath cycle. It should be almost inaudible. If your breath cycle is noisy, it is not being performed correctly. The remedy is to slow the cycle down. Once you are seated for meditation, establish this breath cycle of four-two-four. Once you have consciously performed it for six full cycles of inhalation and exhalation, then dismiss it from the mind and mentally move on to the next phase of the meditation.

Since *prana*, or universal energy, and consciousness are linked, prana will follow consciousness when guided by concentration. Prana gathers where the mind focuses. Prana—the One Radiant Energy—is absorbed directly by the heart center and through the alchemical bellows, the lungs. As the blood passes through the physical organ of the heart, it receives the radiant energy (the “potable gold” of Alchemy) and so takes it to all parts of the physical vehicle.

### ***The Qabalistic Cross***

All meditation should be preceded by a sealing of the subjective “Sphere of Sensation”—the aura. This helps you to center and focus exclusively on the work at hand. It aligns the meditation with the Higher Self. In the Western Mystery Tradition, this sealing is usually done by employing the formula of the Qabalistic Cross. Like all magical techniques, this formula has various applications and gradations of power. At this point, it is important to free your mind from the superstitious belief that esoteric formulae are, in themselves, magical. They are not. Consciousness itself is the true magician. Formulae are merely the tools a trained mind employs. A hammer has no ability to affect anything unless taken up by a human hand. In the same way, a formula serves as a focus for the mind to achieve a change in consciousness. Once that shift in consciousness is stabilized (can be entered into at will, and Realization gained), the formula may become redundant. This applies to all the apparatus of the Magic of Light, be they wands, swords, robes, temples, or schools. It is essential that you begin to grasp this. The purpose of the Mysteries is to empower you to overcome and transcend every form of limitation, not to exchange one set of chains for another. The Qabalistic Cross follows.

Standing upright, visualize an infinite expanse of white brilliance above your head. Raise your right hand above your head, and say:

**IN THY HANDS, O INEFFABLE ONE . . .**

[Visualize the brilliance concentrating into a sphere that illuminates the head. Bring the right hand down to touch your forehead, saying:]

**IS . . .**

[Point your right hand toward your feet and imagine a line of white light descending from the sphere overhead, passing through the body, and forming a white sphere that encompasses your feet and ankles, saying:]

**THE KINGDOM . . .**

[Point to your right shoulder, see the brilliance moving to your right shoulder, and say:]

**THE POWER . . .**

[Point to your left shoulder, see the brilliance moving with your hand across from your right shoulder in a line to your left shoulder, and say:]

**AND THE GLORY . . .**

[Cup both hands in front of your heart, saying:]

**FOREVER . . .**

[Visualize again the sphere of white brilliance above your head, and conclude by saying:]

**AMEN.**

You have now brought the energy of the limitless light into the living Tree of all your sheaths (the mental, astral, etheric, and physical bodies). Feel yourself expanded in size, with the blazing Cross of Light becoming the axis and expanse of your being. Then rest in that awareness.

When the meditation session is completed, use this variation of the Qabalistic Cross to seal your aura. Stand upright and visualize an infinite

expanse of white brilliance above your head. Raise both hands above your head and form a cup. Visualize the cup as holding a Grail of light above your head and say:

**ABOVE MY HEAD SHINES THY GLORY, O ETERNAL ONE . . .**

[Drop your left hand to the left side of your body, keeping your right hand raised above your head, saying:]

**AND IN THY HANDS . . .**

[Visualize the brilliance concentrating into a sphere that illuminates your head. Bring your right hand down to touch your forehead, saying:]

**IS . . .**

[Point your right hand toward your feet and imagine a line of white light descending from the sphere overhead, passing through your body, and forming a citrine, olive, russet, and indigo sphere that encompasses your feet and ankles, saying:]

**THE KINGDOM . . .**

[Point to your right shoulder. See the brilliance move to your right shoulder, forming a crimson sphere, and say:]

**THE POWER . . .**

[Point to your left shoulder. See the brilliance move with your hand, across from your right shoulder in a line to your left shoulder where it forms a blue sphere, and say:]

**AND THE GLORY . . .**

[Cup both hands in front of your heart, which is enfolded by a sphere of gold radiance, saying:]

**FOREVER . . .**

[Visualize again the sphere of white brilliance above your head, and conclude by saying:]

**AMEN.**

[Once more, rest in the Divine.]

## THE PRACTICE: THE WHITE WORK

If you will not clean the impure body and make it white and give back to it its soul, you will have accomplished nothing in this magistry.

—*Rosarium Philosophorum*<sup>2</sup>

Before commencing the *praxis* of the Art, would-be alchemists need to undertake what the old texts call “dignification.” That is, the preparation of oneself with prayer and purification. The exercises which follow are prayer-in-action, and simultaneously purify the subtle energies that uphold the physical body. These preliminary exercises are graduated and increase in intensity. They should be performed before all other practices, commencing with the Qabalistic Cross, posture, relaxation, and establishing the 4 x 2 x 4 breath-cycle. The basic exercise, the “Middle Pillar” as it is known, can be found in several other books; the best being *The Art of True Healing*<sup>3</sup> by Israel Regardie. What follows covers that basic exercise and then gives the advanced techniques, which, as far as I am aware, have not been given out before.

### **Stage 1**

Imagine a sphere of dazzling white brilliance above your head. Then, with an exhalation of breath, see a beam of white light descend and form another sphere of white light at the throat area. On an out-breath, see a beam descend from the second sphere to establish a third in your chest region. Continue the same process to build a fourth sphere in your

<sup>2</sup> “Rosarium Philosophorum,” in *Alchemy and the Alchemists*, Reuben Swinbirne Clymer (London: Philosophical Publishing Co., 1907), p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Israel Regardie, *The Art of True Healing* (San Rafael, CA: New World Library, 1991).

genital region, and finally a fifth, encompassing your ankles and feet. Use imagination to build the intensity of the spheres; allow their radiance to permeate you. For the rest of the meditation period, “bathe” in the influence of these spheres of divine light.

Build the spheres as before. Focus on Kether, above your head, and intone:

EHEIEH

[Then focus on your throat center and intone:]

YAHVEH-ELOHIM

[See the sphere become pale gray in color. At the chest center, intone:]

YAHVEH-ELOAH-VE-DA'ATH

[See the sphere become golden-yellow in color. At the genital center, intone:]

SHADDAI-EL-CHAI

[See the sphere become violet in hue. Finally, at your feet center, intone:]

ADONAI-HA-ARETZ

[See the sphere become citrine, olive, russet, and indigo in color. For the remainder of the meditation period, rest in the vitalizing power of the Divine Lights of Emanation. Close with the Qabalistic Cross.]

## ***Stage 2***

Build up the Middle Pillar in color as before, starting with Kether and proceeding down to Malkuth. Intone the Divine Name as you build each sephira. This helps to establish it through the vibrating power of sound. Imagine the beam of white light connecting each of the spheres in turn: Kether to Da'ath, to Tiphareth, to Yesod, and finally to Malkuth.

When the Middle Pillar is established, return your attention to Kether. With an exhalation, visualize a stream of brilliant white light passing down the left side of your body and aura into Malkuth. Do this to a mental count of four. For a count of two, remain focused at Malkuth.

Then inhale to a count of four and imagine the stream of brilliant white light passing up the right side of your body and aura into Kether, which crowns your head. Remain focused in Kether for a count of two. With the next exhalation, repeat as before: outgoing breath (x 4)—Kether to Malkuth down the left side; hold in Malkuth (x 2); incoming breath (x 4)—Malkuth to Kether up the right side; hold in Kether (x 2).

Repeat the cycle until you have performed it six times in all. It is important that you hold onto the idea that the stream of white light is passing through your body as well as your aura. This will ensure that

the incoming cosmic energy circulates through all of your bodies, subtle and physical, enhancing them all.

Perform the relaxation and breathing exercises for at least ten 4 x 2 x 4 breath cycles. Build up the Middle Pillar in the colors of the Queen Scale, intoning the Divine Names of the Sephiroth. Once this is established, begin building the Sephiroth of the Side Pillars. This may be done in easy stages—Kether on the first day, Chokmah on the second day, and so on. You may find it a useful memory aid to build Kether on the first day; on the next, Kether and Chokmah; the next day, Kether, Chokmah, and Binah; and so on. Do not add another sephira until the previous ones can be formulated with ease.

Kether is a sphere of white incandescence (like burning magnesium) which rests on your head and slightly interpenetrates the crown of your skull. Visualize Chokmah in pale gray on the left side of your head. See Binah in deepest indigo (or black) on the right. Da'ath, colored silver, should encompass your throat and face. Chesed sits by your left shoulder and upper arm, in royal blue, and Geburah in a corresponding position on the right-hand side, in scarlet. Tiphareth, encompassing your heart and solar plexus, is golden-yellow in color. Netzach, in emerald green, is at your left hip, Hod, in bright orange, on your right. Yesod, colored violet, is placed at your genitals. Malkuth encompasses your ankles and feet within its four-fold coloration of citrine, olive, russet and dark indigo (like Binah).

When the Sephiroth are established and can be called to mind with ease, imagine the twenty-two Paths that unite them in white light. Visualizing the Sephiroth and Paths of the Tree of Life can be used as a catch exercise for implanting the symbolism of the Tree in your memory, calling it up in spare moments during the daily routine.

### **Stage 3**

Once some proficiency has been gained in establishing the Tree within the aura, continue with the series of exercises known collectively as the Exercise of the Interwoven Light. These are graduated exercises designed to set up certain currents of energy in the "sphere of sensation" (the bodies, physical and subtle, and the various levels of the aura) and to bring these forces through into the physical levels. The first stage of the Interwoven Light was begun previously by drawing energy from Kether down the left-hand side of your body and aura into Malkuth—all on a breath exhaled to the count of four. Then, on the inhaled breath,

draw the energy up from Malkuth, through the right-hand side of your body and aura and into Kether.

Having established rhythmic breathing, the Middle Pillar, and the first stage of the Interwoven Light, proceed with the next two stages. Focus on the crown center of Kether. Imagine it as a rapidly revolving, whirling sphere of white brilliance, drawing energy into itself from the universe and transforming it so that it becomes available for immediate human use.

With an exhalation, direct the white energy to Malkuth, down the front of your body and aura. Remain focused in Malkuth for a count of two. Then, with an inhaled breath, let the light ascend through the back of your body and aura, returning into the crown. Focus in Kether for a count of two, then recommence the cycle. This exercise should also be performed for at least six full cycles.

Do not be alarmed when you begin to feel physical sensations like goosebumps or tingling. This is merely the physical body responding to the inflow of energy. You will find that this exercise has the effect of invigorating you with the vital current of life.

Upon completion, rest in the resulting sense of calmness, vitality, and well-being. Allow the life-force to nourish you on all levels.

#### ***Stage 4***

Having established rhythmic breathing and the Middle Pillar as before, circulate the light from Kether to Malkuth, down and up the sides of your sphere of sensation, for at least six full cycles. Next, circulate the energy from Kether to Malkuth, down the front and up the back of your sphere of sensation, for at least six full cycles. These circulations of energy define the perimeters of the "alchemical vessel," the aura.

Focus on Malkuth and visualize white light, in a broad band, ascending in a spiral. Imagine the spiral rising from beneath your right foot, passing behind your left calf, around and across your right thigh, and so on. This results in a spiral of white light arising in a clockwise direction from Malkuth to Kether. The spiral should enfold the entire sphere of sensation (aura and body) within its white brilliance. Use the lines of descent and ascent from the first two stages of the Interwoven Light exercise to give you a sense of the ovoid of the aura, about which the rising spiral coils. Let the spiral rise while inhaling to a count of four. Focus in Kether for a count of two, then imagine energy streaming from Kether directly to Malkuth, for an exhaled count of four. Focus upon Malkuth for two, then cause the spiral to ascend to Kether on a count of

four. Perform this exercise for at least six full cycles. When completed, gently dwell in the ovoid of white light, the subjective auric sphere of sensation.

We now come to the “core” practice of the Interwoven Light exercises, the “Fountain Breath.” To perform the Fountain Breath, first complete the preceding stages of the Interwoven Light exercise, then focus consciousness on the crown-center of Kether. With an *exhaled* breath, to a count of four, Kether is imagined as a fountain of pure white brilliance that outpours an incandescent torrent through your entire body and aura, where it pools in the Malkuth center at your feet. The attention is held focused at Malkuth for a count of two. Then, with an *inhaled* breath, counted as four, a column of white light tinged with rainbow ascends from Malkuth, through Yesod, Tiphareth, Da’ath, like a column of light, into Kether the Crown; where the focus is held for a further count of two. With the next exhalation, Kether fountains the white brilliance again, down into Malkuth, pause, and with the inhalation the radiant column again ascends through the Middle Pillar back to the Kether. This is continued (at this point) for ten cycles. Israel Regardie says of the energy (which is *Chaiah*, the life-energy of the Limitless Light) brought into us by this practice: “The force of life is infinite; we are saturated, permeated through and through with this spiritual force, this energy. It constitutes our higher self, it is our link with Godhead, it is God within us. Every molecule of our physical system is soaked with the dynamic energy of this force; each cell in our body contains it in abundance . . .”<sup>4</sup>

### Stage 5

Visualize the Sephiroth of the Side Pillars within your sphere of sensation. See them as formed of brilliant white light. Use the image of a lightning flash to help you establish, weaving them into the already established spheres of the Middle Pillar thus: Kether, Chokmah, Binah, Da’ath, Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malkuth.

Each day, will one of the Sephiroth to radiate in the color scale of Briah (the Queen Scale), intoning the Divine Name of the sephira to trigger this change of color:

Chokmah, YAH  
Binah, ELOHIM  
Chesed, EL

<sup>4</sup> Israel Regardie, *The Art of True Healing*, p. 6.

Geburah, ELOHIM-GIBOR  
Netzach, YAHVEH-TZABAOTH  
Hod, ELOHIM-TZABAOTH

Use a chart of the Tree of Life to assist you.

Start with Kether. Then work on Chokmah for two days, on Binah for two days, and so on. As you descend the Tree, ensure that you maintain the visualization of the preceding sephira in its proper color. Do not let it slip back into white. In this way, by the time you reach Malkuth, you will be able to hold the entire Tree in the Queen Scale.

When you have accomplished this, move your consciousness up and down the Lightning Flash until you become flexible. This is a good foundation exercise for mental agility.

Finish by visualizing the entire Tree within your aura for a while. Picture the Sephiroth in the Queen Scale and the connecting Paths in white light. This serves as a powerful image of integrated relationship on all levels of being. Close the session with the Qabalistic Cross.

### ***Stage 6***

When the preceding has been accomplished, ascend the Tree of the Body up to Kether and while performing the Fountain Breath, speak with devotion the most high and holy Name of the Ineffable One. Speak it as a mantra—"I am that I am." As you do so, focus on Kether for the first "I am," on Malkuth for "that," and on Kether for the second "I am." Gently repeat this mantra with awareness of Who is being aware of whom. Allow this mantra to aid you in gently shifting consciousness. When it feels right, cease the repetition and just BE.

When you emerge from your meditative state, repeat the Fountain Breath for another six cycles. Seal your aura with the Qabalistic Cross and have a good stretch.

Perform the Interwoven Light exercises before all meditation sessions. Endeavor to realize that the physical body is not solid at all, but is composed, in fact, of trillions of points of light (atoms) with vast spaces in between them. The descending and ascending light (in the Fountain Breath) thus pervades and saturates everything and the physical body offers no resistance to the incoming Light.

### ***Stage 7***

In this stage we unite our own subjective Tree with the objective Macrocosm, of which it is a reflection. Starting from Malkuth, ascend the Tree of the material body, building the Sephiroth in the Queen Scale of Briah.

Refocusing on Malkuth, send a spiraling vortex of indigo-colored energy from your personal Malkuth center downward into the very heart of the planet. Image the vortex as a cone of spiraling energy. The point of the cone is, in all cases, within your center. As the cone spirals, it extends in circumference, until it reaches the planetary center and unites with it. From your Yesod center, send a spiraling vortex of silver energy outward into the astral level, imagined as a full autumn Moon in a violet sky.

From your Tiphareth center, send a spiraling vortex of gold energy outward into the mental level, imagined as a blazing noonday Sun in an orange sky. From your crown center, from Kether, send a spiraling vortex of pure white energy upward, like an inverted cone, into the heights of Heaven. Abide in the resulting state of awareness.

Perform at least ten cycles of the Fountain Breath. Notice the difference in how you feel. Then, descend the Tree of Assiah and perform the Qabalistic Cross to close down.

## AFTERMATH

These techniques, though they may appear simple, are the key to all else. In fact, they are the practices of the adepts. They constitute the “Alchemical Fountain” depicted in so many prints, in which the White Queen (the Etheric body) and the Red King (the physical body) bathe together. As the alchemist Artephtius wrote (referring to the Limitless Light under the name of “water of life”): “This *aqua vitae*, or water of life being rightly ordered. . . . It is the royal fountain in which the King (Sol) and Queen (Luna) bathe themselves . . . and the Spirit is incorporated with the Body, and made one with it.”<sup>5</sup> The cumulative effect of the Interwoven Light and Fountain Breath exercises is transformative. It is their very simplicity that renders them so potent. Respiration, the act of breathing, is the primal motion. The holy Name of EHEIEH, by which the divine is adored in Kether, is the sound of exhalation. And so that no reader should be led astray into thinking that the pith-exercise is just for “beginners,” consider the following. In the Book of Revelation (that most misunderstood text of the canonical Bible) the author describes his vision in which he sees the twenty-four Elders who encompass the Divine Presence, *continuously* casting their crowns down to the ground before God and then taking them up again. These Elders are the Lords of Light who constitute the Supernal Table of Melchizadek, the Great Council-on-

<sup>5</sup> Artephtius, “The Secret Book of Artephtius,” 12<sup>th</sup> century translation by Lapidus, The British Library Collection.

high. By casting down, and then resuming, their “crowns”—*in the Presence*—these High Ones continuously perform the Fountain Breath, so renewing their deathless lives.

The subsequent practices in this book should always be prefaced by performing the Qabalistic Cross, relaxation, deep and rhythmic breathing, then the circulation of light and cycles of the Fountain Breath. There is no further need to use the vortexes described in the seventh stage. Experienced practitioners will soon be able to tell how many cycles of the Fountain Breath are necessary before commencing a visualization practice. At the end of a session it is also wise to perform a few circulations of the Fountain Breath to integrate the energies received in meditation into the physical body and then to Hermetically seal the auric vessel by concluding with the Qabalistic Cross.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

It will be helpful to contemplate the following in the light of the 18th tarot key, The Moon, which the *Sepher Yetzirah* names the corporeal, or incarnating, intelligence.

Alexander writes from Persia  
 That a wolf and a dog are in this field,  
 Which as the Sages say,  
 Are descended from the same stock,  
 But the wolf comes from the east,  
 And the dog from the west.  
 They are full of jealousy,  
 Fury, rage and madness:  
 One kills the other,  
 And from them comes a great poison.  
 But when they are restored to life,  
 They are clearly shewn to be  
 The Great and Precious Medicine,  
 The most glorious Remedy upon earth,  
 Which refreshes and restores the Sages,  
 Who render thanks to God, and do praise Him.  
*The Book of Lambspring*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> “The Book of Lambspring” in *The Hermetic Museum*, A. E. Waite, ed. (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1991), p. 284.



# THE HOLY GRAIL

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*He is too great to be called "God." He is hidden, yet obvious everywhere.  
He is bodiless, yet embodied in everything.  
There is nothing that He is not. He has no name, because all names are  
His name. He is unity of all things, so we must know Him  
by all names and call everything "God."*

—Hermes-Trismegistos<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

The quest for the Holy Grail has long been a symbol of progressive unfoldment upon the spiritual path. The attainment of the Grail represents the Grail-winner's freedom from death and rebirth (as, for example, Galahad's translation to the Upper Worlds) and acquiring the ability to heal all ills (as in the healing of the wounded Fisher-King by Parsifal and Lancelot). Both of these refer to the completion of the alchemical Great Work, to the Philosopher's Stone that confers liberation from the grievous Wheel of Birth and Death. (In some romances, the Grail is described as a stone, not a chalice, and, in Buddhist mythology, it is referred to as the "Wish-Fulfilling Jewel," the "pearl of great price" sought by the Dragon.) They also refer to the production of the *medicina catholica*, the universal medicine that heals all disease. Both the quest for, and the winning of, the Grail are metaphors for the "grasping" of the Quintessence. This is the realization of the original substance of creation, the *Prima Materia*, the alchemical First Matter, which in Sanskrit is called *Akasha*, meaning "the mixing bowl of the elements."

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<sup>1</sup> Hermes-Trismegistos in Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, *The Wisdom of the Pagan Philosophers* (Boston: Tuttle, 1998), p. 18.

Four symbols are profoundly linked to the Grail mystery: the lance, the sword, the cup, and the stone. They represent, respectively, the Air of the Wise, the Fire of the Wise, the Water of the Wise, and the Earth of the Wise. The continuous interplay of these symbols indicates the presence of the First Matter—the Quintessence—within and between each of the four elemental manifestations of spirit. And Spirit is the center—the still, dimensionless point—of each of the four elements of the Wise. The sequence is: Akasha, air; Akasha, fire; Akasha, water; and Akasha, earth. In the same way in tarot, the Fool card (assigned to the Quintessence) precedes, in dignity, and separates each tarot card, as the mathematical value of zero (0) precedes and separates each number in the sequence, (e.g., 0, 1, 0, 2, 0, 3, 0, 4, 0, etc.). This is why those physical locations—where the domain of one manifest element gives way to another—are “places of power”: seashores, hills or mountaintops, steambaths and ceremonial fires. They represent the intermediate state between the two elements—the Quintessence. In the sign of the pentagram, the four triangles of the five-rayed star are also assigned to the elements while the apex triangle represents the Quintessence, as the ruling power. The fact that a pentagram can be drawn without taking the pen off the paper shows the interdependence of the four elements, and their utter dependence for existence upon the First Matter. In the Quintessence alone resides the true “rulership” of the elements.

The evocative power of the Grail quest has been an inspiration for beauty. Its mystery has been celebrated in painting, sculpture, and tapestry, in literary romances, poems, and music. The promise enshrined in the Grail symbol and its central redemptive motif has inspired writers, bards, and artists throughout the centuries to pay homage, through their art, to the Cup of Cups. It speaks to the deepest part of human nature—an irrational, yet ever-persistent longing that good shall prevail, that life is eternal. As each new religion has arisen, it has sought to represent the Grail in terms of its own framework. But the Grail transcends them all, belongs to them all, holds them all. It symbolizes the reality that Spirit nourishes and upholds everything, that the universe is eternally being created and sustained.

Macrocosmically, the Grail is the great spirit bowl that contains the totality of existence. It is the universal chalice held in the sacred hands of the Eternal. It is the Mirror of Tetragrammaton and the scrying-bowl of creation wherein God beholds God. But because the Eternal pervades all that is and is all that is, the macrocosmic Grail is the *Neschamah*, the Divine Soul attributed to the third Sephira, Binah, sphere of the Great Mother (hence the recurrent imagery of goddesses and maidens bearing

the Grail). Thus, the Divine's Omnipresence is also attributed to Binah. The Viewer and the vision are not separate, but one: "I declare Myself by seeing." Here we touch upon a "mystery," one of those apparent paradoxes that pervade the teachings of the ageless wisdom. They are called mysteries because they seek to express spiritual realities that transcend reason and form-fettered mentation, yet are limited and subject to misrepresentation by our very need to use language and imagery founded on sense-based experience. The Grail and what it contains are the same.

In the microcosm, in the human being, the Grail symbolizes the *Ruach*, the Higher Self or immortal spirit, called, in some traditions, the holy Guardian Angel. This individuated aspect of the One Life gives rise to our sense of "I-ness," our individuality, the useful illusion of separateness. Until we gain conscious awareness of this aspect of ourselves, it also gives rise to the illusion of separateness from the All. Our spirit is the grail for the Divine Self of the Self, that which alone is truly real, truly eternal. In Qabalah, this is called the *Yechidah*, meaning the "unique and indivisible," and assigned to Kether. On the extended Tree of Jacob's Ladder, spirit is of the world of Briah and *Yechidah* of Atziluth. But Atziluth interpenetrates or indwells the upper face of Briah and is held within a spiritual sheath. By resonance, Spirit (Briah) interfaces with Yetzirah, the realm of the psyche or soul. Here we need to remind ourselves that, when dealing with mandalas—sacred diagrams—like the Tree of Life, "above" equals "within." So when we speak of *Yechidah* being at the "highest level," in Atziluth, we also mean at the most "interior" level of a human being. As Joseph Campbell, the well-known mythographer, put it, "At your deepest identity you are one with the Transcendent."<sup>2</sup>

In most of us, these higher aspects of human unfoldment, subsist as latent potential, like a seed that has yet to come into growth, flower, and fruitage. This is what the alchemical student, Thomas Aquinas, called *latens Deitas* and what the Western mysteries term the "God-Within" or *Adonai Interna*. The purpose of the Great Work is to spiritualize the physical body so that the Higher Self may fully manifest on Earth. This is the awakening of a Buddha or a Christed One. It is the inner meaning of the Qabalistic prayer: "May the Holy One be restored unto His throne"—to humanity in His fullness.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers* (New York: Mystic Fire Video, 1989), videocassette.

<sup>3</sup> Aryeh Kaplan, *The Sepher Yetzirah* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993).

However, we work with things as they are and in most of us the Divine is latent potential. This state of affairs is portrayed by the 14th tarot key, Temperance, which takes its name from the process of tempering metal in fire. The angel on the card, Archangel Mikael (Michael) of Tiphareth, is shown engaged in the Great Work. The *gematria* of the name "Mikael" is 101, the same number as for "Aben-Gedulah," meaning "a great Stone." Mikael pours water upon the lion of fire and ignites the eagle of water with a burning torch. When the work is near completion, the lion becomes the Blue Sphinx, shown in the tarot key 10, The Wheel of Fortune, which understands the riddle of human destiny. The eagle will become the fiery phoenix that renews its deathless life by fire. The Archangel has one foot upon land and one in a pool of water. The realm in which the Archangel has his place is Briah. This is indicated by the gold sky overhead, the realm of endless day. The pool signifies the watery world of Yetzirah and the human psyche, into which the Archangel has placed a toe. This teaches us pictorially that the Higher Self is present in the heart of the soul, as Briah interpenetrates Yetzirah, and is present within it. The "toe" of the Higher Self is a poetic image for the Immanence within our subtle bodies.

Within the center of the subtle bodies (of Yetzirah), resides what some traditions call the "solar drop," perceived by some as a drop of molten gold and by others as "the steady tapering Flame of a lamp in a windless place." In Tibetan yoga, this is called the "indestructible drop" (*Mi gshigs pa'I thig-le*) and, like the "seed atom" of theosophical literature, it is that which persists from incarnation to incarnation, the nucleus that "grows" the vehicles necessary for incarnation. This is the Inner Light, the Divine Immanence. It is the germ, the potential seed from which grows the incorruptible solar body that is the goal of the Great Work. In Rosicrucian lore, it is referred to as *granium in pectoris Jesu*, "a seed in the breast of Jesus," the esoteric reality behind the image of the Sacred Heart in Christian iconography. It is in the central stillness of this place, the cave of the heart, that the Voice of Silence (*Shabda-Brahman*, the song of the Absolute) is heard. And it is the turning about of consciousness to this, the indwelling God, that constitutes true mystical conversion. In the symbolism of the Rose-Cross, this light of immanence is depicted as a single drop of dew resting upon the heart of the rose, refracting the light of the White Sun of Supreme Consciousness.

It is a well-established fact that when advanced yogis and adepts die their vacated physical bodies show no sign of decomposition or decay

for at least three days. The body retains its upright posture and the skin remains supple. Rigor mortis is not present, and a warmth is detectable in the region of the heart. When this warmth ceases, usually after three days, the vacated body collapses and the usual signs of death appear.

This Divine Presence within the heart, is the true Grail. The quest is the realization and manifestation of the Holy Grail. It is what is meant by the completion of the Great Work of Alchemy, is called in the Emerald Tablet the "Work of the Sun." The gematria of *Shemesh*, Hebrew for "sun," is 640, the same as for *kos tankhumim*, "the cup of consolation" (used in the 23rd Psalm as: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my Cup runneth over . . .").

In the Qabalistic model we are using, the Grail appears to be fashioned from different substances in each of the Sephiroth of the Middle Pillar. But, as The Emerald Tablet states: "All things are from One Thing" all substances are fashioned from the First Matter. In Malkuth, the Grail is formed of iron (not lead, for reasons that will become clear later); in Yesod, it is fashioned of silver, in Tiphareth of gold. In Da'ath it is carved of crystal and in Kether, the crown, it is pure incandescence, for "cup" and "content" have become indistinguishable. In Kundalini Yoga, the most difficult stage is raising the Spirit-Fire of the dragon to the heart center. Hence, in most of the practices that follow, we focus upon the golden Grail of Tiphareth. Tiphareth is the imaginative intelligence. In other words, it is the image-making faculty. Imagination, or the ability to create and perceive images, is not confined to existence on the physical plane. It is, in fact, a faculty of the Higher Self, of the indwelling spirit. Imagination is our inheritance, as offspring of that which "dreamed" the worlds into existence. Developed to its highest potential, as it is developed in the indirect path, Alchemy and the tantras—imagination is the tool whereby we become co-creators with the eternal.

The Grail appears in different forms in different sacred myths. What all these myths have in common is that the holy vessel, by whatever name, is a means whereby energy from the Upper Worlds can be held in Assiah, the world of Form and Action. In Celtic lore, the Grail is the Bottomless Cauldron, the Well of Transformations sacred to the goddess Ceriddwen. It is the Moon Bowl of lost Atlantis. It is the Ark of the Covenant, the throne of the Shekinah, kept in the Mosaic tabernacle and the great temple of Solomon. The Grail was the chalice of wine brought by Melchizedek, king and priest of the Most High, who initiated Abraham into the Qabalah and who, according to the *Sepher Yetzirah*, taught him

the very same alchemical practice that is being offered in this book. The Grail was the cup used by Jesus at his last supper (simultaneously the first Eucharist). According to tradition, this cup was carved from the emerald of Lucifer's diadem, which he lost when he was cast out of heaven for the sin of pride.

Nor is the symbolism of the Grail confined to Middle-Eastern and European mysticism. The following *Jataka* (a legend of the Tathagata) describes the origin of the Chalice of Buddha:

Then from the four lands came the Four Guardians of the World who offered chalices made of sapphire. But Buddha refused them. Again they offered four chalices made of black stone (*muggavanna*) and he, full of compassion for the four wise men, accepted the four chalices. He placed one inside the other and ordained, 'Let them be one!' And the edges of the four chalices became visible as outlines. All the chalices formed one. The Buddha accepted food in the newly formed Chalice and, having partaken of the food, he offered thanks.

The Blessed One then says to the Four Guardians who brought the four cups:

Pay thy respects to Buddha in the name of the Chalice, and the Chalice shalt be to thee as a vessel of knowledge.

If thou wilt offer the Chalice to thy peers, thou will not remain, either in memory, or in judgement.

But he who offers the Chalice to the Buddha, will not be forgotten either in memory or in wisdom."<sup>4</sup>

In Tibetan Vajrayana, the equivalent of the Grail is the *Tse-bum*, the sacred vase that contains the elixir of life, whose lid is ornamented with a fan of peacock feathers. It is held by the Buddha Amitayus (Tibetan: *Tsepamê*), Lord of Eternal Life. Buddha Amitayus is the tantric aspect of the better-known Amitahba, the Buddha of Infinite Light. (This correlation between life and light is vital in alchemical and yogic practice.) In many tantras, both of these buddhas are assigned the Anāhata chakra, the heart center. In tantric initiations (*abisheka*), a replica of the Tse-

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Roerich, *From the Heart of Asia: Memoirs from the Himalayas* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1990), p. 108.

bum is used, and the actual act of empowerment occurs when the guru-initiator places it upon the candidate's head, upon the thousand-petaled crown (*Sahasrāra-Padma chakra*). The placing of the Tse-bum upon the top of the head is highly significant, because, in the Vajrayana ceremonies, the skull cup, held by deities in their "wrathful" aspect, also contains the life-giving elixir that is the "nectar of the Gods," literally, the deathless ones. The crystal skulls of Meso-America and elsewhere also symbolize this particular teaching.

In the temple of the human body, it is the skull that holds the alchemical Stone, the jewel of the yogis. When the Stone has been successfully conected (manifested in the physical body), it causes the "ambrosia of Bliss" (another term for the elixir or nectar) to fill and begin to transmute the body. For, when higher states of consciousness are attained and stabilized, subtle changes occur in the composition of practitioners' bloodstreams. This phenomenon occurs well before the completion of the Great Work and is one of the signs of proficiency in Kundalini Yoga, a "fruit of attainment" from arousing the Dragon.

In the New Testament, Kundalini is referred to as the *Paraclete*, the Holy Spirit, who is "the Lord, the Giver of Life." The planetary reservoir of Kundalini is termed the "Laboratory of the Holy Spirit" and initiation as the "work of the Holy Spirit." Hence, Jesus' question takes on deeper import, "Know ye not that ye are temples of the Holy Spirit and that the Power of the Most High dwells within you?" The human body is the temple, and the heart is the temple's sanctuary (literally, "holy place"). But the Adytum, the temple's Holy of Holies, is the pineal gland, the rudimentary third eye. The Stone is conected in the pineal gland by the Spirit-Fire of Chokmah and so the favorite name that the old alchemists awarded themselves was "philosophers," "the lovers of Wisdom."

Mount Meru, which crowns the world-axis in both Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, is geographically Mount Kailas in Tibet. The rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra have their source at the foot of this solitary peak. To Hindus, Mount Kailas is sacred to Lord Shivā, patron of yoga and god of transformation. To Buddhists, Mount Kailas (Tibetan, *Kang-Rimpoché*, "The Jewel of the Snows") is the center of the mandala of the deity Demchog (Sanskrit, *Mahāsukha*), the meditational deity of highest bliss, of supreme happiness. Mount Kailas is shaped like a skull and is the Adytum of the planetary microcosm.

In the first Major Arcana of tarot, the card of The Fool, the figure is crowned with a laurel wreath (laurel is sacred to the Sun) to indicate spirit's victory over all. This laurel wreath consists of 22 leaves, one for

each of the shining Paths on the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. In the final Major Arcana of tarot, the card of The World, the central figure who symbolizes cosmic consciousness, or the highest bliss, dances within an ellipse formed by the same laurel wreath. The enlightened sage is one who has attained cosmic consciousness—who is a fool as the world judges things—and is free from the illusion of separateness, liberated from all appearances and limitations. Having realized that the One Identity is both unique and indivisible, the sage dances to *Shi'r-Yehovah*, the unending Song of the One Reality.

## THE PRACTICE

All practices should be preceded by performing the Qabalistic Cross and the Parting of the Veil mudra. Then, seated in the posture, commence your relaxation and establish your breathing pattern of 4x2x4. Build up the Tree of Life in the Queen Scale of Briah, imagining it as permeating your physical body and aura. Then proceed to the Interwoven Light exercises, culminating in the Fountain Breath, which should be performed for at least ten full cycles. Abide for a little time in the energies, then proceed with the particular stage of practice being undertaken.

Focus upon your golden-yellow sphere of Tiphareth, then, inside it, visualize the Round Table, some six inches in diameter. See it as indigo in color, a deep violet-blue like the color of the sky at night. The surface of the table is divided into twelve segments, like a horoscope chart. The lines of division upon the indigo table are of silver. In each segment, near the rim of the table, shines a symbol of one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. These zodiacal symbols are gold. The signs follow their usual sequence, from Aries to Pisces, arranged counterclockwise around the table (see figure 1 page 39). At the exact center of the Round Table, where the silver lines converge, shines an object. It is covered with a gauzy veil of white samite (silk or satin). Through this veil you can discern a chalice of gold. It is the Holy Grail.

When you feel ready, by an act of definite—yet gentle—intention, project the table and the Grail out of your subjective Tiphareth center until it is some six feet away from your physical body. As this composite image is projected it grows and expands until it is life-sized. As the image stabilizes, twelve carved chairs appear before each segment of the table. These are the high sieges of the Table Round. Mentally approach the table. You will find that the siege nearest you is that of your natal Sun sign, the sign of your spirit. Sit on the chair at this segment of the

table, with your back to your physical sheath, some six feet behind you. Place both hands—one on either side of the gold zodiacal emblem—on the table's surface. As you do so, the zodiacal symbol will “light up.”

Gaze upon the veiled Grail, bathe in its golden radiance, and contemplate its symbolism in the light of the teaching that has been imparted. Bring to mind the knowledge that, as a symbol of Tiphareth, the Grail mediates grace and blessing from Above. Tiphareth is the heart of the Tree of Life; it receives, harmonizes, and imparts the influences of all the Sephiroth except Malkuth. Tiphareth has various titles assigned to it: Ben (Son), your Higher Self as a ray of the divine light of Yechidah; and Melekh (King), your spirit is the true and mighty ruler over all manifestations, both in your personality and in your environment. The Grail's presence affirms that, in truth, you are one with all.

It is this contemplation of the Grail as the symbol of Tiphareth that will “magnetize” or empower it for your future work. This is the means whereby the symbol's form is united with the reality it represents.

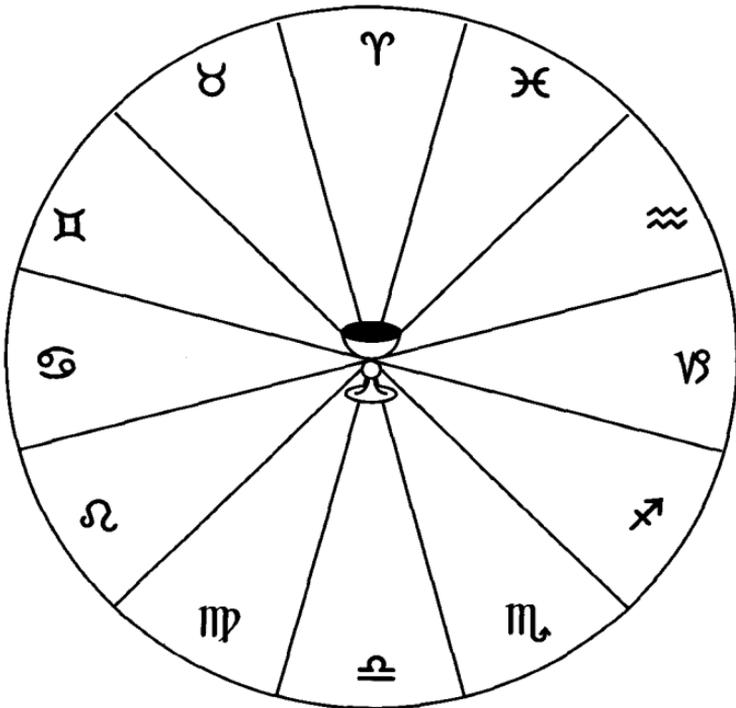


Figure 1. The practitioner's personal siege—that of the natal Sun sign—is to the west, facing east beyond the Grail.

When it feels appropriate, rise from your siege and withdraw back into your physical body. Then, by an act of definite—yet gentle—intention, draw the table and Grail toward your body. It shrinks as you do so, until it is about six inches in diameter, and then becomes a point of light. Withdraw it back into subjectivity, within the Tiphareth center of your heart. Make the Closing of the Veil mudra to signal to your subconscious mind that the levels are now distinct. A few more Fountain Breaths at this point will help to circulate the energies. Then rise and perform the Qabalistic Cross once more to seal your aura. Stamp your feet to assert your incarnate personality and have a good stretch. This helps incorporate the influences received in meditation into your physical body. Then write your record before the finer, subtle details fade from memory.

## AFTERMATH

Seven days or so should be sufficient in most cases for this practice, but this depends on the clarity of the thought-form, how “real” you can make the image of the table and Grail. You may use part of this practice as a “catch exercise” to develop the image’s clarity. At any time you like, you can quite safely focus upon your Tiphareth center and see within it the image of the Round Table and the Grail in miniature. You can use this overview—remembering that, with imagination, it is easy to magnify your view—to build up the image and its details. Endeavor to feel the table’s solidity and the texture of its surface. The more we can utilize our inner senses, which equate to (and are in fact the originating causes of) our five physical senses, the clearer and the more potent our work will be. It is the only way to engage the active participation of the subconscious.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

Therefore the knowledge and power magical . . . sleeps since the knowledge of the apple was eaten; and so long as this knowledge (which is of the flesh and blood, gross and material, belonging to the external man and darkness) flourishes, the more noble magical power is lying dormant. . . . Therefore we establish this point, *viz.* that there is inherent in the soul a certain magical virtue [energy] . . . naturally proper and belonging to her [the soul], inasmuch as we are his image and engravement;

and in this respect she acts also in a peculiar manner . . . and that more powerfully than by any corporeal assistance. . . . Which power, man is able, by the Art of Cabala [Qabalah], to excite in himself at his own pleasure, and these, as we have before said, are called Adepts. . . .

[A]ll the spirits, and as it were the essences of all things, lie hid in us, and are born and brought forth only by the working, power, and phantasy ["fantasy," meaning the trained imagination] of the microcosm.

But the reason why exorcisms, conjurations, charms, incantations, etc., do sometimes fail of their desired effect, is because the unexcited mind, or spirit of the exorcist, renders the words dull or ineffectual.

Therefore, no man can be a happy or successful magician, but him who knows how to stir up the magical virtue of his soul, or can do it practically without science.

*The Magus*  
—Francis Barrett<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Barrett, *The Magus* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1977), pp. 23–24, 28; material added in brackets is mine.





# THE COMPANIONS OF THE LIGHT

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*I am always near to those with faith, and even to those without faith, although they do not know it. I will never cease to protect my children with my unending compassion.*

—Padmasambhava<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

In the previous practice the composite symbol of the Grail and the Round Table were projected from the heart center, out of the practitioner's physical body and beyond the aura. This practice, known in older times as "arising from latency to potency," is the root technique of the Work of Alchemy. It is the means whereby we separate the subtle from the gross. The images used are first evoked—called up—from within us, because, as reflections or holograms of the universe, we potentially contain everything that is. This is what is meant by the statement in The Emerald Tablet: "That which is Above is as That which is Below. . . ." The term "That" is used in some Eastern traditions as a title for the Absolute, expressing its transcendence over any concept. In the Western tradition, the term is also part of the most high and holy name of the Absolute: "I Am That I Am."

Symbolism is the language of the subconscious mind, used in dream and vision. We have access to the entire store of symbols held in the collective unconscious. In Qabalah, this is attributed to the astral realm of Yetzirah on Jacob's Ladder, and to the Sefhira of Yesod on the simple Tree. It is called the "treasure house of images." As conscious beings, we

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<sup>1</sup> Padmasambhava, in Timothy Freke, *The Wisdom of the Tibetan Lamas* (Boston: Tuttle, 1998), p. 36.

are able to retrieve any of these images and bring them up to consciousness. Indeed, the Hebrew letter of the tarot card assigned to meditation, The Star, is Tzaddi, which means “fish hook.” This is a good image of what occurs in this type of meditation. Our intention for meditating is the bait attached to the fish hook. When lowered into the depths of the subconscious—frequently represented as a sea, river, or pool—we get a bite! Then we have the delicate job of landing our catch.

Accessing the symbol is not so difficult; with a little practice, it becomes almost automatic. The trouble is in *owning* the symbol, making it our own tool that we can utilize in the Work. This is done by “brooding over” the symbol, by contemplating it in the light of the Sephiroth, so that we invest it with the meaning it should have. This is important, because all symbols, being of the fluidic Yetziratic level, have associated shadows, distortions of their original spiritual impulses. The bright Castle of Camelot has its dark counterpart in the sorcerous Citadel of Kling-sor; the Inner Kingdom of Logres (the Realm of the Summer Stars) is distorted in the image of the Wasteland. In this light, let us now look at the symbol of the Grail.

As the container for the stuff of universal life—the alchemical First Matter—the Grail has been the object of the quest, for both good and ill. Generally speaking, humans fear death. So a treasure (already the greed theme appears) that enables its possessor to overcome death is highly desirable. There have been those who thought of the Grail as a physical object and spent their lives and fortunes hunting for it. (It is of interest to note here that the sages tell us that the *First Matter* is to be had for a few pennies!)

Others, hearing that the *First Matter* is concentrated in the blood have followed more vile routes in their questing. These foolish and often cruel methods have included class and caste systems, eugenics and blood sacrifice. Subsequent beliefs in the so-called purity of blood (in either a particular family or racial grouping) have culminated in beliefs in superior “master races,” leading to the evils of tyranny and genocide.

No strange breeding programs, crank diets, or way-out asceticism ever produced the immortal body of a Sage. No one is ever born an Adept. Eugenics help not at all, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the earth. The *First Matter* is perceived by liberated consciousness alone, by pure awareness, nurtured by bliss and motivated by compassion.

We have access to all images and symbols within the collective unconscious, which is just another name for the astral plane. Not only do we have access to such images through recollection, we can also create images. And, in a certain sense, each time we bring a symbol to con-

sciousness and invest it with mental energy through thought, meditation, or contemplation, we further empower that symbol. That is why ancient symbols carry such power. This ability—one we use unconsciously all the time—is the action of our indwelling spirit focusing its creative energy in time and space. Once we begin to realize that this is a spiritual energy (from Briah, the world of Creation), we begin to walk in an expanded universe.

In his alchemical treatise, *The Salt of Nature Regenerated*, Alipili wrote:

He that hath knowledge of the Microcosm cannot long be ignorant of the Macrocosm. This is that which the Egyptian industrious searchers of Nature so often said, and loudly proclaimed . . . that every one should know himself.

This speech their dull disciples (the Greeks) took in a moral sense, and in ignorance affixed it to their Temples. But I admonish thee, whosoever thou art, that desirest to dive into the inmost parts of Nature, if that which thou seekest thou find not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee. If thou knowest not the excellency of thine own house, why dost thou seek and search after the excellency of other things? The universal Orb of the world contains not so many great mysteries and excellencies as a little Man, formed by God in His own image. And he who desirest the primacy among the students of Nature will nowhere find a greater or better field of study than himself.

Therefore will I follow the example of the Wise, and speak from my whole heart, and from certain true experience proved by me, and in the words of the Egyptians, and with a loud voice, do now proclaim: "O Man, know thy Self, in thee is hidden the Treasure of all treasures."<sup>2</sup>

### ***The Round Table***

In one version of the Arthurian mythos, the Round Table was part of the dowry of Guenivere upon her marriage to King Arthur. According to the esoteric tradition, the table was built according to the design of the Archmage Merlin, based upon a template of one of the wisdom-temples of Atlantis. This tradition further states that it was originally brought from the stars, from Sirius, the "Tear of Isis." This stellar symbolism is

<sup>2</sup> Alipili, "The Salt of Nature Regenerated," in Herbert Silberer, *Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and the Occult Arts* (New York: Dover, 1971), p. 153.

reinforced by the symbols of the twelve constellations of the zodiac upon the table's rim. This is the same symbolism found in the belt worn by The Fool in the first tarot card of the major keys. The zodiac represents time and space, which is also the meaning of Eden, the garden in which Adam and Eve were placed.

In the myth, the Grail appears upon the Table Round when the king and all his knights are gathered for court on the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost, or Whitsun, as it is also called, occurs fifty days after Easter (Christ's resurrection) and celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples when they are gathered together, in the same upper room in which they had celebrated the Last Supper with their master. The Divine Spirit descends like tongues of fire.

Stars are the first condensation of Limitless Light, and it is through them that the One Radiant Energy is radiated throughout the physical universe. Our star, the Sun, receives and relays the energy to the planets within its system. Reciprocally, but to a lesser degree, the energy patterns that humans create through their thoughts, words, and actions, are received by our Sun and relayed out to the cosmos. This energetic exchange between the macrocosm and the microcosm shows that, although the macrocosm affects the microcosm, the microcosm can, with dedication and awareness, affect the macrocosm.

All energy and forms on our planet are adaptations of solar power. Our day star is the synthesis of all forces that comprise a human being. It is a living, conscious power like unto ourselves. The energy radiated by the Sun flows through our bodies and manifests in our activities. This same energy flows back to the Sun, producing all the phenomena of human experience. Thus, there is a continuous circuit. We live in the Sun and the Sun lives in us. The secret name of humanity is the "Heart of the Sun."

In Qabalah, the signs of the zodiac represent the twelve spiritual *types of perfected humanity*, symbolized by the twelve tribes of the Spiritual Israel and by the twelve foundations of the celestial city, "Jerusalem Above, the Mother of us all." The zodiacal signs also relate to the twelve stages of the Great Work. These alchemical stages and their tarot attributions are:

Aries: Calcination, the tribe of Gad, The Emperor

Taurus: Congelation, the tribe of Simeon, The Hierophant

Gemini: Fixation, the tribe of Ephraim, The Lovers

Cancer: Separation, the tribe of Zebulun, The Chariot

Leo: Digestion, the tribe of Judah, Strength  
 Virgo: Distillation, the tribe of Naphtali, The Hermit  
 Libra: Sublimation, the tribe of Asher, Justice  
 Scorpio: Putrefaction, the tribe of Dan, Death  
 Sagittarius: Incineration, the tribe of Benjamin, Temperance  
 Capricorn: Fermentation, the tribe of Issachar, The Devil  
 Aquarius: Dissolution, the tribe of Manasseh, The Star  
 Pisces: Multiplication, the tribe of Reuben, The Moon

These twelve stages of the Great Work are indicators of its progress, but, in a certain way, they occur in conjunction rather than sequentially. This is why they are represented by the circle of the zodiac rather than as a linear model.

The twelve sieges, or seats, around the table also relate to the Starry Wisdom, but after another manner. The choir of angels, assigned by the Qabalah to Binah, are the *Aralim*, the thrones of *Ruach-Chaim*, the “Breath of Lives.” By gematria, Aralim has the numeric value of 282. The digits of this number add up to 12. Binah, the Great Mother, receives the star-seeds from Chokmah, the All-Father (symbolized by the impregnating letter Yod) to give birth to all forms. Binah (astrologically, the planet Saturn), is the limiting or finitizing agency. She grows the forms to receive the “Breath of Lives”; but the very substance with which the myriad forms are built is also the one radiant energy radiating from the starry hosts. Without the appropriate forms (apparatus), the higher vibratory scale of the light could not be received or expressed. The sieges about the table signify that those who will sit in them have the inherent capacity to receive and express the Wisdom of Chokmah and the Understanding of Binah.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* states that “Malkuth is established upon the throne of Binah.” This intimates that the human form, grown in Malkuth by the finitizing agency of the Great Mother, has the same capacity to consciously receive the “honey” of unblemished Wisdom and the “milk” of life eternal. In one of the ancient Greek initiation rituals, candidates are asked what their ancestral lineage is; they reply: “I am a child of Earth and Heaven alone but my race is of the starry heavens.”<sup>3</sup>

The Grail, combined with the Table Round, constitutes an esoteric formula of great spiritual potency. Many occult schools and orders have

<sup>3</sup> “The Petelia Tablet,” in Dion Fortune, *The Circuit of Force*, Gareth Knight, ed. (Loughborough, Leicestershire, UK: Thoth, 1998), p. 51.

built their ceremonies and meditations around this composite glyph. It is the proto-symbol in Briah that has given rise in human history to the as yet unfinished works of democracy, council circles, and the League of Nations, which is now the United Nations. Because these works are as yet unfinished—in that they are presently incomplete and distorted reflections of the archetype—this combined glyph of the Grail, with its altar, the Round Table, is of great relevance still, individually and collectively: individually, because it can be a powerful psychic focus for our own personal integration; collectively, because humanity is still an unfinished work. We are still in the process of becoming truly human.

The Table and Grail glyph is a foreshadowing of human destiny, of the zenith of our species' evolution. When the twelve spiritual types of humanity—the Company of Just Ones made Perfect—sit at the Round Table of Glory, they collectively represent the totality of the Divine's own concept of humanity. At the center of the table springs the living essence of the Godhead itself, overflowing a great golden chalice, the Holy Grail, from which all at the table may drink and so attain conscious union with the living God.

## THE PRACTICE

Commence as usual with relaxation. When ready, perform—with awareness—the Qabalistic Cross, then the Parting of the Veil mudra. Once seated, establish the rhythmic breathing cycle. Ascend the Tree of the Body, of Assiah, and perform the Interwoven Light exercises. As before, focus upon your own Tiphareth center. Think of the subjective Tiphareth—the region of your heart, as a kind of projector (imaginative intelligence) used to project a mental image from latency into potency. Now, as before, by a gentle but definite act of will, project the miniature table with the veiled Grail upon it from within to without. See it expand rapidly from a point of light, until it assumes its full size some six feet in front of you. Now, imaginatively rise from your physical sheath and go to sit at your siege among the twelve seats of the Table Round. Place your hands upon the table, one on either side of the symbol of your natal Sun sign. As you touch the table's surface, the zodiacal symbol before you lights up.

See high above the Round Table a small sun, a solar sphere. As you gaze at it, a beam of golden light strikes down into the Grail at the center of the table. As the Grail receives this outpouring, a deep sense of spiritual power enters the atmosphere of your meditation, a superpersonal

power, but one that is ensouled with compassion. When this occurs—with the corresponding emotional reaction—your table is “contacted,” that is to say, the subjective symbol is linked to the objective reality.

The descending sunbeam is received by the veiled chalice, simultaneously transmitted by it into your heart chakra, and radiated throughout your subtle body.

Focus again upon the solar sphere above. As you watch, it emits more rays of light, which ray down upon the remaining eleven sieges around the table. Within the radiance, figures form, one seated on each siege. At first, they appear as shapes of light, clear and transparent. Soon, however, their forms coalesce and gain density, becoming distinct. They appear as humans wearing silver-hooded robes, with the cowls raised to conceal their features. These are the Fellowship of the Table Round; they are the Great Companions of the Light. As the Companions take their places, the other eleven gold symbols of the zodiac on the table’s surface also light up.

When the twelve sieges are occupied and the starry signs are aglow, this signifies that the Companions have joined you at the table, the altar of fellowship, and are united with you in the light of the Grail. This is not just some poetic metaphor. This process is a wonderful telepathic working. There are many who will take their places with you at the Table of Unity. Some will still be incarnate, others will be dwellers from the upper worlds. They are linked to you in various ways, but primarily through the universal law of Interdependence: all beings are manifestations of God. Some will have bonds of affection for you, forged in other lives and in other times. Others, companions of your spirit, you may never have consciously encountered before. They are here—true to their oaths of service to the Divine—to assist you in your unfolding. To a degree, you will assist them in turn. There is a reciprocal aspect to this practice.

Now, give thanks to that from which all good things come. Then rise from your siege and return to your physical body. By a gentle but firm intention, diminish the table to a miniature again, until it is a photon—a point of light. Reabsorb this into your heart center.

Perform the Closing of the Veil mudra and the Qabalistic Cross, descend the Tree of the Body, and bring the meditation session to an end by standing and stamping your foot to assert your presence in material reality. Stretch to absorb the energies accruing from the meditation into the cells of your body. Then record your meditation before the finer details are lost.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

There are two types of death. One which is inevitable and common to all, and one which is voluntary and experienced by the few. It is the second death which the Messenger of Allah prescribed saying, "Die before you die." Those who die this voluntary death are resurrected. All the business of their lives return to the Oneness of God. They see God through God. As the Prophet said (on him be grace and peace), "You will not see your Lord until you are dead." This is because it is through this death and resurrection that everything becomes nothing and only *One thing exists—One Reality*. For initiates, whatever will befall a believer after physical death is prefigured in this life. This return of the many forms of things to Allah and the end of their becoming, is only a change in perception not in the Reality. For someone who dies and attains resurrection, the many are One through an essential Unity; and the One is many through His many aspects and their relationships.

*Abd Al-Kader*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy Freke, editor, *The Wisdom of Sufi Sages* (Boston: Chales E. Tuttle Co., 1989) p. 53.



# THE HOLY PLACE OF MEETING

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*I will build a Round Table, and around it a Hall,  
and about the Hall a Castle.*

—King Arthur Pendragon in John Boorman's *Excalibur*<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

All beings are, to a greater or lesser extent, telepathic. The key is to become aware of it. In fact, in training most students in psychic unfoldment, the greatest obstacle lies in overcoming their preconceived notions of what they think telepathy should be like. Telepathy is older than speech and transmits feelings and images more easily than precise words. Although, with training and practice, this can be remedied. The root of telepathy is the Primal Unity of all, the law of interdependence. In humans, the chakra that governs telepathy is called, by Alchemy, the Moon center. In Eastern schools, it is called the *Ajna* chakra. This center—within the inner vehicles, as are all the chakras—equates to the physical pituitary body situated in the brain. The problem, as said, is becoming aware of your telepathic faculty. Most of us are so busy having our own interior conversations that our minds are never still or placid enough to notice “mind speech” from others.

The Moon center, the pituitary body, is situated just beneath the pineal gland (the Mercury center), which represents the Philosopher's Stone. The Stone is sometimes called the “Seed of the Sun” and, in sacred art, is often portrayed as a flaming disc. On the ceremonial crowns of certain high lamas, there is often shown the symbol of a lunar crescent, lying on its back, holding a radiant disc. This refers to the crown-wearer's realization of the ultimate nature of reality and their ability to

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<sup>1</sup> *Excalibur*, dir. John Boorman, Orion Pictures, 1981, videocassette.

initiate into all the stages of tantra, culminating in liberation. The most famous examples are the Lotus Crown of the precious Guru Padmasambhava and the *Vajra-Mukhut*, the Black Crown of the Karmapa incarnations.

Telepathy is very often the first *siddha* (magical power) to spontaneously unfold when a practitioner has realized a level of spiritual awareness. Alchemical texts refer to it under such verbal veils as the “projection of the Stone” and also by the name of the twelfth stage of the Great Work, Multiplication.

Telepathic induction is vital in the work of “Those Who Know.” At a personal level, esoteric teachers, no matter how skilled, are to a certain extent still products of their milieu. Their use of words, anecdotes, and parables in spoken teaching will reflect their cultures, social backgrounds and life experiences. Although some would-be pupils will be able to relate to this with ease, others will find it an obstruction. This is even more the case with practitioners in the world. The use of telepathy overcomes this. We may give advice out of a pure motivation of compassion, but because we do not have a clear perception of the total situation, the advice may lead others astray. With telepathy and other powers of heightened awareness, such problems do not arise, because it is the reality that is broadcast. And the recipients’ own subconscious will present what is projected in idioms and language with which they are comfortable. This is why teachers in the East often give what is called *darshan*. *Darshan* occurs when pupils sit with their teachers in silence. No verbal exchange takes place. There may be preliminary prayers or invocations and a spoken blessing at the conclusion, but the rapport and exchange takes place at a supersonscious level, “in those things which are eternal.”

At a planetary level, telepathic broadcasting is vital. Those who have earned the privilege of being consciously in the Divine Presence also have the responsibility to mediate, through their instrumentality, that awareness to those of us who aspire, as well as to those in the world who seek to bring “the Kingdom to Earth,” men and women of all degrees who work selflessly for betterment of humanity in all areas of endeavor—individuals who, though not engaged in esoteric work per se, aim at the same goal.

This is more pronounced in the political arena (contemporary cynicism aside) because politics affect the fate of millions. Throughout history, there have been men and women in politics whose ideals and insights have raised them from the level of politician to that of statesman. Those who have worked near such individuals have become aware

of a positive influence greater than any shortcomings of the individual that might work through them at times. When these people remain true to their ideals, the Hierarchy can work through them. When they turn from the good, the beautiful, and the true, others must be sought. This is one reason why, in times of national or planetary crisis, individuals come to the fore with all the qualities needed to deal with the crisis. Often, when the crisis has passed, these individuals replace their “guidance” with their egos and they fall from prominence. Most are unaware of the source of their inspiration; a few are not. Tradition says that Abraham Lincoln was one who was so aware. In recent times, it is said that Anwar Sadat, of Egypt, and Mikhail Gorbachev, of the former USSR, were as well. Sometimes it is necessary for a Sage (a *mahatma*, “a great soul”) to enter the political arena directly to express, by word and deed, the spiritual principles that will lead to humanity’s abiding happiness. Then we see the coming of a Jesus, an Apollonius, a Comte de Saint-Germain, or a Gandhi.

In rank upon rank the Hierarchy extends through every level of existence. It is composed of humans (incarnate and discarnate), angels and archangels, life-forms unknown to many, and those Great Ones (some of whom are of human evolution) who gaze upon the light of the Most High face to face. Each in their turn receives from above and imparts to below. And they speak mind to mind.

One of the purposes for attaining the Stone of the Wise enshrined in the Mercury center (astrologically, Mercury rules communication) is to produce a receptor capable of receiving the more rarefied spiritual influences and an organism capable of transmitting them. “Selfish salvation there is none.” It is for all others, as well as for ourselves, that we undertake the Work. Likewise, in Mahayana Buddhism, all rituals and meditations end with the dedication that “Whatever benefits are accrued may help all beings to reach Enlightenment.”

### ***The Far-Voyaging Spirits of Light***

Those who sit with us in the sieges about the Round Table wear “thought-presences,” imaginative forms to which our consciousness can relate. After all, in the early stages of practice, dealing with “glories of light” might be romantic, but it can also be rather disconcerting and distort our focus. These thought-presences are, at first, “clothings” projected from our own subconscious wardrobe of images. But the essences, the communicating intelligences, that wear the “clothes” are nonetheless real.

Intellectually, there arises the question: "Are they, in essence, objectively real, or are they actually sub-personalities from my unconscious?" And, as with most matters of higher and interior levels, the answer is of course, paradoxically, "Both!"

The macrocosm and microcosm are not actually separate. This is where the model of a microcosmic mirror reflecting a macrocosmic image, like all models, falls short. Macrocosm and microcosm simply appear to interact as if this were the case, which is not the same thing. And, although practitioners of the indirect path make use of this state of appearances, they should not become attached to it, or they remain like flies caught in the Web of Maya. The microcosm is a center of expression for all the forces of the universe, its very existence brought about by those forces converging at that point. In truth, everything is from Above; nothing originates below. So, the "reflection" in the microcosmic mirror is not a two-dimensional image, nor is the image separate from that which it reflects. The complete Hermetic axiom of wisdom is: "As Above so Below; as *Within* so *Without*."

Every power in the universe, every archangel, every god, every archon, every demon, is both "out there," as a cosmic function and within us. Every state of consciousness is reflected in us. Our dreams and nightmares are the frontiers of heaven and hell. Consequently, each and every human being has the innate capacity to be a Buddha or a Hitler.

Those Companions who sit with us in the light of the Grail are both exterior beings who have become embodiments of certain universal qualities and, at the same time, projections of those qualities—albeit undeveloped—within our personal totality. Like the Round Table itself, this practice evokes them from subjectivity to objectivity. But the source of both the table and its illustrious company is Divine in origin. The distortions we must acknowledge as our own and, with the help of the those who sit about the table with us, we must redeem them if we are to come into our full potential. Communication with the unseen is fraught with problems, as history shows in many deluded individuals who have distorted spiritual impulses to aggrandize their own egos. Yet all our religions and philosophies (at least, those that deserve the name), indeed, all that inspires civilization, have originated from such revelations. This all may seem to focus on the negative. But this is not to denounce the means. Electricity may light a city or fry a living being. In fact, all I am doing is endeavoring to forewarn practitioners of the potential pitfalls of transference, illusion, and resultant hubris.

This formula of the table and the Grail is an age-old, tried-and-tested means of communication. It has the advantage over the better-known methods of séance and channelling because it is one level removed from brain-consciousness, operating, as it does, upon the subtle plane, thus bypassing the muffling effects of pure physicality. If the guidelines that govern such communications are understood and adhered to, this may be an instrument for drawing back the veil of heaven.

The unwavering focus of this formula must be the Holy Grail itself, since we have, through our previous meditations, endowed it with the automatic association of being a living symbol of our Higher Self and of the Sefhira Tiphareth. Although to Tiphareth are assigned the qualities of harmony, balance, and their resultant Beauty, the prime attribution of the sphere of the Sun is Truth. In the ancient Egyptian Mysteries, Tiphareth was symbolized by the golden scales of Ma'at (goddess of Truth), in which the soul was weighed at the end of an incarnation. And, in Christian sacred art, the Archangel of Tiphareth, Great Michael, is often portrayed holding a pair of golden scales to weigh souls on the day of judgment. The Grail, receiving the ray of light from Above, indicates, at a profound level, that the communications received come through the mediation of our own immortal spirit and are mental constructs that serve as psychological safeguards against deceit.

Therefore, all questions and answers are directed through and received from the Grail in the center of the Table Round. We do not address a Companion by turning to one side or another. The focus of all at the table is the Divine Glory in the center. In fact, if communication is received as words, the voice will emanate from the Grail itself, rather than from any seated figure. Anything other than this should be discounted and ignored. There are important testings that we may use to distinguish true communication from the clamor of our own psyche. The Voice never flatters. The Voice never interrupts. The Voice never commands. The Voice speaks in terms of spiritual principles—of eternal laws—that may be tried and proven by their application in our daily life. The ultimate criterion by which all received teachings are judged (and this applies equally to exterior teachings and inner-plane communications) is: “Does this teaching take me closer to God or farther away?”

Intuition (literally, “inner teaching”) is the way the Eternal One communicates its own knowledge of itself to the personal consciousness of a human being. This knowing is imparted from Above, through the images impressed upon the astral realm of Yetzirah. Intuition is superconscious

in origin, but clothes itself in the symbolic images of the collective subconscious. True intuition never advises what is merely expedient; it is always clear and concise and its meaning is unmistakable.

Communication may not necessarily come through speech at all. It may come through images or be received as strong impressions—hearing, seeing, or feeling, depending on our personality—but they too will emerge from the light of the Grail. Over the course of time, communication will come through each and every one of these means.

The forms and identities of the Great Companions are at first concealed by their hooded silver robes to prevent inexperienced practitioners from falling into the trap of projection. Too many channelled teachings are accepted as “gospel” in many esoteric, New Age, and spiritualistic circles, simply on the basis of the illustrious identity of their source. People are flattered if Plotinus, Merlin, or Gabriel come and teach them in person. They fall to their knees and swallow it whole, like an infallible pronouncement given *ex cathedra*. Basically, this reflects the same ego-game as celebrity worship and name-dropping in high society, just moved up one level. And, of course, it’s all presented in nice “spiritual wrapping paper” to make the hearers feel really special and evolved. It’s quite amazing how individuals who, in ordinary life, can recognize a rogue a mile away (and wouldn’t buy a car from him!) lose perspective when it comes to religious and/or esoteric matters. They will give away their homes, their families, their integrity, will happily kill other people or themselves, if only some highly-evolved aliens are there waiting to beam them up to a passing comet.

My root teacher once said, “In Qabalah, God is the only authority, all else is advice.” We do not escape the consequences of our actions because some authority—living, dead, or fictitious—tells us to do something. “I was only obeying orders” is not recognized as a mitigating circumstance in the universe’s Court of Appeals!

In real Schools of the Soul (esoteric groups giving valid training in the Mysteries), the identities of their inner teachers—for there is an inner group behind the outer group—are not revealed to their apprentices in order to avoid this problem of projection and to encourage apprentices in the Mysteries to develop discrimination, to assess a teaching for themselves. In tarot, this is why the card of Reason (Key IV The Emperor) comes before the card of Intuition (Key V The Hierophant).

Some teachings, it is true, do not make sense immediately. These should be filed away for future reference. They may become clear later.

It is important that we do not become emotionally bound to what is received, for there is a glamor in such things. One should be courteous and grateful for what has been transmitted—*any errors usually lie on our side of the fence*—then judge it accordingly: “Does this teaching take me closer to God or farther away?”

Gradually, over time, the identities of the table’s Fellowship will emerge. As with most things upon the inner plane, this usually occurs when you’re *not* expecting it! It doesn’t happen when you’re obsessed with it. In fact, it doesn’t really matter if it ever happens. Perhaps, during a practice, you will find that one of those seated at the table will appear uncloaked. Sometimes, the figure’s identity comes as a surprise. It may relate to something from your distant past, something you had forgotten, an interest you once had, a place you saw, or a book you read. Other identities will seem to have no relevance to your current incarnation at all, but relate to other experiences of your spirit’s Great Journey. And then, when you think it’s all clear, one member of the Fellowship may be replaced by another. This only happens, however, if you are moving forward and not resting on your laurels. Veiled or revealed, however, the Great Companions are there to assist you. They will always point to the Divine as the sole purpose of the Great Work. They are the faces and forms by which the Absolute teaches you, in a manner you can bear—at this time. They are His servants alone. They are the messengers, bearers of the wisdom and guidance forever being uttered by the One Teacher. There is, in truth, no other than the One Teacher who is also the Voice of Silence: “He who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:15 and Mark 4:9).

## THE PRACTICE: STAGE 1

Commence with the preliminary exercises—relaxation and rhythmical breath cycle. Do not neglect them. Ascend the Tree of the Assiah and perform the Qabalistic Cross and the “Parting of the Veil” mudra.

Project the table and Grail from your Tiphareth center—from subjective latency to objective potency. Take your seat in your siege. Look up at the Sun shining high above the Grail. See it ray down a beam of its influence into the Sacred Cup and through it. Let the golden light enter the heart center of your subtle body, irradiating you with its sublime glory. Lay your hands on the table, one on either side of the zodiacal symbol incised on its surface, and see it light up with golden light. When

this happens, the Great Companions will come and take up their places about the Table Round. Unite with them, being aware of how your auras interpenetrate. Mentally send greetings, through the Grail, to those gathered there with you. Adopt a confidently serene and receptive attitude and observe what comes to you through the Grail, from them.

Now, become aware of the chamber in which the Round Table is situated. It is a great, square chamber of stately proportions. The floor is paved with square tiles of whitest marble, with gold mortar set between the paving stones. The high walls, hewn from grey granite, rise to a groined ceiling, with the Sun sphere—high above the Grail—at its boss. Set into the walls are wonderful stained-glass windows. They depict the kings and princes of the Grail—those illustrious ones who have, throughout Earth's history, been and still are the custodians of the mysteries of the Grail. Paradoxically, sunlight from outside shines in through these windows. Their rainbow light shines down upon the white paved floor. This chamber, the Great Hall, is encompassed by these translucent images of the spiritual royalty of humanity.

Beneath the windows, on the wall to your right, hang richly colored tapestries with particular tarot keys as their design. In clockwise sequence they show The Emperor, The Hermit, and Death. The tapestries on the wall to your left (continuing in a clockwise direction) show The Devil, Justice, and The Lovers.

On the wall directly opposite you, in place of a tapestry, hangs a curtain of cloth-of-gold. Above the curtain, but beneath the window, hangs a chivalric shield. The shield's field is white and its heraldic device is a gold phoenix, *issuant* from a nest of azure-blue flames. This is the east wall of the hall. Your personal siege is placed on the western arc of the Round Table.

Turning, the western wall behind you is also without a tapestry. It has a low archway cut through it that is veiled by a strangely quiescent mist. This mist sparkles with rainbow-colored light. On the same wall, above the arched doorway, hangs another shield; but this shield is concealed from view by a black cloth that hangs over it.

Having surveyed the hall, focus again upon the Grail and give thanks through it to the Companions. Return to your physical sheath and then draw the table back, from objective potency into subjective latency, into your own heart center. As before, close the veil, perform a few cycles of the Fountain Breath to align the energies, perform the Qabalistic Cross with *kavannah* and descend the Tree of Assiah. Write up your meditation record as soon as possible.

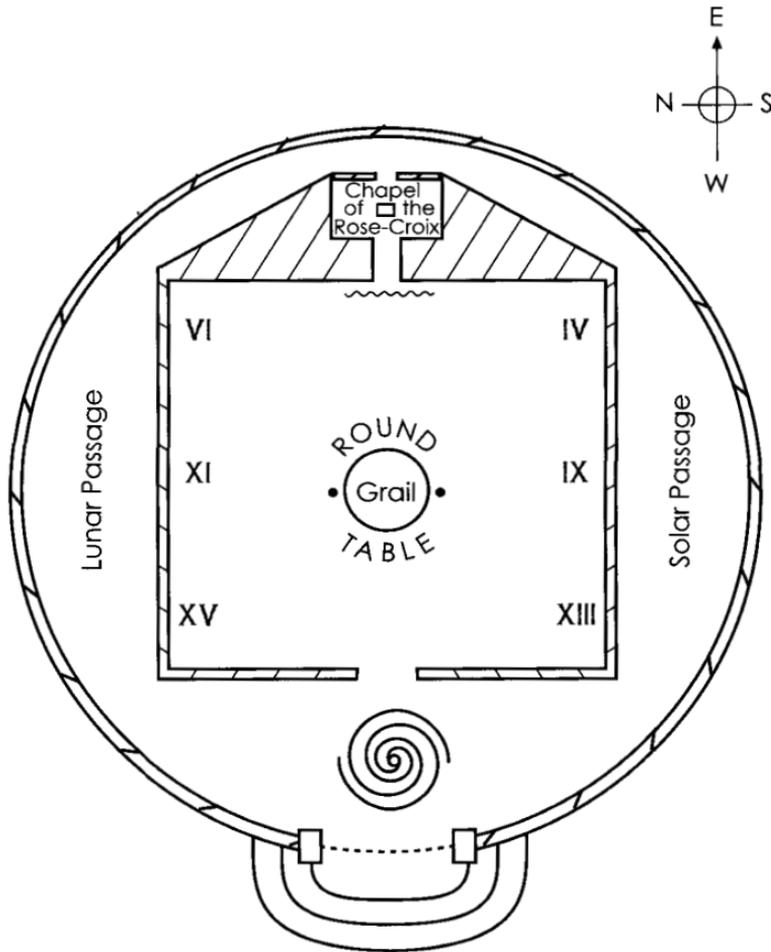


Figure 2. The Great Hall. The roman numerals denote the tarot tapestries.

## AFTERMATH

It will take some practice to build this hall imaginatively and establish it firmly. Figure 2 may be useful for memorizing the various details (see above). You will know you have succeeded when the symbols spontaneously emit light and radiance within the meditation. This indicates that the details are now “fixed,” that they have been accepted by your personal subconscious. For example, you may find yourself gazing with pleasure at the way the twelve silver lines on the table’s surface gleam in

the sunlight, or the way the rainbow patches of refracted light glimmer on the floor. This practice should be undertaken at least twenty times.

## THE PRACTICE: STAGE 2

Proceed in the same way as in the first stage: the preparatory practices, the projection of the table, sitting thereat, linking with the Grail and then with the table, and the arrival of the Great Companions. Greet the Companions, as always, through the Grail.

Now rise from your siege and walk around the table until you come to stand before the golden curtain on the eastern wall. Pull back the gold curtain to reveal a rectangular door. The door is fashioned of cedar and upon it is an enameled plate depicting a black oval containing an upright scarlet triangle. Open the door and see a short, narrow passage. Proceed along the passageway to emerge into the sanctum, into the Chapel of the Rose-Croix (see figure 2, page 59).

The chapel, like the hall, is built of squared gray stones; but here, the floor is covered by a thick, deep-violet rug. In the center of the chapel, raised on three steps, is a cubical altar. Rising from the altar is a gold Latin cross—some six feet in height—with a red rose of 22 petals at its center. The rose is lit from within, like a “presence lamp.” Upon the golden heart of the mystical rose glistens a single dewdrop—a drop of dew from the first dawn. Light from an unknown source is refracted by the dewdrop, creating a halo of rainbow-colored light about the ruby rose and illuminating the cross of gold.

On the altartop, lying before the Rose-Cross, is a great sword in a jeweled scabbard. This is Excalibur, but it has other names too—and many uses. It is the Sword of Light and may only be wielded by the rightful sovereign of this place. Beyond the altar, in the far wall, is an archway opening onto a passage that runs left and right, encircling the Chapel and the Great Hall of the Table (see figure 2, page 59).

Approach the altar and, before the great symbol of universal hope, offer the form of worship that seems appropriate to you as an act of dedication to the Great Work. Then make the Qabalistic Cross upon yourself, observing, on this level, the energy patterns this sets up.

Return to the Great Hall, sit at the table once more, and make contact with the Companions, noting whatever images or ideas arise.

When the communication comes to an end, give thanks for what has been received and bid the Companions farewell. Rise from the table and return to the physical level. Absorb the table and complete the sealing practice as before.

## AFTERMATH

The Chapel of the Rose-Croix is the secret heart. It is the “central stillness,” the “deep center,” “the place that loveth silence.” It is the dwelling of the Immanence—the Divine Presence within. Visit it often, for it is the place of the true *Holy Communion*, of which all others are but outward forms and signs.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

Invocation of God with a certain heavenly intention, drawn from the depths of a sincere heart conscience liberated from ambition, hypocrisy and all other vices which are in affinity with these including arrogance, luxury, boldness, petulance, oppression of the poor and similar evils. All of these are to be eradicated from the heart . . . that when a man desires to prostrate himself before the Throne of Grace, in order to obtain health . . . his body may be transmuted into a Holy Temple of God and purged from all uncleanness.

*The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*  
—Basil Valentine<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Basil Valentine, *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* (Leipzig, 1604; English translation, 1660, The British Library Collection).





# SUN AND MOON BOW DOWN BEFORE HIM

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*Verily, I tell you, the world is within this six foot high body.*

—The Buddha<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

In the previous practice, when building up the Great Hall of the Table, there is an interior sun—at the hall's ceiling, high above the Grail—and an exterior Sun, whose light shines through the stained-glass windows into the hall. This apparent paradox results from an attempt to portray a deep spiritual reality, expressed by the alchemist, Jacob Boehme, in his tract *De Signatura Rerum*: “The outer sun hungers for the inner one.”<sup>2</sup>

An altarpiece painted in Westphalia, Germany between 1370-1380 shows the twelve disciples seated around a circular table. In the center of the table is a miniature Sun sphere from which rays of light shine into the mouth of each disciple. They are fed—nourished—by the inner Sun for which the outer Sun hungers.

### ***Creations of the Created***

The creation of thought-forms is one of the skills that practitioners master in the Lesser Mysteries. Essentially, this consists of fashioning, in Yetzirah, appropriate channels through which the spiritual energies from Briah can flow. The same purpose is served in Assiah by holy images: icons, tankas, statues, sacred art, and architecture. If the physical image is not connected to the inner reality, or if worshippers mistake the sign

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<sup>1</sup> Buddha, “Samyutta Nikaya I,” in Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Psycho-Cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa* (Berkeley, CA: Dharma, 1976), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Boehme, *The Signature of All Things* (London and Cambridge: Thomas Clarke, 1969).

for the goal, the result is idolatry and confusion in the labyrinth of appearances. Here we can see that the first Commandment—"Thou shalt have no gods before Me"—is of paramount importance in esoteric work, as it is in the material sphere. Our beacon, the guiding light by which we set our course, is the Divine.

There are three classes of imagery that occur in our interior states: mantic, telematic, and phosphoric. Mantic images are those that arise clothed in forms drawn from the personal subconscious content. We are most familiar with this type of image in dream work and psychoanalysis. For example, a person who, while out of their physical body in sleep, encounters a ministering spirit, will subconsciously clothe the spirit in a form it associates with that energy, so that the form may be perceived as a mother, a wise friend, or even a beloved dog. This perception will be recalled upon waking. In fact, the same thing occurs with physical sight. Light rays strike the retina of the eye in various patterns. These come from the surfaces of the objects from which the light is reflected. This stimulus is passed to the back of the brain, where the sight center is situated, and the subconscious identifies—rightly or wrongly—what is perceived. In an adult human, whose subconscious store is great, this happens so fast, that it generally goes unobserved. In babies and young children, it is more easily observed. Yet, even with adults, there are occasions when this becomes apparent. The following yogic parable illustrates this—and much more—since it also holds a teaching regarding the path of form.

While walking in a tropical garden at twilight, a man's foot touched an object. Looking down, he saw a coiled snake. He fled. Returning to the garden in the morning light, he saw that the object of his fear was a piece of discarded rope. He laughed at his panic and left. A yogi walking thru the same garden saw the object, picked it up, and used it as a girdle.

This parable illustrates, among other things, the problem with using mantic images for advanced work. While they are useful, as indicators of subconscious content, for processing past experiences and as signs of interior health and healing, they are the product of personal experience, with all the colorful distortions and prejudices that this entails. The images per se are untrustworthy. Two people dream of a dog. One was bitten by a dog as young child and has ever since had a dislike of them. The other had a close relationship with a pet dog. In both cases, the image is the same; but in each case, the dream means something entirely different. This is also the case with mantic images. As a result, in the

Eastern and Western esoteric traditions, the second class of images are used for the work of transformation.

Telesmatic images are images deliberately built through thought. They are formed by concentration and visualization, until a semi-autonomous state is achieved. Humans do this all the time in their fantasies, in an attempt to make their existence bearable. In pathological circumstances, individuals become obsessed by those images. Here we see the negative side of the thought-form attaining a semi-autonomous state. This is one of the reasons, why at the completion of each practice, we close the veil and affirm our objective functionality upon the physical plane. We are dealing with a willed disassociation, followed by a willed integration—potentially dangerous tools to be sure, but powerful.

Telesmatic images are those thought-forms built up over millennia by generations of practitioners. As such, they constitute a safe and tried way through the unseen. In Vajrayana, we see the thought-building of mandalas, deities, spirits, lineage-trees, and the chakras within the subtle body. In alchemy, we see the thought-building of the Tree, deities, angels, tarot tableaux, and the “interior stars” within the subtle body. These images, drawn from the collective unconscious, are superior to personal images. They are undistorted reflections mirroring the Beckoning Light. But they must still be used with care. Used unwisely, they can cause eruption within the subconscious and even flood the conscious mind. This is why Alchemy, like the Tantras, is not for everyone. This is the true reason for the secrecy and discernment their teachers insist upon. Wisely used, they are the rungs of the ladder, of Jacob’s vision at Beth-El, by which the angels descended and ascended the heavens.

A phosphoric image, as mentioned in the aftermath of the previous practice, is a “sign of attainment.” It occurs when a carefully built telesmatic image, imbued with energy from practice and contemplation, becomes connected with the spiritual reality for which it is a symbol. The image is literally lit up from within, sometimes causing the inner eye to wince at the brightness. It is beyond our normal capacity to visualize and sustain. It cannot be forced. Once this has occurred, it indicates that the image has been accepted as a means of grace. Sacred art seeks to portray this by depicting haloes and, in Tibetan sacred art, auras around the forms of deities and enlightened beings. In a phosphoric image, the radiance occurs of its own accord and brilliance. However, this does not mean that the image will be luminous forever; once is usually enough. It is something to look for as an indicator of progress.

***Working at the Table***

The glyph of the Round Table may be worked in several ways to effect various intentions. We place different images upon the table, on the zodiacal sign in front of our siege, to signal our intention and to activate the table accordingly. When we are in need of nurture and vitality, we place a small silver chalice before us; the table is now functioning as the Table of Refreshment. We see grace descending into the Grail, the cup of consolation, and from there flowing into the silver chalice before us. We may then drink of the Life of worlds, which is also the Well of infinite compassion.

If we are in need of clarification concerning a problem or an issue that besets us, we may place a lighted lamp on the table before us; the table will now function as the Table of Counsel. Gently hold the issue in mind and propel it toward the Grail until it is swallowed in its light. Serenely and confidently await the response, whatever images or messages issue from the Holy Grail. Always remember, however, it is advice that is given; the decision is yours.

When, after prayer and meditation, it becomes clear that decisive action must be taken—on whatever plane of existence—place a drawn sword upon the table, the blade's point toward the Grail and its hilt toward you. You now sit at the Table of Action. If a sword is then laid upon the table by each of the Companions—until the Grail is surrounded by twelve shining swords—this indicates that the proposed action is just and that the energies of the table and its Fellowship will flow through you.

There are other aspects of the table as well—from the Table of the Hosts of Faerie right up to the Starry Table of Great Shalom—and these will open to receive practitioners as they progress in the Work.

In a certain manner, the Tree of Life—the ten fruit and the shining paths—may be conceived as a *vertical* cross-section of the aura, while the Round Table, with its twelve-fold division, can be seen as a *horizontal* cross-section of the aura. The Grail upon the table—coinciding with Tiphareth upon the Tree—shines in the heart, balancing Above with Below and Without with Within.

***The Caduceus of Hermes***

The Divine Unity of the world of Atziluth becomes subdivided into the creative powers when the world of Briah emanates from its heart. The Tiphareth of Atziluth simultaneously becomes the Kether of Briah. It is important to note the use of the term “subdivided.” It is repeated over and over in the ceremonial presentations of the Mysteries, in the al-

chemical texts, and in the witness of the Sages that there is only One Reality, One that appears under the guise of the many. Creation is not a result of multiplication, of forming more than there was originally. It is an act of subdivision, the actual revelation of the inexhaustable potential of the Infinite One.

In Briah, polar opposition first appears as cosmic day and night, expansion and contraction, force and form, and a whole host of opposing yet complementary aspects. All are necessary for dynamic existence, for movement, alternation, and progression. These principles embody and express the spiritual laws of rhythm and polarity.

A superficial knowledge of the law of polarity has caused much misunderstanding in many esoteric schools: concepts such as “working partners,” “soul mates,” one gender being able to do certain occult work and not another, and even to what level of existence you may ascend if you “wear” a certain type of physical body (as if it were a spacesuit). These views can be supported (rather ardently usually), by some very interesting theories, ranging from the complex to the naïve. They are shown to be absurd, however, in the light of real practice. They confound “companionship on the Path” with emotional, psychological, and physical needs.

Essentially, “polarity” is alternation. Therefore, the esoteric use of polarity is the knowledge of alternation, of the tides of flux and reflux, within and without. There is only “now,” the present moment. In the daily cycle, now is constant, but at a certain phase, day predominates, and at another, night. When engaged in conversation, you may be in an active mode (the speaker) at one moment and in a passive mode (the listener) at another, although, the conversation (an act of mental communion through physical instrumentality) is constant, regardless of which participant is in which polarity.

Each human being is a complete refection of the universe; there is no other outside needed to effect that completion. A woman is not one half of the Tree awaiting an exterior male to come along and complete it—or vice versa. Neither does Enlightenment occur in pairs. All the ten Sephiroth, all the worlds, all the principles and potencies are present in totality within every individual. That’s what being a microcosm means! Individuality may emphasize certain aspects more than others, but that doesn’t mean the quiescent aspects are absent. Each human is an image or expression of the divine.

Many students of occultism confuse what is common practice (though not always well understood) in the Lesser Mysteries (which are,

after all, a spiritual apprenticeship for the Great Work) for *the Work itself*. Yet in many other systems of training, we see that fundamental basics are often taught in classes—groups—and that sometimes these classes will divide into pairs for more detailed reflection and feedback. It is just the same in esoteric work.

In the Work of Transformation, three great channels in the subtle body are of paramount importance. The *Shushumna* corresponds physically to the spinal column and to *Akasha*, the Quintessence. Along this central axis are the seven “interior stars,” the “inner metals,” or chakras. Weaving around the column of *Shushumna*, mirroring one another, are the twin currents of *Ida* and *Pingala*. This is depicted in Western illustrations as the caduceus of Hermes or Mercury, the serpent-entwined staff carried by the messenger of the gods (see figure 3, page 70). According to Greek myth, the god Hermes (Roman, Mercury), was given a rod by his fellow god, Apollo. Traveling to Arcadia, Hermes came upon two snakes engaged in deadly combat. He cast his rod down between them and the snakes peacefully entwined themselves about the rod. The rod, the serpent-girt caduceus, thus became a symbol of peace—of balance and equilibrium of two warring energies.

*Ida* and *Pingala* are, respectively, the microcosmic active and passive (lunar and solar) currents of the One Force flowing through the human being, on all levels. They weave about the central column in a helix, similar to the DNA helix of which they are the prematerial prototype. There is a rabbinic parable that says that the Creator—blessed be He—when fashioning the universe took a spiral of flame (fire) and a spiral of ice (water) and wove them together.

*Pingala*, the solar current, corresponds to day, heat, dryness; it is centrifugal and electric. It is evolutionary and tends toward conscious awareness (since evolution is initially a self-conscious activity) differentiation, and objective knowledge. *Ida*, the lunar current, corresponds to night, coolness, moistness; it is centripetal and magnetic. *Ida* relates to involution and therefore subconsciousness, since it is by its agency that embodiment occurs. It is integrative, regenerative, seeking to re-unify all that has been separated by the intellect.

These two currents are seen in the side Sephiroth on the Tree. Water, the lunar current, is expressed in the spheres Binah, Chesed, and Hod. The solar fire occurs in Chokmah, Geburah, and Netzach. This crossover prevents either side pillar of the Tree from becoming too rigid. The fiery Sephira of Geburah, in the center of the Pillar of Form (Binah and Hod both being watery), adds dynamism to an otherwise fluidic

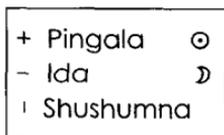
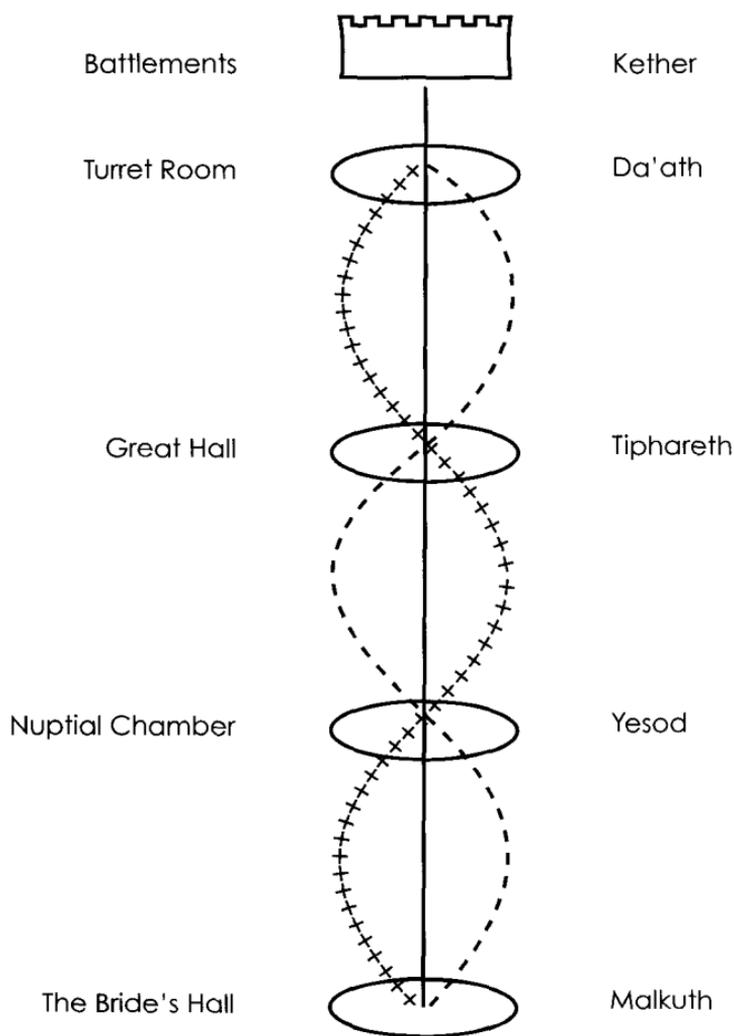
pole, while the serene waters of Chesed, in the center of the Pillar of Force, restrain the fires of Chokmah and Netzach. The spheres of the Central Pillar—Kether, Tiphareth, and Yesod—are attributed to air, as a symbol of all-pervading consciousness.

In esoteric physiology, these two currents are seen as having two terminals: one in the right and left ovaries or testes, the other in the right and left nostrils. Observation of breath will reveal how one nostril predominates in breathing for about 20 minutes and then, alternately, the other nostril. There is a short crossover period in which both nostrils are optimum, lasting only for a couple of minutes. It is most important to remember, however, that these currents, like the chakras themselves, are not the properties or organs of the gross material body. They belong to the etheric—or vital pranic—body from which the visible body has emerged.

The solar and lunar currents weave about the central axis of the spinal column. At certain points, they intersect. These points of juncture relate to the position of the Middle Pillar Sefiroth on the subjective Tree of Life: Kether, Tiphareth, and Yesod. These junctions are therefore of critical importance in the arousing the Dragon, the fiery power of Kundalini. For this reason, the visualizations of the chambers of these spheres is detailed in our practices, in order to give us the necessary precision and control.

The objective of Yoga and Alchemy is two-fold, each part dependent on the other. First, after satisfactorily mastering the necessary preliminary purifications, is to unite the solar and lunar currents. Alchemy symbolizes this with images of marriage between the solar king and the lunar queen and, later, by representation of the hermaphrodite, Mercurius. In Tibetan sacred art, it is shown by *Yab-Yum*, representations of the buddhas and deities in sexual union with their consorts. When positive and negative currents are brought together in an electrical circuit, a bulb may be lit. When the solar and lunar subtle energies are brought into a state of balanced union, the human being can become illumined.

The second objective is to bring the vital energy (prana) into the *Shushumna* channel. This usually only happens in sleep or as death approaches, which is why trance work plays a part in some esoteric practices and why the ancient manuals acquired such names as the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Only by esoteric practice can the vital energy be made to enter the *Shushumna* outside of sleep or death. When this happens, Kundalini is activated and rises. As it ascends, dualistic states of mind are annulled and realization is achieved.



Inset #1



Inset #2

Figure 3. The caduceus of Hermes or Mercury.

This is the hidden meaning of the sign of infinity—symbol of the Holy Spirit—that looks like the number 8 lying on its side. In gematria, eight is the Dominical number, “the number of the Lord.” It is also the number of the Sefira Hod (the Perfect intelligence), and therefore of Mercury and of Alchemy. This horizontal 8, appears only twice in tarot. The two keys in which it is shown both relate to the kundalini aspect Great Work. They are The Magician and Strength. On both figures, the sign of infinity (or “perpetual rhythm,” also associated with Hod) is shown as being above the head. The Magician card plays a critical part in arousing the dragon, as you will see later, and Strength is the tarot representation of kundalini itself, having the number eight assigned to it. The loops of the number eight represent the spirals of Ida and Pingala, joined together at a single point—in other words, within the Shushumna channel. Furthermore, the position of this symbol (over the head) signifies that the Fiery Power has been raised to the crown, the Kether center just above the head.

Some traditions assert that the solar and lunar currents lie outside the spinal column, while others hold they lie within it. But, as is often the case, the truth lies somewhere between these two views. In some systems of Yoga and Theurgy, practioners use images that seem to conflict with those in other systems. But we should not be bound by or fixated on any system of metaphysics, saying “This is how it is; all else is wrong.” The visualizations given here are not assertions that practitioners must accept as objective facts (e.g., whether the polar currents lie in or outside of the central channel), but rather directions for the work of creating vivid mental images so that the vital currents may flow from here to there, thereby creating psychic and physical relations and preconditions for the flow of the forces of consciousness.

Both Alchemy and Vajrayana teach that it is necessary for the active and passive currents to be brought into the Shushumna. Tibetan Yoga calls this “bringing the ‘winds’ into the central axis.” Here “wind” is used to signify different aspects of mind or consciousness. This has the same significance as the Western term Air when used as a symbol for consciousness. Consciousness is invisible, subtle, and pervading. Mercury is assigned to air; alchemical Mercury is a symbol for Superconsciousness and Enlightenment. The Kether center is also the Mercury center among the “interior stars.” In our practice, the unification of the polar opposites of Sun and Moon is achieved through a series of techniques that we will utilize as we proceed.

The Ida and Pingala currents are depicted on Tibetan tankas (visualization aide-memoires) by images of the Sun and Moon shown in the top right and left corners of the sacred scroll. In Western esotericism, these currents are shown in tarot symbolism by the pair of kneeling ministers in The Hierophant, by Adam and Eve in The Lovers, by the sphinxes in The Chariot, and by the human figures in The Devil, Sun, and Judgement cards. In all of these keys, the third and central figure is the reconciler (The Archangel, The Charioteer, The Sun-disc, etc.) and a pictorial image of Super-consciousness, of Shushumna. And in Key XXI, The World, representing Cosmic Consciousness, the dancer at the center of the design holds a spiral wand in each hand, representing the solar and lunar currents.

The central axis, Shushumna, is the channel for the Quintessence—the “concealed Glory,” all-pervading Akasha. But do not hold too rigidly to the idea that the Shushumna is confined to the subtle equivalent of the spinal column. Sometimes in meditation, the Shushumna can appear as fine as a hair and, at other times, so wide that the entire body becomes one stream of force, a fire of highest inspiration, annihilating all limits, and growing until it fills the whole universe.

The Chinese say “A picture is worth a thousand words.” The following is from Arthur Avalon’s book, *The Serpent Power*, in which he records an experience that a European friend of his had.

He . . . saw the “nerves” of Ida and Pingala and the “central fire” with a trembling aura of rosy light, and blue or azure light, and a white fire that rose up into the brain and flamed out in a winged radiance on either side of the head. Fire was seen flashing from centre to centre with such rapidity that he could see little of the vision . . . The radiance or aura round Ida was seen as moon-like—that is, palest azure—and Pingala red, or rather pale rosy opalescence. Kundalini appeared in vision as of intense golden-like white fire . . . Taking the centres Shushumna, Ida and Pingala to be symbolised by the Caduceus of Mercury, the little ball at the top of the rod was identified with the *Sahasrara* [crown center] or pineal gland, and the wings as the flaming of auras on each side of the centre when the fire strikes it. One night . . . he felt the serpent uncoil, and it ran up, and he was “in a fountain of fire,” and felt, as he said, “the flames spreading wingwise about my head and there was a musical clashing as of cymbals, whilst some of these flames, like emanation, seemed to expand

and meet like gathered wings over my head. . . . I really felt frightened, as the Power seemed something which could consume me." My friend wrote me that in his agitation he forgot to fix his mind on the Supreme, and so missed a divine adventure.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PRACTICE

Commence with the preliminary exercises (fountain breath cycle), ascend the Tree of the Assiah, and perform the Qabalistic Cross and the Parting of the Veil mudra. Project the table from your Tiphareth center and take your seat in your siege.

Go to the chapel and make your offering of self to the Divine, then return to Great Hall of the Table. Approach the west wall, bearing the concealed shield, and pass through its doorway (curtained with a veil of rainbow mist). Beyond the doorway, there is a landing. Facing you is a large stained-glass representation of tarot key 2 The High Priestess. On either side of the tarot key are two arched doors, each leading onto a spiral stairway that goes up to chambers above and down to halls below. As you face the doors, the one on the right has carved above it a chalice, surmounted by a crescent Moon. The handrail of the stairway is of stout pale-blue rope attached to the wall at intervals. The left-hand doorway has carved above it a chalice surmounted by a Sun. The handrail of this stairway is of scarlet rope.

Go through the left-hand doorway, beneath the sun-cup symbol. This spiral stairway ascends in a deosil (clockwise) direction. You can feel a warm, dry breeze blowing up this stairway—blowing up behind you, not unpleasantly. It plays with your hair and the folds of your robe as you ascend. While climbing the stairs, you can see other doors and landings, but these do not concern you in the present practice.

You come to the end of the stairs, emerging onto another landing. Here, the tops of both spiral stairways are set into the floor (from which you have emerged). Turning to the East, you find a door of pale-amethyst crystal. Set in it is a design of a white crescent moon, lying on its back, with a smaller crescent within it. When you touch this design, the door opens and you enter a large circular room. This is the Turret Room. Overhead, there is a round window set in the ceiling. This overhead window shows the Shield of David (the six-rayed star of Unity and

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Avalon, *The Serpent Power* (New York: Dover, 1974), pp. 20-21.

Love), bearing in its center the four letters of the holy Name: *Yod-Heh-Vau-Heh*. The walls of this chamber are inset with clear windows, through which you can look out upon your inner kingdom, your interior world. The surrounding frame of the eastern window is particularly ornate. It depicts two serpents—one white, the other red—one rising up each side. The serpents meet, face to face at the keystone of the window's arch. In the oval space between the open jaws of the two serpents, is the All-Seeing Eye haloed by a golden glory. To the right of this eastern window, hanging from the ceiling, there is a purple pull-rope, ending in a tassel.

In the center of the room is a table or desk on which is an eagle-shaped bookstand bearing a large open book. The book is blank. Beside it lies a quill pen made of a white ostrich feather. Before the bookstand, inset into the table's surface itself, is a dull, black stone tablet. The tablet is rectangular. Engraved on it, in fine silver, is the Tree of Life. Beneath the Tree design, at the tablet's edge, is a row of four square buttons. The far-right button draws your attention, because it glitters. Looking more closely, you see that this button alone is depressed. It is carved from a flawless diamond.

Go to the windows and look out over your inner kingdom. You are looking at the land of Logres, the land that is under enchantment. In this land, the forces are out of balance and many things are happening which are against the divine law. Giants and ogres, dragons and wizards, and damsels in distress, are all here. Over the whole land broods a misty atmosphere which, however brightly the sun shines, prevents clear observation. This land also contains hidden springs of water, holy wells, and sacred sites. Many who dwell in the kingdom are in disguise, and those with whom they dwell do not know that the power and authority which these hidden ones serve derives from the Round Table. Remember that Logres is both macrocosmic and microcosmic. It is the world outside and around you, with all its problems, difficulties, and illusions, and it is also part of the inner kingdom of yourself. Remember, as you look at that land, that there—and nowhere else—are you called upon by the Fellowship to which you now belong to play your part and to put into practice the training you are given herein.

Make your way down the spiral stairway with the blue cord. As you step down onto the stairs, you are met by a cool, moist breeze blowing upward from the stairwell. This breeze gently blows on your face as you descend back down to the landing and emerge from the doorway sur-

mounted with the crest of the chalice and moon, to the left of the High Priestess card. Pass through the Great Hall of the Table and return to the Chapel of the Rose-Croix. There, before the Altar, make whatever pledges you may feel moved to make, but remember that these are not idle words. They are binding commitments. Be sure, therefore, that you do not attempt more than lies within your present power. Those who are faithful in small things can safely essay greater things in due course.

Return to the Great Hall and your siege at the Table Round. There, in the Circle of Fellowship about the Grail, give thanks for what has been received. Now withdraw the table back to latency as usual, and close your practice session in the usual manner.

It is recommended that this practice be undertaken at least twelve times.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

The following should be meditated upon from the viewpoint that what is described therein refers to a self-arising "state of consciousness" rather than to a constructed "mental attitude."

If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God; for like is known by like. Leap clear of all that is corporeal, and make yourself grow to a like expanse with that greatness which is beyond all measure; rise up above all time, and become eternal; then you will apprehend God. Think that for you nothing is impossible; deem that you too are immortal, and that you are able to grasp all things in your thought, to know every craft and every science; find yourself home in the haunts of every living creature; make yourself higher than all heights, and lower than all depths; bring together in yourself all opposites of quality: heat and cold, dryness and fluidity; think that you are everywhere at once, on land, at sea, in heaven; think that you are not yet begotten, that you are in the womb, that you are young, that you are old, that you have died, that you are in the world beyond the grave; grasp in your thought all this at once, all times and places, all substances and qualities and magnitudes together; then you can apprehend God. But if you shut up your soul in your body, and abase yourself, and say "I know nothing, I can do nothing, I am afraid of earth and sea, I

cannot mount to heaven; I do not know what I was, nor what I shall be"; then, what have you to do with God? . . . For it is the height of evil not to know God; but to be capable of knowing God, and to wish and hope to know Him, is the road which leads straight to the Good . . ."

*Corpus Hermeticum*: xlii  
Hermes-Trismegistos<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hermes-Trismegistos, *Corpus Hermeticum*, xlii, John Everard translated from Ficino's Latin, in the British Library Collection, London: 1650.



# THE CITADEL OF THE SOUL

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*The Lord is not worshipped with material things, but with one's own consciousness. Don't wave lights and incense, or offer flowers and food. He is found effortlessly when worshipped through self-realisation alone. The continuous and unbroken awareness of the indwelling Presence, the inner light of consciousness, is the supreme meditation and devotion.*

—Maharamayana<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

In both alchemy and Vajrayana, the exteriorized subtle body is imaged in the form of an edifice, a building, so that practitioners can make the delicate adjustments to the chakras, represented by the rooms or chambers in the edifice, that are necessary to initiate physical transformation.

This procedure is common to both oriental and occidental esoteric practice. In Vajrayana, the visualized edifice imprinted on the subtle body is the *stupa* (in Tibetan, *chörten*). Originally, a stupa was an Aryan monument raised over the tombs of the royal dead, like the earth mounds found in other cultures. In all likelihood, it symbolized the first tree (the Tree of Life) growing upon the primal mound or hill. With the coming of the historical Buddha, Shakya-Muni, the stupa was invested with a higher significance to represent the manifestation of the enlightened mind (consciousness), an architectural representation of the kayas, the vehicles of the Buddha. Some of the largest stupas are found in Sri-Lanka. The great stupa of Bouddhanath, at Kathmandu in Nepal, is the center of pilgrimage for people from all over the trans-Himalayan region and the Indian subcontinent.

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<sup>1</sup> Maharamayana, in Timothy Freke, *The Wisdom of the Hindu Gurus* (Boston: Tuttle, 1998), p. 35.

Apas is the Water of the Wise. It is shown as a crescent lying on its back, because all its manifestations form semi-lunar waves. Its color is white, with violet as a secondary tint. Its characteristic quality is contraction and it is the subtle principle of taste. Apas is assigned to Yesod (the sphere of the Moon) on the Tree of Life, but also to Kether. This teaches an aspect that might otherwise escape our notice. It is through the mental activity of the One Reality that the Tree—the Sephiroth and the paths—come into being. Kether is the point at which the wave-like motion, vibration, begins. So we see that the universe and everything in it is the result of the One's reflection of its own nature, the "stream of consciousness."

The last Tattva is Prithivi, the Earth of the Wise. It corresponds to Tiphareth and *not* to Malkuth upon the Tree. Its quality is cohesion, its color yellow, and its form cubic or rectilinear. Prithivi is the subtle principle of smell.

Although the Tattvas are better known in the East, they are, in fact, part of the Primordial or Planetary Tradition. The Lords of Mind (humanity's first teachers) used these "prime symbols" (circle, triangle, and square) to initiate early humanity into abstract thought—thought that was not form-based. The 17th-century mystical alchemist, Jacob Boehme, as far as we know, never met a yogi or an oriental in the flesh, yet in the Fifth Text of his *Mysterium Pansophicum*, we read an account of his own direct perception of nature's finer forces, wherein he gives colors that correlate with those of the Tattvas:

And thus we are able to recognise an eternal substantiality of Nature, identical with water and fire, which are, as it were, mixed together; where then this gives a light-blue colour [Vayu], like a flash of fire; where it hath a form as of ruby [Tejas] mixed with crystal in one substance, or as yellow [Prithivi], white [Apas], red and blue, mingled in a dark water [Akasha]; where it is as blue in green [the alchemical "Peacock's Tail," the iridescent subtone of Akasha], yet each has its lustre and shines. And the water checks the fire, so that there is no consuming there, but an eternal essence or substance into mysteries united one in another, and yet the distinction of two principles as two kinds of life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Boehme, "Mysterium Pansophicum," *The Signature of All Things* (London and Cambridge: Thomas Clarke, 1969).

The form-shapes attributed to the Tattvas are not arbitrary. Knowledge of them is the basis of the occult “doctrine of signatures.” Their vibrations determine the structure and shapes of crystals, and also the organic structures of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. So the Tattvas are the actual forces by which physical forms, in all nature’s realms, are produced. They are the builders of form and their shapes can be seen in all forms. Some of the tattvic patterns are visible to the naked eye. Sand sprinkled on a plate of glass will show some of them when a violin bow is drawn along its edge. Others are brought within our visual range with the aid of a microscope. But to the sages, such instruments are redundant.

The Tattvas interact with one another—as do the gross elements—and these permutations can be likened to the planetary conjunctions in astrology. These double influences are represented by combined symbols. For our purposes, certain of these symbol combinations represent the seven inner centers, the chakras. The tattvic symbols act as a powerful stimuli for the chakras, purifying their blockages (karmic impediments) and awakening them from dormancy. So we may safely utilize the tattvic symbols of the interior stars, without damaging the physical organism through concentration on actual physical locations. The symbols are shown in ascending order in figure 5 (see page 82) and in Table 1 (see below).

Table 1. The Tattvic Correspondences of the Interior Stars.

CHAKRA	INTERIOR PLANET	TATTVA GLYPH
<i>muladhara</i>	Saturn center	<i>Akasha-Akasha</i>
<i>svahisthana</i>	Mars center	<i>Tejas-Tejas</i>
<i>manipura</i>	Jupiter center	<i>Vayu-Aspas</i>
<i>anāhata</i>	Sun center	<i>Akasha-Tejas</i>
<i>visuddha</i>	Venus center	<i>Aspas-Tejas</i>
<i>ajna</i>	Moon center	<i>Aspas-Aspas</i>
<i>sahasrara-padma</i>	Mercury center	<i>Prithivi-Prithivi</i>

Two of these symbol combinations you have already encountered in your practice: the *Akasha-Tejas* symbol on the door-plate of the Chapel of the Rose-Croix, denoting the Sun center, and the *Aspas-Aspas* glyph on the door into the Turret Room, the Moon chakra. The others will become apparent when we complete the Tower of the Art.

Mercury Center:  
(Quicksilver)

Yellow square charged with a second yellow square.

Moon Center:  
(Silver)

White crescent charged with a second white crescent.

Venus Center:  
(Copper)

White crescent charged with a red triangle.

Sun Center:  
(Gold)

Indigo oval charged with a red triangle.

Jupiter Center:  
(Tin)

Blue circle charged with a white crescent.

Mars Center  
(Iron)

Red triangle charged with a second red triangle.

Saturn Center:  
(Lead)

Indigo oval charged with a second indigo oval.

Figure 5. The tattvic symbols of the interior stars.

### ***The Inner Castle***

The subtle body contains more power than the physical body. The physical body is not a distinct, self-sufficient entity. It is, in fact, very transient. It has been likened to a “standing wave,” inasmuch as the cells of which it is comprised are constantly being created and ejected. Nearly one third of the physical body’s cells are replaced in a twenty-four hour period. This is why the body of Jesus, after his crucifixion, lay in the tomb for three days. It is the etheric or subtle body that “holds” the template of the physical vehicle and permeates physical substance, holding it in its appointed form. In some of the older texts, the subtle body is called the *real physical body*, because it is *permanent* (throughout an incarnation, that is) and the merely physical is ever-changing. The body of physical matter has the form and functions that it has because it is derived from the subtle body, which is its seed. But it is the subtle body that contains divine power—Kundalini—the form-building and regenera-

tive power. On the Tree of Life, the subtle body is equated to Yesod. In the anthropomorphic image of Adam Qadmon, Yesod is the situation of the generative organs of the archetypal human. Furthermore, Yesod is the sphere of activity for the hidden power of Yod-Sod—the “secret of Yod”—the qabalistic term for Kundalini Yoga.

A yogi or yogini of the Tibetan tradition visualizes his or her subtle body as a chörten. This visualization is actually a “co-creation,” since the universe is ultimately a mental creation. Rising from storey to storey (each storey being a more refined level), practitioners build within each a mandala of tantric deities—an energy web of the dynamics of enlightenment—to activate the chakras and penetrate the veil of appearances to perceive Reality.

Similarly, practitioners of Alchemy build their Tower of the Art. Passing from chamber to chamber aligns their interior forces and their corresponding states of awareness with those of the macrocosm. Ultimately, they enter the thrice-radiant Darkness, the Concealed Light of the Absolute.

The thought-form of an “inner castle” has been used by alchemical adepts for centuries. It was probably strongly influenced by the Hekhaloth mysticism of post-temple Israel. There is a tradition within Hekhaloth that the Seven Palaces of the Holy One are mirrored in the seven chambers (chakras) of the mystic. This form of mysticism also appeared later in 16th-century Spain in a Christian form, when the Carmelite nun, Teresa of Avila (herself of Jewish Converso stock from Toledo, the one-time qabalistic “capital” of Europe) wrote her book of contemplative practice, *The Interior Castle*.

Mary Magdalene, according to some Christian Gnostic sects was the “shakti” or spiritual consort of Jesus (a view that is currently enjoying a popular revival). “Magdala” means a “strong tower.” Mary Magdalene’s anointing of her lord’s feet with precious perfume has a certain qabalistic symbolism, as well as Oriental overtones. There are also resonances of Jesus and Mary of Magdala in the Grail legends of Parsifal and Kundri.

Numerous alchemical prints show the alchemist, usually at prayer, in a fortress or tower. Often, upon the battlements of the tower, four angelic figures stand as guardians. These heavenly guardians are standard in esoteric ceremonies, such as “The Ritual of the Lesser Banishing Pentagram,” where the archangels Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, and Uriel, the celestial regents of the elements, are invited to guard the cardinal points of the sacred space. According to tradition, these four bright spirits were the guardians of the patriarch Abraham, who was initiated by

Melchizadek. Since then, these four archangels have been seen as the protectors of those who approach the Divine through the Qabalah.

In the Old Testament, it says in the *Proverbs* 18:10, "The Name Yod-He-Vau-He is a strong *tower*: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." This relates to the Tetragrammaton (Yod-He-Vau-He) as a symbol of the four winds, and in particular to the four Sephiroth on the middle pillar, that constitutes the axis-column of the alchemical Tower of the Art. The construction of the tower itself holds an important teaching. There are four chambers running up the central axis of the tower: the Hall of the Bride in Malkuth; the Nuptial Chamber in Yesod, the Great Hall of Tiphareth, and the turret-room of Da'ath (see figure 3, page 70). Kether itself is imaged as a Radiant White Sun above, and independent from the edifice of the tower itself. This intimates that the Divine Itself is superior to, and above all constructions of the human intellect, be they theological, credal or philosophical. The same applies to any image of the Divine, however poetic, built by the human imagination. The immensity of the One Reality transcends all definition. We can only come nearer to the Eternal in feeling and in understanding. The wisdom inherent in the alchemical symbolism of the Tower of the Art, is that it does not seek to present an image that "captures" the Absolute. What it endeavours to achieve by the tower is a representation by which the practitioner can ascend *up* in graduated stages of consciousness to the Divine and bring *down* the glory of the Divine Radiance into the tower so that it is irradiated from Above, so becoming a "citadel of Light" in the Lower Worlds.

This heretofore closely-guarded secret of esoteric practice—the exteriorization—is also one of the meanings of the Rosicrucian (Christian-Qabalah) pledge "to perform all practical work in a place concealed and apart from the gaze of the outer and uninitiated world." This means that the alchemical procedure is undertaken within the inner bodies, as well, of course, as in those objective Temples of Ingathering in the Worlds Above.

The tower stands upon a promontory within the inner kingdom, the "hill of power." Psychologically, this represents the most developed personality complex (*persona*, Latin for "mask") in the individual. It is the personality that undergoes the serious redevelopment, the rebuilding, that this and any other spiritual discipline involves. One cannot become an adept and remain the same.

The first chamber we built was the Great Hall of the Table Round with its annex, the adjoining Chapel of the Rose-Croix. This constitutes the microcosmic sephira of Tiphareth. Both the Jupiter and Sun centers

function in it. This chamber is built first, because it is crucial to the Work to follow. The Sun center, the heart, is pivotal in the chakra scheme. There are three centers above it (Venus, Moon, and Mercury) and three below it (Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn). As the subjective Tiphareth, the heart center harmonizes and integrates the influences of the other six interior stars. In arousing the dragon, the fiery power of Kundalini, the most difficult part is raising it from the Saturn center, through the Mars and Jupiter centers, and into the heart. Once the kundalini irradiates the Sun center (the heart girl with a serpent), the flow through the upper centers (being foci for higher reaches of consciousness) is relatively smooth.

The Turret Room is the subjective sphere of Da'ath, the Withdrawn Sefhira, which is our observatory upon our outer and inner spheres and our link with the worlds above. All the symbolism in this chamber relates to vision and communication. In its highest sense, Da'ath, translated as "knowledge," means to "know another" in the biblical sense of sexual intimacy. It is a metaphor for both the sublimation of the libido ("borrowing strength from the Eagle," Kundalini) and the rapture of union with the Divine in transcendent bliss. There are two major currents of energy upon the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life. The first is the Kether-Malkuth current; the second is the Yesod-Da'ath current, with all that entails for ascension and transfiguration. Both the Venus and Moon centers (*Visuddha* and *Ajna* chakras) are present in this landing.

As shown previously in figure 3 (see page 70), the double spiral stairways—the channels of the lunar (Ida) and solar (Pingala) currents—coil about a central column. This column extends from the top to the bottom of the tower. It is the thought-built channel for the Shushumna, the spinal pillar. It is hollow for two reasons: as a needful reminder of the spatial characteristic of Akasha, and because, once awakened, the fiery power will ascend through it to unite the kingdom with the crown by "restoring the Creator to His throne."

There are three landings that open out from the central column and its spiral stairways. The first we have traveled, from Tiphareth to Da'ath. At the entrance to the stairs from that landing, between the two arched doorways opening onto the spiral stairways, is a depiction of Key II, The High Priestess. This representation of the "chief feminine elder" (to give its literal translation) was seen from the landing, but it can also be seen from inside the stairways, whenever one is ascending or descending them, so that one knows which landing one is approaching or passing by. There are two other landings beneath this one. The first, immediately

beneath this landing, is sign-posted by Key XIV, Temperance, and gives entrance to the chamber equating to Yesod. An entrance/exit at the base of the stairways is marked by the Key XXI, The World. These three tarot keys are, of course, those designating the three Paths of the Middle Pillar on the Tree, the Paths of the Arrow.

### ***Kether-Malkuth***

The chamber that represents the interior Malkuth lies deep within the hill upon which the tower is built. One enters it by descending the spiral stairway with the blue handrail, the lunar current. By passing through the door to the left of The World, one enters a hall of vast proportions. Its floor is rough underfoot. Upon examination, it is seen to be black basalt spewed by volcanic eruptions aeons ago from a volcano that now slumbers. In the center is a crudely finished cubic altar formed from a single block of stone. This is the “Rough Ashlar,” which will require the blows of experience upon the chisel of discipline to smooth its surface and the sweat of labor and the tears of sacrifice to polish it. Upon this altar lies the Cross of the Elements (the equal-armed Greek cross) and a chalice of dark iron. In the hall’s ceiling of living rock, directly over the altar, there is a protuberance—a central boss marking the Middle Pillar. This protruding boss is carved to resemble an almond blossom.

In the eastern wall, there is a curtained doorway, leading to the heart of the planet Earth, to the laboratory of the Holy Spirit that is the center of Planetary Kundalini. This doorway can only be penetrated once union with the Higher Self has been established and stabilized. There are two other doorways. The one on the right is veiled by a tapestry depicting Key XX, Judgement (called the collective intelligence in the *Sepher Yetzirah*). It leads to the Chamber of the Sacred Ibis, the subjective Hod. The left-hand door in the northern wall is covered by a tapestry of Key XVIII, The Moon (the corporeal or incarnating intelligence). It leads to the passageway to the subjective Netzach, the Chamber of the Green Lion. Behind, in the western wall, are the twin arched doors to the spiral stairways flanking The World. Set within a niche at the foot of the tarot representation is a glazed earthenware cup.

So there are two vessels in this “Bridal Hall,” as the chamber of Malkuth is named: one of glazed earthenware beneath tarot Key XXI, The World, and the other of iron standing upon the altar. The earthenware chalice is the “grail” of Malkuth. As the result of good practice, manifested as noble living, this cup will begin to fill with the Wine of Merit. The second chalice is upon the altar, which signifies that the energies of

one level are raised to those of a superior level, and is of iron, the metal of Mars. This is linked to the interior star of Mars, the *Svahisthana chakra*.

Turning our attention to the Turret Room of Da'ath, to the right of the eastern serpent-framed window, there is a purple pull-rope. It is used to lower or raise a trapdoor in the ceiling ornamented with the *Prithivi-Prithivi* symbol of the Mercury center, and from it comes a ladder that enables one to ascend to the battlements of the tower, which correspond to the crown center, the *Sahasrara-padma*, the thousand-petaled Lotus.

The parapets of the battlements are crenellated and the roof's center is inset with the window adorned with the Star and the Shem, the Holy Name. Directly overhead is a large sphere of blazing incandescence (like burning magnesium), the White Sun of Kether.

Although the view of the inner kingdom is clearer from the battlements—from horizon to horizon—than it is from within the Turret Room, when standing upon the battlements, one can be buffeted by fierce astral gales. These gales are the product of both interior emotional states (emotion being a very real astral force) and the objective astral forces sweeping through the microcosm—for we are not separate.

The descriptions of these two chambers—the Bridal Hall of Malkuth and the Battlements of Kether—are given here so that practitioners can begin to become familiar with their detail and symbolism before undertaking the following practice.

## THE PRACTICE

Perform the preliminary exercises and then project the Table Round. Take your place at your siege. Observe that you are clothed in a hooded robe of deep blue-violet, the indigo color of Akasha. The hood is a symbol of impersonality, the necessary attitude of mind for this work. There are silver sandals, the magical tool of Yesod, upon your feet, for you are walking the shining Paths of the Tree. This robe and these sandals should be your usual inner attire when working within the Tower.

Greet the Companions through the Grail. Then rise and enter the Chapel of the Rose-Croix. There make your adoration to the *Mysterium Magnum*, the one reality. Pass back through the Great Hall to the rainbow-misted doorway in the western wall. Notice that, because it is a low door, you have to bow your head to pass through it. This is a constant reminder of the need for humility—not a false, groveling abasement, but

one rooted, like the word itself, in humus, meaning “of the Earth.” True humility is the necessary antidote for the “vice” of Tiphareth, which is hubris, overweening spiritual pride.

Facing the depiction of the High Priestess, enter the left-hand spiral stairway. Feel the warm breeze blowing from behind and below; hold onto the red handrail if need be, and walk up the clockwise spiral of stairs until you come to stand before the crystal door to the Turret Room.

There, place your hand upon the Apas-Apas doorplate and push the door open. Go to the serpent-framed eastern window. Pull on the purple tasseled cord and see the trapdoor in the ceiling open. A golden ladder is lowered to the floor. Walk up the seven rungs of the ladder onto the roof of the battlements. At first, the blazing light of White Sun is dazzling, but you adjust after a short while. Look out over Logres. To the west lie the rich forest and gentle hills; to the north, the wide plains and the distant far mountains; to the east, the great sea. And to the south? What do you see? Remember.

Descend the ladder. Yank on the purple pullrope. The golden ladder slides up and the trapdoor closes. Leave the Turret Room, closing the crystal door behind you. It is vital that the chamber doors are always opened and closed to keep the energies distinct and uncontaminated. Walk down the lunar spiral stairway with the pale-blue cord rail, feeling the chilly, moist breeze in your face, blowing up from below. Continue down these stairs, past the landing of Tiphareth indicated by the High Priestess, past Yesod marked by Temperance, until you come to the depiction of The World, and emerge from the left-hand archway into the Bridal Hall.

Standing with your back to the tarot key, look at the hall and the titanic forces at play within it. As you watch, a great stream of multi-colored light gushes upward from the alter. It is chiefly white in color, but also has highlights of red, yellow, and blue. It represents the integrated power of all the elements. This living light impacts with tremendous force upon the protruding almond blossom, the base of the Middle Pillar. It then flows upward through the passages which connect the Bridal Hall with the upper levels of the tower. It is by the light of this living radiance that we have found our way down here. On all levels of the tower, it is this light that fills the passages and chambers. It even radiates through the solid walls of the castle to form a mantle of living light to encompass it.

Gazing on this fountain of light energy, notice that there is a definite rhythm to it, it pulsates like a mighty heart. Upon closer observation, see that there is, flowing down from the carved almond blossom, a re-

verse stream of energy. This reverse current is a pure white brilliance, flowing down upon the altar and being absorbed therein. This descending current of white light gives the impression of having come from a very remote source.

Now, pay close attention to the Cross of the Elements upon the altar. When the multi-colored energy arises from the chamber, through the altar, and up through the almond blossom, the cross appears in glowing molten red. When, in the reverse flow, the white brilliance descends from above into the altar stone, the cross becomes white-hot. But during the short periods between the alternating currents of force, the cross is shown as refined gold!

Now ascend by the solar spiral stairway, past Yesod (Temperance), until The High Priestess key indicates that you have reached the landing leading into the Great Hall. Enter the chamber, go straight to the chapel, and give thanks. Return to the Hall of the Round Table, closing the chapel door and pulling closed the golden curtain. Resume your place in that blessed fellowship. Remain for a while in the harmonizing light of the Holy Grail. Then draw the table back to latency in your heart center. Perform the closing exercises and write up your record.

## AFTERMATH

The reason for visiting the chapel first—and for returning to it at the end of a practice—is to integrate and balance any of the forces you have encountered in the session by the mediation of Tiphareth. This is also true of the Grail, before absorbing the thought-projection.

It will take several practice sessions to get all these details into place, and more still before they achieve semi-autonomy. One of the signs of accomplishment, for this stage, is the coming of the guardians.

Apart from the Great Hall and the Turret Room, every other chamber in the tower has a guardian and this is a very real being. The form by which you perceive a chamber's guardian will depend on what your own subconscious thinks such a being should be. The spirit guardians are, however, independent beings; you only build the form they "wear." Some of the spirit guardians may appear in the form of deities. However, one should not be fascinated by the glamor of this. It only indicates that the being has either worked in the past within the mysteries of that deity, or is currently working with the same enlightening energy of which the deity is also a representation. In due time, spirit guardians "clothed" as deities should "unveil" themselves.

The Hall of the Table doesn't have a distinct guardian because the Fellowship of the Table, as a corporate unity, guards it. However, the chapel has its own guardian, whom you will encounter when you have pulled back the gold curtain and opened the door bearing the *Akasha-Tejas* plate. It is required inner-plane etiquette and courtesy that you greet the guardian when entering or leaving a chamber.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

The following is from the introduction to Eliphas Lévi's book, *Transcendental Magic*, in which he quotes in turn from a 16th-century manuscript. Like many of these quotations offered for contemplation, its language is time-fettered. However, its essential teaching coincides with the siddhis, the powers of the perfected yogi, described by Patanjali.

Hereinafter follow the powers and privileges of the man who holds in his right hand the Clavicles of Solomon, and in his left the Branch of the Blossoming Almond:

Aleph—He beholds God face to face, without dying, and converses familiarly with the seven genii who command the entire celestial army.

Beth—He is above all griefs and all fears.

Ghimel—He reigns with all heaven and is served by all hell.

Daleth—He rules his own health and life, and can influence equally those of others.

He—He can neither be surprised by misfortune nor overwhelmed by disasters, nor can he be conquered by his enemies.

Vau—He knows the reason of the past, present and future.

Zain—He possesses the secret of the resurrection of the dead and the key of immortality.

Such are the seven chief privileges, and those which rank next are these:

Cheth—To find the Philosophical Stone.

Teth—To possess the Universal Medicine.

Iod—To know the laws of perpetual motion and to prove quadrature of the Circle.

Caph—To change into gold not only all metals but also the earth itself, and even the refuse of the earth.

Lamed—To subdue the most ferocious animals and have power to pronounce those words which paralyse and charm serpents.

Mem—To have the *Ars Notaria* which gives the Universal Science.

Nun—To speak learnedly on all subjects, without preparation and without study.

These, finally, are the seven least powers of the Magus:

Samech—To know at a glance the deep things of the souls of men and the mysteries of the hearts of women.

Ayin—To force Nature to make him free at his pleasure.

Pe—To foresee all future events which do not depend on a superior free will, or on an undiscernible cause.

Tsade—To give at once and to all the most efficacious consolations and the most wholesome counsels.

Koph—To triumph over adversities.

Resh—To conquer love and hate.

Shin—To have the *secret of wealth, to be always its master and never its slave. To enjoy even poverty and never become abject or miserable.*

Tau—Let us add to these three septenaries that the wise man rules the elements, stills tempests, cures the diseased by his touch, and raises the dead!

But certain things have been sealed by Solomon with his triple seal. It is enough that the initiates know; as for others, whether they deride, doubt or believe, whether they threaten or fear, what matters it to science, or to us?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1972), pp. 10–11.





# THE FLOWERING TREE

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*When I ascended into the heavens I saw the holy sons of God  
moving in flames of fire, wearing white clothes,  
whose countenances shone like snow.*

*—Ethiopian Book of Enoch<sup>1</sup>*

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## THE TEACHING

The Hebrew word for “almond” is *Luz*. This is also the ancient name for the town of Beth-El, where Jacob wrestled with his holy Guardian Angel, signifying the inevitable struggle between the lower and the higher self. After that profound initiation, Jacob received a new name, Israel, meaning “He shall rule as God.” He was then graced with the vision of the Upper Worlds, seeing the great ladder, with Angels ascending and descending thereon to execute the Will of The One. According to Jewish folklore, Luz is the “city over which the Angel of Death has no power.” The citizens of Luz are immortal. It is said that if the inhabitants tire of life, they have to be placed outside the city walls in order to be enfolded in the sable wings of the Angel of Death. It is further said that you can only gain entry to the city through a secret cave that is concealed by an almond tree. By passing through a hole in the trunk of the almond tree, you gain the cave and, thus, the city.

Aaron, the brother of Moses, was chosen to be the first High Priest because his staff of almond wood miraculously flowered when left overnight in the tabernacle. Those of the other candidates remained dormant. Aaron was anointed and arrayed in the high-priestly “robes of glory” (representing the inner vehicles of the Upper Worlds) and he

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<sup>1</sup> “Ethiopian Book of Enoch,” in Z’ev ben Shimon Halevi, *Kabbalah: The Divine Plan* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p. 15.

alone of all the House of Israel was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies (the opened third eye of spiritual vision) to stand face to face with the Divine Presence. Aaron's flowering almond staff was placed in the holy Ark of the Covenant, along with the tablets of the Commandments.

The flowering staff also appears in the Arthurian mythos with Joseph of Arimathea, who brought the Holy Grail to Albion (England). Joseph had been told that, when he saw a hill that resembled Mount Tabor in Israel (the mountain of the prophetess Deborah and of Jesus' transfiguration), he would be given a sign to settle there. When he came to Glastonbury Tor in the Vale of Avalon, he saw that it did indeed resemble Mount Tabor. That night, his staff flowered. Indeed, its physical descendent, the Holy Thorn, still flowers each Christmas. Joseph remained, establishing the first church on the twelve hides of land gifted to him by the Druid priesthood and initiated the Merlin of Britain into the priesthood of Christ.

The appearance of biblical figures and symbols within the Arthurian legend is not simply a case of monastic scribes attempting to "clean up" earlier pagan legends. When these Middle Eastern figures appear in the myth, they indicate the coming of the Qabalah into the indigenous Matter of Britain—a meeting and cross-fertilization between two streams of the primordial tradition of the Ageless Wisdom. In the same way, the Guru Rimpoché, Padmasambhava incorporated and elevated the indigenous Bon Shamanism into religious practice when he brought the Buddhist Dharma to Tibet. Joseph of Arimathea, the Ship of Solomon, and the Grail City of Sarras all represent the Qabalistic stream, while figures such as Ygraine (Arthur's mother), the Merlin, Morgan le Fay, and the Table Round itself represent the Atlantean stream of the mysteries. It was this cross-fertilization of Middle-Eastern with Celtic and Hyperborean imagery that gave the Arthurian mythos its abiding potency, and remains embedded deep within the psyche of Western civilization to this very day.

In Aramaic, the Mediterranean mercantile language in the time of Jesus, Luz means "nut" or "bone." It refers to the bottom cervical vertebrae of the spine, the coccyx, where the dormant Kundalini sleeps as a coiled serpent. Luz is thus a Qabalism for the *Muladhara* chakra. Rabbi Joshua taught the Emperor Hadrian (who was an initiate of the Graeco-Egyptian Mysteries) that the resurrection of the dead begins in the "almond" or "nut." This belief was later taken up also by Christian and Islamic theologians, becoming an article of faith for all the People of the Book. In all likelihood, this teaching was received in ancient Egypt, where the resurrection of the savior-god, Osiris, was signified by the

raising of the Djed Pillar, a symbol of the backbone of the god and also of a ladder for ascension. The Luz is the “seed” of physical regeneration and is depicted in the top left corner of the 13th tarot key, Death, as a symbol of transformation. The *Rosa Alba*, the white rose of Superconsciousness, is only shown in two tarot keys: Death (Key 13) and The Fool (Key 0), which was anciently named The Alchemist!

In the system of theurgy known as *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, practitioners are directed to fashion a rod or wand from almond wood. The purpose of the Abramelin system is to achieve “knowledge and conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel”; in other words, to enter into conscious union with the Higher Self.

### ***The Rod of Power***

Within the Bridal Hall of Malkuth, the ascending planetary kundalini impacts upon the almond Luz, passing through it and then upward through the rest of the tower. Here the Luz, as the ceiling of the chamber of Malkuth, merges with the chamber of Yesod as its floor. Yesod, the Sephira of the genital region, is not the source of Kundalini, but the personal reservoir for it within an individual organism.

It is the ascending fiery stream of Kundalini—the flame of the Dragon—that, upon reaching the pineal gland, fuses the grains of brain-sand therein and “confects” (produces) the Stone of the Wise. It is the descending elixir from the stone—the universal medicine—that transforms the physical body. Kundalini is an integrating and illuminating power. As it rises, it draws into itself the powers of the chakras—the inner metals—purifying, uniting, and sublimating them in its ascent. In Malkuth’s Chamber we see the rising energy as multicolored, suffused with the tattvic tints of the elements (but *predominately* white) because the force termed “Kundalini,” like all the forces in the universe, is an activity of the one conscious radiant energy, which is the Limitless Light of the Absolute, and is, in essence from Above. As the Emerald Tablet reminds us: “As all things are from One, by the mediation of One, so all things arose from this One Thing by adaptation.” The tablet refers to Kundalini again when it says, “It ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends to earth: and revives the strength of the superiors and of the inferiors.” The descent is the stream of pure white brilliance issuing from a remote Source, this being Kether, the Omnipotence. As the physical vehicle becomes more and more refined, through the integrating and illuminating power of the ascending kundalini, so the descending elixir, the Mezla, flowing through the Crown of Life, initiates the work of transformation.

As it says in Proverbs 24:3, "Through Wisdom [the alchemical Sulphur, the fire of Chokmah] is the House [the regenerate physical body] builded, by Understanding [the alchemical Salt, Binah the formative power] is it established, and by Knowledge [Da'ath] are the secret places [also translated as 'chambers'] filled with all precious and pleasant riches [the treasure of the Sages]." And why does this occur? Because, as the Sepher Yetzirah teaches: "Malkuth causes an influence to emanate from the Prince of the Countenances."<sup>2</sup> And who is the "Prince of the Countenances"? Metatron, the archangel of Kether; Metatron, the transfigured Enoch; he who walked with God and tasted not death!

So the rod of power, the caduceus of Hermes, is the spinal column, entwined by the solar and lunar currents, whose precursors are the *nagas* of Hindu and Tibetan mythology. In Yesod are the Saturn and Mars chakras; in Da'ath are the Moon and Mercury centers. It is the Mercury center (this is the Hermetic work of Mercury), the pineal gland, which is conected into the Stone. The completed Stone is referred to in the Old Testament as "Zion," the mountain of the Divine Presence. In alchemical texts, the third eye (the pineal gland) is named Mount Abiegnus, the Hill of Vision, and also the Mountain of Attainment whereon The Hermit stands in the 9th tarot key. "Abiegnus" means "pine cone" and refers to the pine cone on top of the thrysus, the wand carried in the Bacchic mysteries of Dionysos. Dionysos is the Greek god of intoxication. Intoxication has long been a metaphor for bliss in the Western Mysteries. Wine and intoxication are also similes for the bliss of Divine union in Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam. The famous *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayam is, in fact, a mystical text. Khayam himself was a Sufi teacher and astrologer. The wine, and its resultant intoxication, is a metaphor for the bliss-imparting elixir precipitated by the Stone, an elixir that overflows the Moon center and fills the body, absorbing the practitioner into the state of Samadhi. Neither is it coincidence that Melchizadek brings bread and wine to Abraham (Genesis 14:18) when he initiates him, in the Reception, into the holy Qabalah.

Because the Stone is also the opened third eye, we are taught: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). Tibetan sacred art depicts tantric deities as having an open third eye upon the forehead. Again, "The Eye of YHWH is upon them who hold Him in awe." And, in Isaiah 53:8, "Thy watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see

<sup>2</sup> Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1984), p. 289.

eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." It is the eye, the Mercury center, which is the Adytum, the holy of holies, in the temple of the human body. In Tibetan sacred art, the Buddha is shown with a gold, conical jewel rising from the protuberance on his head. The protuberance indicates the fully-developed "thousand-petalled lotus" (the Mercury center) and the gold jewel is the Philosopher's Stone; "Om, the Jewel in the Lotus, Hum." The *tilak* or mark upon his forehead (and on other divinities and Sages) also indicates the presence of the confected Stone within the skull. It is the prismatic nature of the Stone that produces the radiant halo about the heads of the Enlightened Ones. When Tantric deities are depicted in their wrathful aspect (*dragpo*) they are shown to have an actual open eye upon their foreheads. The Western idiom of the Mysteries presents the same teaching by the symbol of the pentagram, when that star is related to the elements and to the human body. In this symbol, the Elements of the Wise, Earth, Air, Fire and Water are allocated to the four lower triangles of the five-fold star and correspond to the arms and legs. Although the symbol for the alchemical Quintessence is assigned to the triangle corresponding to the head, it is *not* to indicate that the First Matter is in any way restricted to the head region, but to show that the Quintessence is perceived through the spiritualized faculty of sight. In Buddhism the awoken Third Eye is called the "Eye of non-dual Wisdom" because the Sage who looks with this Eye can *actually* see that all beings live in, and are composed of, the One Radiant Energy and are therefore interdependent. All creatures and things are seen to be appearances or forms of the One Thing and seem to be separate—like waves appear to have fleeting separateness from the ocean—but in fact are indissolubly rooted in the Primordial Nature of the Absolute. It is the knowledge of the underlying unity of all that this direct perception brings, which impels the Sages to engage in their ceaseless works of compassion. For the Golden-Eye confers the Heart-of-Love and vice-versa. This is why the Illumined Ones, throughout human history, have proclaimed the same message as the panacea to all human ills, and as the means to true and abiding happiness. Their message is "Love one another." Let it be known.

Each end of the rod of power is ornamented with a tree's fruit: the almond nut and the pine cone. This, the true wand of practitioners of the Great Work, is internal. It is described by Eliphaz Levi in his *Sanctum Regnum* and shown in the suit of Wands in the tarot designed by Paul Foster Case as having identical crystals (more accurately diamonds), one bright and one dark, on either end of the rod, just as, on the simple

Tree of Life diagram, the Greater and Lower Faces are identical in appearance and “face beholds face” in Tiphareth. Once again, we quote from The Emerald Tablet of Hermes-Trismegistos, the “father” of the Royal Art and the Graeco-Egyptian form of Melchizadek: “that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, for performing the miracles of the One Thing.”

### ***The Nuptial Chamber***

In the tower, the landing opening upon the hall of Yesod is marked by tarot Key XIV, Temperance. The archways to the spiral stairways on this level are marked by a griffin (over the solar stairway) and a unicorn (over the lunar). They are the “mounts” of the Sun and Moon and act as reminders that it is the Higher Self, depicted by the holy Guardian Angel in the tarot key, who is actually engaged in the alchemical work of bringing about an equilibrium of the forces. Opposite Temperance is the door to the hall of Yesod. It is of cedar and bears a plate showing the tattvic symbol combination of *Akasha-Akasha*. Over the door hangs a shield: a green field bearing a rampant red lion. This lion, along with the griffin and unicorn, remind us that Yesod is the sphere of the *Nefesh*, the “vital” or “animal” soul, so called because humanity shares it with the animal kingdom, with all life-forms.

Upon entering, you find yourself in an empty semi-circular chamber, which is the vestibule to the place of power itself. Do not be deceived by its emptiness: it is only the spacious quality of Akasha. The guardian of this chamber—when she or he comes—will be of critical importance in advanced aspects of the Work. Set in the eastern wall is a life-sized representation of tarot Key I, “The Magician.” It is fashioned, like the others in the central column, of stained glass, and is lit from behind. The only way to enter the Nuptial Chamber proper is to become the Magician; to take on the mode of consciousness this tarot key represents.

The Sepher Yetzirah calls *Beth*, the Hebrew letter of this card, “the transparent intelligence.” It also teaches that creation was begun through the agency of this letter (*Barasith*, “In the beginning”) because it is also the first letter of the Hebrew word, *Barukah*, meaning “blessing.” The Magician card is assigned to the 12th Path of the Tree of Life, which unites Kether, the Source, with Binah, the womb of creation.

“Becoming” The Magician means to open oneself to be a conscious channel for the downflowing power of Kether, to develop the awareness that everything is from above. Nothing originates at the personality

level; only reaction and response lie with the waking and subconscious aspects of mind. "Of myself, I do nothing." The transparent mode of consciousness, pictured by The Magician, is that of being aware, however fleetingly, of Who is looking out from your eyes, Who is experiencing life through your instrumentality and, for Whom you are a living expression in the world.



The Stag of the Soul (psyche) and the Unicorn of the Spirit (Higher-Self). "Lamspringk: De Lapide Philosophica, figurae et emblemata, in Musaeum Hermeticum reformatum et amplificatum, Frankfurt, 1678.

By aspiring to this transparency of consciousness, you are drawn into the image of The Magician and, for a brief moment, you are the magician in the tarot scene. The White Brilliance flows down through your upraised wand, uplifted as an instrument for the Primal Will to good through you. This is directed, by your concentrated attention, into the soil of the garden (Eden), where the life-giving influence causes roses and lilies to grow and blossom. "God placed Adam in Eden to grow roses." About your head is the white fillet (the oldest form of crown), to show that your personal will is co-centered with that of the Divine. And the horizontal figure eight over your head—in the place of the Kether center—indicates that the secret force, the Kundalini, is operative. Meditation on this theme and on other aspects of this tarot key, as separate from this practice, will be of great benefit.

Having "touched the hem of the garment" of the intelligence of transparency, even for a moment, you are drawn into the sacred Nuptial Chamber. This is the chamber where the influence of Malkuth, who is Kallah, the Bride, will be united with her destined groom, *Malekh*, the King in Tiphareth. This is the place of the hierogamos, the sacred marriage of the alchemical King and Queen, where Shiva and Shakti conjoin. This is the Temple of the Mystery of Yod.

The ceiling, floor, and walls are formed of pure amethyst, so that the entire place is lit by violet light. An atmosphere of dormant power pervades the chamber. Behind, in the western wall, shines the tarot key. And in the eastern wall, there is an alcove in which stands a tall statue, about twelve feet in height. It is carved in black marble and depicts an enthroned, veiled goddess, crowned with the Sun and Moon. It is the Black Isis, the Co-Emergent Mother. In the very center of the chamber is a stone font, about three feet high. A bright light shines from within it, so bright that sometimes the stone of the font appears almost translucent. At other times, a mist overflows the font and covers the floor of the nuptial chamber, the astral mist that is the "breath of the Dragon." This font is an extension of the almond blossom carved on the ceiling of the chamber of Malkuth below. The font is the Luz, the portal of the world-maker and world-devourer in the Saturn center, the Muladhara chakra. Those Sages who develop the skills necessary to utilize the fiery power dwelling in this chamber are called "Lords of the Secret of Saturn" and "Lords of the Serpent and the Mother."

### ***Chamber of Indwelling***

We come now to the last chamber of the Middle Pillar in the Tower of the Hermetic Art. It serves as a vestibule to the Turret Room, in the same

way that the foyer to the Nuptial Chamber does. At the top of the solar and lunar spiral stairways, you face the crystal door of the Turret Room. (see figure 6, page 102). Behind you there is another door, fashioned of copper and bearing an enameled plate depicting the tattva combination of *Apas-Tejas*, the sigil of the Venus center. Entering this room, you see a high-backed chair in the center and beyond it, set in the western wall, a large oval window that looks out onto the forest and hills of Logres and overlooks the courtyard of the tower. This room, the Chamber of Indwelling, equates to the medulla oblongata of the physical body, the ganglion of nerves at the back of the neck where the spinal cord enters the brain. This is the entrance to the subconscious mind. This chamber, with the Turret Room, constitutes the subjective Sefhira, Da'ath, and the Venus and Moon centers. The Chamber of Indwelling is the portal by which practitioners indwell the entire tower with their consciousness.

Finally, as you stand at the top of the spiral staircases, on the Da'ath landing, facing the door to the Turret Room, you see two other doors, one on either side. To the left, on the same side of the landing as the lunar stairwell, there is an alcove containing a short flight of three steps that lead up to a silver-sheathed door emblazoned with scarlet in the design of the alchemical sigil for sulphur  $\hat{\text{S}}$ . To the right, on the same side as the solar spiral, there is another alcove with three steps that lead to an ebony door bearing the alchemical symbol for salt  $\ominus$  depicted in silver. To reiterate, four doors lead from the landing of Da'ath: to the east is the crystal door to the Turret Room, set with the *Apas-Apas* symbol; to the south, three steps lead to an ebony door with a silver sign of alchemical salt upon it that opens into the hall assigned to Binah, the Chamber of the Queen of Great Bliss; to the west is a copper door bearing the *Apas-Tejas* glyph that opens into the Chamber of Indwelling; to the north, three steps lead up to a silver door bearing the sign of sulphur that opens into the hall assigned to Chokmah, the Chamber of the Starry Wisdom.

From this landing of Da'ath—this level of spiritual knowledge—you can activate the tower (or return it to latency) through the Chamber of Indwelling. You can enter either the Chamber of Wisdom or the Chamber of Understanding. By entering the Turret Room, you can ascend the heights to the Battlement of the Crown of Light. Here you see, pictorially represented, the crucial role of the Withdrawn Sefhira of Da'ath. It functions as a control point to link one level of the Tree with other dimensions. In the practical Qabalah, Da'ath is the means by which you penetrate the four worlds of Existence. You can now appreciate why, until this century, teachings regarding Da'ath were withheld by the custodians of the Mysteries, and given only to those proven to be dedicated and twice-born.

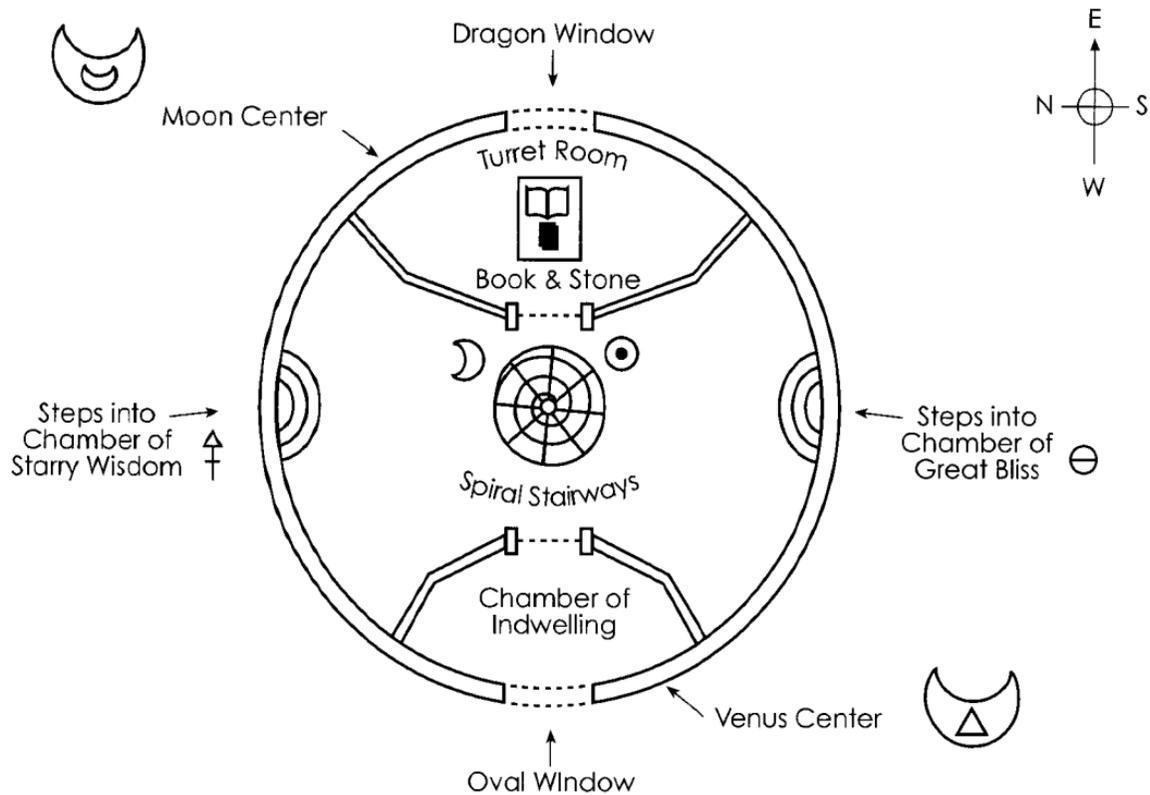


Figure 6. The Landing of Da'ath and the Chamber of Indwelling.

## THE PRACTICE

Perform the preparative exercises. Project the table and take your place at your siege, robed in indigo and wearing the silver sandals of the Moon. After greeting the Great Companions, rise and go through to the Chapel of the Rose-Croix. There, ask for the protection of the All-Holy upon your journey.

Now retrace your steps back through the Great Hall to the archway in the western wall, beneath the veiled shield. Pass through the rainbow-tinted mist to stand before the central column that contains the twin doors to the stairways, which flank tarot Key II, The High Priestess.

In this practice, do not enter either of the spiral stairways, but walk around the whole central column until you come to face the great door to the tower itself, a tall double doorway of iron-studded oak. Open the door and step out into the courtyard of the castle. The courtyard is enclosed by a crenelated wall, with two small turrets to your right and left (see figure 7, page 104). Upon each turret, a flag gently flaps in the breeze. The flag on the turret to your right is red and charged with a white unicorn; the one on the left flies a white flag depicting a red stag. These creatures are the alchemical guardians of the Tree of Life and signify the "Red" and "White" stages of the Great Work.

Beneath the left wall of the castle nestle the stables that house the steeds that will bear you on your future journeys through your inner realm. There is also a mounting block in the courtyard. Against the right wall stand store rooms and a wash room for purification from the stains of travel. Immediately on your right and set into the wall itself, a small postern gate leads through an underground passage. The portcullis gateway and drawbridge lie directly ahead. The waters of the moat are not still or stagnant, for they arise from a deep, concealed spring. They are fresh and have a current that circulates around the castle edifice. The moat marks the boundary of the *immediate* or etheric, aura.

Walk to the castle gates and down the green Mound of Power. At the bottom of the slope, a stone bridge spans a small river that flows swiftly to the distant sea. Cross this bridge and walk to the edge of the great forest that lies beyond. Once there, turn back and look eastward. See, for the first time, the entire edifice.

The citadel rises from the emerald-green mound, which you now know contains the lower chambers of Malkuth and Yesod with the hidden power. Its rearing walls protect all within, and in time of need, serve as a sanctuary for all who dwell in Logres. Two flags fly from the ramparts. Over the walls, you can see the upper portion of the mighty

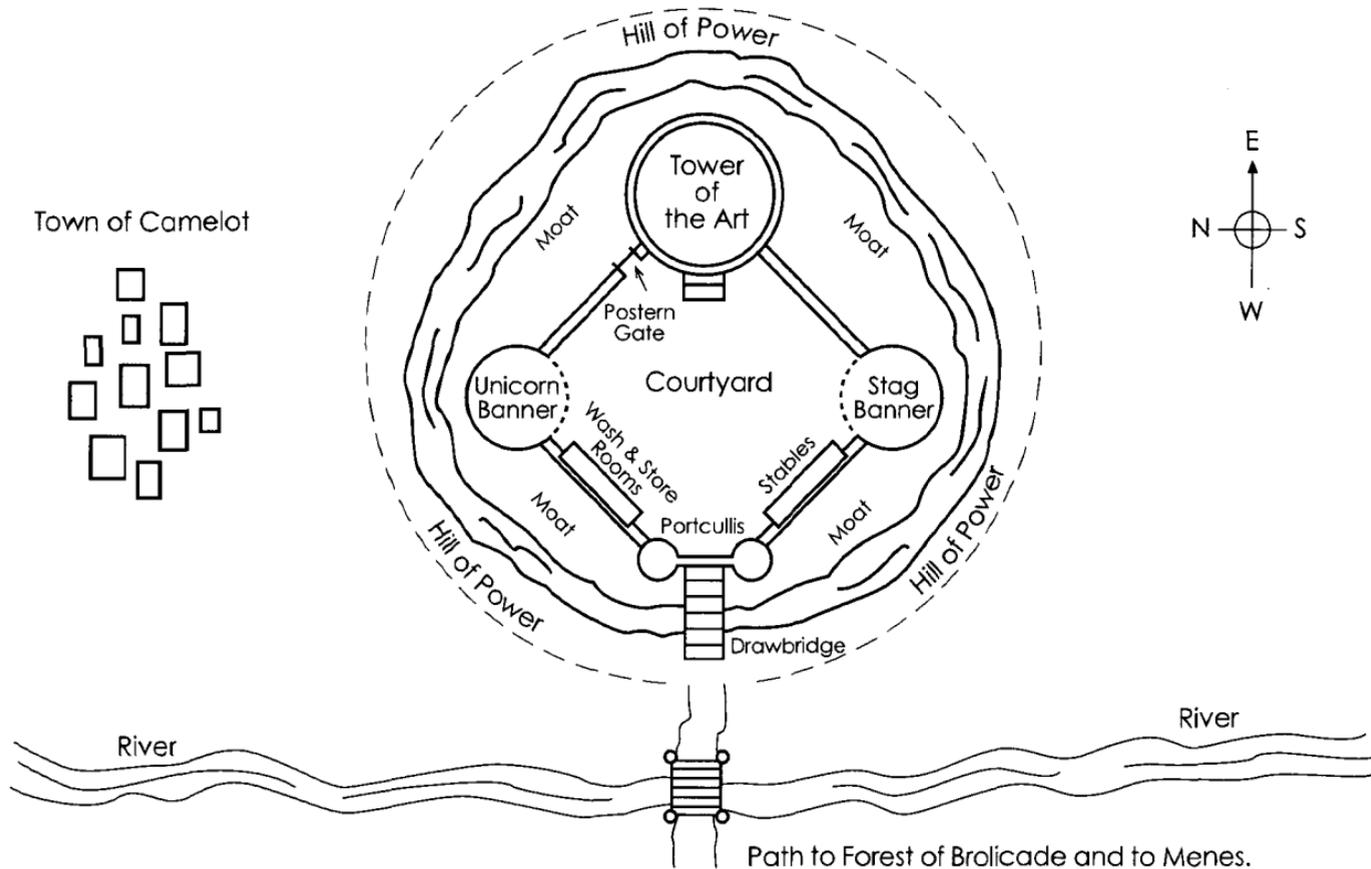


Figure 7. The castle and its courtyard.

Tower of the Art itself. From this prospect, the circular shaft of the tower is featureless, save for the westward-facing, oval window of the Chamber of Indwelling. And, above the tower's battlements shines the White Sun of Kether—never-setting, constant, and abiding. No matter what time of day or night, or what seasonal appearance may impose itself upon your inner kingdom, the White Sun ever crowns the tower. It is the true beacon by which we ever navigate on the Path of Return.

Take your time. Gaze at the enchanted scene before you. You will make more progress by spending time building and establishing this scenario than by rushing on to the next practice. Invest the images before you with emotions and with sense impressions. Wonder at the mighty castle and the mysteries it contains, some so far only hinted at. Allow a sense of awe to fill your heart as you gaze at the White Sun, with its promise of a perpetual Divine Connection. Sit on the grass by the forest's edge. Feel the breeze, smell the plants and flowers, hear the bird calls. Bring all of your interior senses to bear, so that the scene acquires "independence." Once this has been achieved through practice, the castle and its realm will become a true mirror of your interior states and potencies. Nothing you then see in your inner kingdom will be without significance. A leaping salmon, a darting dragonfly, a flash of lightning, the white hart glimpsed running through the forest, or trees bearing blossoms or fruit—all are relevant and potentially wisdom-bearing messages. As it has been said: "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else will be added"; "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," and again, "As Within so Without, but after another manner."

Rise and retrace your steps across the little bridge, up the Mound of Power, and over the moat via the draw bridge. Enter the courtyard. As you walk toward the tower—the castle's keep—look up at the oval window. Something about it beckons you.

You now come to stand before the double oaken door that leads into the tower. Above this doorway, carved into the gray stone, is a full heraldic achievement, a coat-of-arms. The shield depicts a flying dragon soaring up after a flaming jewel. The shield's "supporters" are the stag and the unicorn; the crest upon the shield is a crown within a "glory." The scroll beneath the shield bears the motto: "*Morte nunquam Reget*" (Death shall have no Dominion).

Enter the tower, pass around the central column, approach the low entrance enshrouded in mist, and step again into the Hall of the Round Table. Go straight to the chapel and there give thanks before the altar. Return to the Great Hall and sit at the table. There, in the harmonizing

and integrating light emitted by the Grail, share your journey with the Great Companions and observe any insights they may share with you.

Return your consciousness into your physical sheath, then withdraw the table and close down in the usual manner. Record your notes promptly, before the finer details fade.

## AFTERMATH

You should persevere with this practice until the images can be called up spontaneously and with ease.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

And Jesus answered:

Seek not the Law in your scriptures, for the Law is Life, whereas the scripture is dead. I tell you truly, Moses received not his laws from God in writing, but through the living Word. The Law is the living Word of the Living God to living prophets for living men. In everything that is Life is the Law written. You find it in the grass, in the tree, in the river, in the mountain, in the birds of heaven, in the fishes of the sea; but seek it chiefly in yourselves. For I tell you truly, all living things are nearer to God than the scripture which is without Life. God so made Life and all living things that they might by the ever-living Word teach the laws of the true God to man. God wrote not the laws in the pages of books, but in your heart and in your spirit. They are your breath, your blood, your bone; in your flesh, your bowels, your eyes, your ears, and in every little part of your body. They are present in the air, in the water, in the earth, in the plants, in the sunbeams, in the depths and in the heights. They all speak to you that you may understand the tongue and the Will of the Living God. But you shut your eyes that you may not see, and you shut your ears that you may not hear. I tell you truly, that the scriptures is the work of man, but Life and all its hosts are the work of our God.

*The Gospel of Peace of Jesus Christ*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Edmund Székely, trans. *The Gospel of Peace of Jesus Christ* (Saffron Walden, Essex, UK: C. W. Daniels, 1982), p. 13.



# THE CO-EMERGENT MOTHER

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*“Although mind-created by the yogin, the visualised images of spiritual beings . . . are not to be regarded by him with indifference. . . .*

*The yogin . . . should regard them with exalted regard, veneration and devotion, looking upon the Devatās [i.e., the visualised deities] as real, holy and divine. They are none the less so because mind-produced, for the Mind ultimately is That, and its ideas, forms of That.*

—W. Y. Evans-Wentz<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

The visualizations of the various practices may seem needlessly complex to the uninstructed. However, the various details are essentially to assure that the normally free-ranging consciousness remains engaged within the psychic region under focus for “regeneration.” The details of the visualizations are in fact safety nets. Consciousness can flicker between two objects, literally, at the speed of thought. The mental constructions, the thought-forms, we build in our practices are like the reins of a chariot drawn by powerful horses. The reins control, direct, and harness the motive power.

It is by the thought-building quality of consciousness that humans formulate and perceive their own unique world. Each perception of the universe is ultimately subjective. Although “consensual reality” is a strong determinant, there is also an element of “mass hysteria” in our reactions to experience, as well as an element of “mass hypnosis” in our perceptions. We, and the worlds we construct, are the “stuff of dreams,” as Shakespeare put it. We mold this “stuff of dreams” using our mental

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<sup>1</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 44.

image-making ability, by our imagination. The Eternal emanates—from eternity—an image of Itself (Creation), that is sustained by Its constant Self-reflection, the primordial “stream of consciousness,” in which all units of consciousness are bathed. In this respect, we—as offspring of the Eternal—mirror It by co-creating our inner and outer worlds within time and space.

Throughout our long journey—life after life, incarnation after incarnation—our perceptions of life, rooted in our interior states, have taken firm hold. We have become form-habituated and sensual creatures, immersed in the dance of appearances, engaged in the shadow play. Except in rare moments of lucidity, we are ignorant of Whose music animates the apparent dancers, or what Light casts such glorious shadows. Over many incarnations, our embodied consciousness becomes attached and bound to exterior things, people, and states of being. Our thoughts, words, and deeds that occur due to these attachments deepen their hold and establish karmic bonds and debts. The ancient rabbis likened this record-holding aspect of consciousness to soft wax, upon which impressions are easily made and remain. This, of course, is a metaphor for the deep subconscious mind and our karmic store that awaits discharge and exhaustion through enlightened response, rather than blind reaction.

On the Way to Liberation, we use the very same qualities of consciousness that brought about our captivity to become the instruments whereby we attain eternal freedom. By imaging and then becoming attached to image, we are ensnared. By imaging and becoming vitally interested in or attached to a superior image like the castle and its details (those signposts to freedom), we walk the Path of Return. Moving consciousness level by level to more refined states, glimpsing now and then the primordial state, bathing time and again in the sea of being, until we see and hold the Veiled Light, the luminous Self-Originating Glory. And holding onto It, stabilizing It within ourselves by making our vehicles more sensitive instruments for Its reception, we are gradually transformed into Its likeness, nourished upon Its bliss, participate in Its wisdom, radiate Its compassion, and abide in Its eternal nature. For it is not by suppression that the Goal is attained, but by sublimation. By lifting our humanity into the Divine, we attain the consummation.

The Path of Return—Vajrayana, or Alchemy—entails accelerated evolution and, therefore, accelerated karmic exhaustion. So it is said that a certain “ripeness” is necessary before undertaking the Great Work.

Meditation (interior work) has been described in Yoga as “frying the seeds of karma.” In certain types of cooking, the seeds of various spices are fried in hot oil to seal in their flavor. A sealed seed cannot sprout. This metaphor refers to the dynamics of our inner and outer worlds—seemingly distinct, but in fact interfacing and interpenetrating, like the geometric formula for drawing the *vesica-piscis*, a symbol beloved by alchemists and medieval artists (see figure 8, page 110). In its truest sense, karma refers to education (the process of self-knowledge) and to the exhaustion of energy trapped within patterns of habitual thought and behavior, often spanning incarnations. The Hebrew letter, *Lamed*, assigned to Key XI, Justice, is the tarot depiction of karma. It means “ox-goad.” The ox, you will remember, is *Aleph*, The Fool, the human spirit descending into incarnation to undergo experience and acquire the skills that only embodiment can impart. Karma is the goad that guides the ox back onto the way when it has strayed. Whenever a being wilfully attempts to diminish the interdependence of all things, acting in such a way as to temporarily obstruct the unity of the One in all its manifestations, the karma generated by those actions, by those transgressions, comes into play as an educational and corrective agent. The Divine attributes of Rigor and Mercy are utterly dependant upon the position of the creature, not on arbitrary mood swings of the Creator. Ultimately, the law of karma is a manifestation of the Eternal’s boundless compassion. If there were no undeviating law, there would be no true guide for right living and conduct, no fixed polestar on which we could align our compasses and so set our sails.

For here, we come to one of the greatest secrets of practical mysticism. Karma does not care in which “world” the reparation or “education” occurs. If individuals choose to deal with karma inside their own inner worlds, well and good. For there, on the inside, they can choose to face their inherited fears, hates, and pains, their inner demons. Through meditations of various kinds, they can resolve these issues and neutralize them. Or individuals may choose to ignore their inner worlds, turning away from the inherent battle for maturation and the struggle for self-knowledge, and wait until their karma produces exterior circumstances and situations that give them opportunities to equalize the scales of Divine Justice. This choice is part of human free will. So practitioners engage in interior work using a “map” of the forces constituting the macrocosm, such as the Tree of Life, and seek to readjust their personal microcosm to match its undistorted reflection. Any painful reactions such readjustment entails are dealt with by bringing them to the

indicates that this force is the parent of all forms and—having a feminine designation—that it is a power at work at the subconscious level of Mind. What is more, being subconscious in modality, a practitioner can skillfully direct the Fiery One through use of the subconsciousness' own “language,” namely through the use of precise and clearly built mental images. Kundalini exhausts all desire by fulfillment, confers bliss, and brings the practitioner into cosmic-consciousness—the non-dual wisdom that is the Unity of the One—the All-Good.

### ***Alexandria: Where East and West meet***

References to “our Isis” and “our Diana” abound in alchemical texts. These refer to the White Stage of the Work and simply mean projecting the etheric vehicle (in Alchemy, in the form of a tower; in Vajrayana, as a chörten) as the focus for the Work in that stage. Isis and Diana are Moon goddesses of Egypt and Rome respectively. The astro-etheric level is represented by all the lunar symbolism of Yesod, on the Tree, or Yetzirah, on Jacob's Ladder (the extended Tree). They, therefore, have precisely the same meaning in Alchemy as do all the references to the metal silver. In the language code of the Mysteries, the lunar goddess is the White Isis, the Queen of Heaven and Star of the Sea. She is the alchemical “White Queen” who, after uniting with the “Red King,” gives birth to the golden and immortal One. The Green Isis (sometimes equated to Hathor), is the personification of nature, the “Mother of thousands.” Like the green Stone and the green lion, she represents the natural condition, the starting point of the Work.

Classical scholars and modern pagans are often thoroughly confused, and led astray, by the way in which alchemists use the deities of ancient pantheons in their formulae. This calls for some clarification, if the symbolism of the Royal Art is to be understood, owned, and applied.

Alchemy, the yoga of the West, was formulated in Alexandria, the ancient capital of Hellenistic Egypt. Alexandria was preeminent among ancient capitals because it had the advantages of a superb port and a highly developed transport system (the River Nile), and was the mercantile center for the caravans traveling between the Far East and the West. In the classical world, Egypt was known as the “bread basket,” the source of wealth. The Nile flood produced two harvests each year. Consequently, Egyptian grain fed most of the Mediterranean basin. The Roman Republic, and later the Empire, was sustained by Egyptian grain. Despite Shakespeare's romantic interpretation, the war between Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony on one side, and Octavian (later Caesar

Augustus) on the other, was not about “love,” but about political power bought and sustained by Egyptian wealth. A modern analogy would be the key position held by the oil-producing Arab states in the 20th-century world economy.

Founded on the site of the small, ancient Egyptian town of Rhakotis, by Alexander the Great after he had liberated Khem from Persian occupation, Alexandria soon became the commercial center of the Mediterranean and beyond. Consequently, the city also became a meeting place for all the cultures and philosophies of the known world. Because of its wealth, Alexandria could fund splendid institutions. Its multi-cultural population, valued and encouraged education, the acquisition and the exchange of ideas, on an unprecedented scale. Its early rulers, the pharaohs of the Ptolemaic dynasty, were Macedonian in origin. Ptolemy-Soter I and Ptolemy-Philadelphus II, in particular, were patrons of philosophy, science, architecture, and the arts. The Museion (literally, “Temple of the Muses,” from which the modern word “museum” comes) contained the Great Library and was the first “university” in the modern sense. The architectural genius of the Pharos lighthouse has been hailed throughout history as the last of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was the vision of the early Ptolemaic pharaohs that made Alexandria the “queen among cities.” Their vision was to fulfill the “dream” of Alexander the Great, that the city would be a place where people from all the nations of the world could live in mutual respect. And, surprisingly, they very often did!

Alexandria was no Utopia or Shangri-La. But it did embody the highest flowering of culture, philosophy, medicine, art, and literature in the classical world. The list of teachers at Alexandria is impressive: Euclid, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Hipparchus, Ammonius Saccas, Basildes, and Hypatia, to name but a few. Neoplatonism was founded in Alexandria, and its doctrine of emanation strongly influenced the body of teaching known to us now as the Qabalah. There is a legend that the holy scriptures of the Jews (the Septuagint) were translated into Greek at the command of Ptolemy II. Supposedly, he ordered seventy Palestinian translators to come to translate the Torah. It is said that these rabbis were given separate rooms and were not permitted to talk to each other. Yet their translations were exactly the same—proof that the scriptures were inspired by God. Greek philosophy, Indian Vedanta, Jewish mysticism, Roman legalism, and Egyptian metaphysics all cross-fertilized and blended with one another here. Thus Alexandria was, quite simply, the fountainhead of Western civilization. Centuries later, its ancient treasures (thought lost)

were restored to Europe through Islamic academies and gave rise to the Renaissance that lifted the West out of its medieval morass.

In such a milieu, it is hardly surprising that Alexandria received a celestial mandate, becoming the spiritual fulcrum of the terrestrial world. At different times in history, various cities or states have become the center of spiritual influence for the whole contemporary world. Chinese mystics call it the “removal of the capital,” showing how the Pivot of Spirit moves its location from epoch to epoch. The great esoteric School of the Soul in Alexandria, sometimes called the “School of a Thousand Years,” lasted from approximately 305 B.C.E. to 642 C.E. This school was comprised of the world’s greatest sages, mystics, and mages of the time, drawn from all spiritual traditions. Its work, as with all true schools, was to facilitate the ongoing evolution of humanity.

When the great pagan philosophers of the Classical and particularly Hellenistic periods spoke of the gods, they did so, not in the superstitious terms used by the ordinary people, but as “humans written large.” The philosophers who attended the wandering court of Alexander the Great upon his conquests encountered cultures from all over the known world; they—like Alexander himself—came to the conclusion that the *forces* that the gods represented were a universal human experience; it was only the *forms* and *names* of the gods that altered from culture to culture. The alchemical sages also held this opinion derived from the Hellenistic philosophers. The deities of the mystery cults were not perceived as saints as comparable figures were by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. For the sages, deities were akin to mathematical formulae, representing identifiable energies at work in the universe and in the lives of its creatures. Anthropomorphizing this energy (clothing it in human form) was sound psychology. One can relate to, and identify with, a being that appears to be of your species. Dion Fortune in her series of articles, *The Circuit of Force*, put succinctly the valid reason for the invocation of deities. She says of the gods:

A mythical divine being is a projection of the subjective and a symbolization of the objective. In them subjective and objective meet and unite. They are the projection of our desires and the representation of the factors in the Cosmic Life of which our desires are the subjective experience.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dion Fortune, *The Circuit of Force*, Gareth Knight, ed. (Loughborough, Leicestershire, UK: Thoth, 1998), p. 207.

A “god” is a mask placed upon a power at work in the Universe by human imagining—but, the power it masks is real, indeed, both within and without. So although the “form” of every god does originate from within the human breast (being creations of the created), the energies which the gods symbolize are of the Macrocosm. The invocation of deities is a deeply effective way of uniting Below with Above. And the wisdom of this method of practice is confirmed by the illumination so gained by the adepts of Alchemy and the yogis of Vajrayana.

But there is another practical, mystical reason for anthropomorphization. It implicitly teaches that the universal energies are present within the human constitution. In the Mysteries, it is taught that the gods are both without, as objective energies, and within, as archetypes and latent potencies. As Iamblichus taught, the reason for invoking the gods through theurgy was to assist and “hasten” our own deification, our apotheosis. This is exactly the same reasoning that motivates Buddhist tantric practice, in which an acceleration of growth leads to more effective service.

Classical initiates did not view the gods and goddesses as supermen and superwomen. Generally speaking, with the exception of deified humans, goddesses have never been physical human women, and never will be. This applies equally to gods. Gods and goddesses were rather classifications of energies, just labels. The deities of the ancient pantheons, as they are worked within the Mysteries, were individualized masks, *personae*, of the Absolute Unity. They enabled practitioners to focus on specialized energies, in the same way that the Sephirothic classifications of the Tree do. This is why the individual deities of the ancient pantheons are attributed to various Sephiroth. They give us a face and a form to which we can relate, in the early stages of our journey along the path. Later, as illumination dawns, they become redundant. Hence, after the Lord Buddha’s enlightenment, the gods of the Hindu pantheon were the first beings to petition him to teach the Dharma.

As in tarot, where male figures represent self-consciousness and female images represent the subconscious, so in the Mysteries “god” is a label for active, stimulating energies (Yang, in Taoism) and “goddess” is a term for passive, form-building energies (Yin, in Taoism). The Tree of Life represents this duality, with its complimentary side pillars of force and form, energy, and structure. In Alchemy, as in Yoga, this duality is worked with energetically, and synthesized by the solar and lunar currents of the One Radiant Energy.

The modern pagan movement has yet to grasp this effectively. The majority—and we speak from experience—still view the gods as simply an alternative religious approach to monotheism. They worship the gods in the same mode as did the *lay* people of the ancient world, not as initiates of the Mysteries worshiped.

Take, for example, the god Pan. Originally, he was an ancient, rustic god of the flocks, often at odds with the later, sophisticated gods of Olympus. When the initiates of the Mysteries used “Pan” as a label, they were *not* referring to this god of wild creatures. Nor when Dion Fortune or Aleister Crowley composed their invocations to Pan were they calling upon the deity of the flocks. Pan, in Greek, means “all.” The classical initiates and their descendants use the term “Pan” as a synonym for the entirety of creation. Humanity has the same impulses, drives, and instincts as the animals (hence, the goat hooves and legs of Pan). In Qabalah, this is Nefesh. But humanity also has its own special qualities, represented by the human head and torso of the god. His horns, as were those of Moses, are symbols of divinity, and the syrinx, the pan-pipes, he plays, represent the octave, which, in Pythagorean thought, was the basis of creation.

### ***The Black Isis***

Within the Nuptial Chamber of the secret temple of Yod resides an image of the Black Isis. She is the veiled or concealed one, the “Co-Emergent Mother” of the Alchemical Qabalah.

Here we will deal with Isis from the perspective of Alchemy, as she was understood by the initiated adepts of the Hellenistic world, not from the point of view of Egyptology. Under the influence of the Graeco-Egyptian School, Isis had absorbed and come to represent the functions and attributes of all the other goddesses of the ancient Egyptian pantheon. Later, in the days of the Roman Empire, as her cult spread further, she absorbed the attributes of all the other goddesses in the Empire. The name of the River Thames in London, for example, means the “broad Isis” and, above the city of Oxford, the same river is simply called the “Isis.” One of the most beautiful invocations to come down to us from this period is by Lucius Apulius, a Roman priest of Isis. It appears in his book, *The Golden Ass*, and describes Isis as the only one goddess.

In Alchemy, Isis is the “World Soul,” the universal subconscious reservoir. She also represents the deepest stratum of the personal unconscious of the individual that holds all the subconscious memories and karmic traces from all previous incarnations. As mentioned, subconsciousness is the magical agent. So, when alchemists refer to “our Isis,”

they are speaking of this deep aspect of mind that, like Isis in the ancient Egyptian myth, seeks and finds the scattered parts of the dismembered Osiris (self-consciousness) and integrates and unites them—the Isis who, by her magic (the Fiery Power), raises Osiris from the dead, from three-dimensional consciousness, to become the Horus-King (Pharaoh), the Hawk of Gold, symbol of the Superconsciousness state of Enlightenment. It is through the subconscious, properly instructed by the self-consciousness, that the Great Work is achieved. This saving, healing, “Savioress” is called, in the Mysteries, the White Isis. The advantage of using a single name—Isis—to represent these different activities is that it acts as a constant reminder that, ultimately, all forces are from The One, and in The One.

The Black Isis is that aspect of the universe that finitizes, that draws the freely-distributed energy (Chokmah) and concentrates it into units. It is passive in the sense that it doesn’t originate the energy, but collects and holds that energy in form. Qabalistically, this is Binah and astrologically, it is the planet Saturn. Black Isis is veiled because energy is veiled within form. Until various scientific instruments were invented, however, most of humanity didn’t know that: all was energy. Therefore, Black Isis is *Ama*, the dark, sterile mother of Binah. Here we have a deep Qabalism. Biologically, you cannot have a sterile mother. From the point of view of eternal Spirit, the “children” of *Ama*, of Black Isis, are finite and short-lived because all forms change. Isis, in her black aspect, veils the light of Spirit. It is said of her that “None may lift my veil and live” (originally this was attributed to the ancient goddess, Neith, the weaver). In other words, no one in whom the sense of duality persists may lift her veil and live again as they have before. For, to see through the veil of Isis is to see through *Maya* and natural appearances and perceive the First Matter, *Shunyata*, the void. So, Black Isis is the personification of Binah and therefore, of Akasha, the “mother” of the Elements of the Wise. But she is more than this.

Binah is not actually a separate power that grasps and holds the fire of Chokmah in structure. The Sephiroth are not actually separate but are the ten-fold aspects of One Unity. That from which Binah—Black Isis—makes form, is the fire of Chokmah itself, that originally came through the hollow crown of Kether from Ain. Force and form represent an illusory, but necessary, duality—necessary for manifest existence. This interplay, this courtship, between the All-Father of Chokmah and the Great Mother of Binah, continues throughout all the four worlds. Every single life-form can only continue in existence, in embodiment, while it receives or retains enough energy to replenish its structure.

Black Isis is similar to the Tibetan meditational deity, Vajra-Yogini, the Diamond Sow. Black Isis is what Hindu cosmology calls Shakti, the world-forming Mother of all things. And so she is Kundalini, that essence of power, locked within form, which, when released, frees us from bondage to the energy patterns, the mirage, of form. Isis' blackness is the "veil" for her essential fiery nature. Black and dark colors are assigned to Saturn and to Binah in the lower three worlds. But in Atziluth, the world of Divine perfection, Binah is revealed as fiery-scarlet in hue. She is the divine radiance hidden within all things, "concealed with all concealments." For Black Isis is the hidden Shekinah, the Co-habiting Glory, that by day in ordinary consciousness appears as the Pillar of Cloud. But by night, in meditation and exalted states of consciousness, she shows herself as the Pillar of Fire, rising within the Shushumna spinal channel, to be reunited with her lord. Like Shekinah, Black Isis is in mourning for her absent consort (the Absolute) and for her children exiled in time and space. Therefore do the wise worship the Black Isis, for she is the embodiment—or veiled aspect—of the First Matter.

Lest we fall into the trap of thinking of these powers as essentially separate, we turn again to the *Coelum Terrae*, in which Thomas Vaughan speaks of the First Matter (but note his play on the word "nothing," meaning, in fact, "No-thing," the *Ain* of the Qabalah, as he illustrates later) saying:

This first something was a certain kind of cloud or darkness. . . . What was that nothing out of which the first cloudy chaos . . . was made? It may be thou dost think it is a mere nothing. It is indeed *nihil quo ad nos*—nothing that we perfectly know . . .

But, by your leave, it is the True Thing, of Whom we can affirm nothing. It is that Transcendent Essence Whose theology is negative. . . . This is that nothing of Cornelius Agrippa, and *in this nothing* when he was tired with human things—I mean human sciences—he did at last rest. "To know nothing is the happiest life." True indeed, for to know *this* nothing is life eternal. Learn then to understand that magical axiom, "the visible was formed from the invisible," for all visibles came out of the invisible God, for He is the wellspring whence all things flow, and the creation was a certain stupendous birth or delivery. This fine Virgin Water or chaos was the Second Nature from God Himself . . .

The first extreme was that cloud or darkness whereof we have spoken formerly. Some call it the remote matter and the invisible chaos, but very improperly, for it is not invisible. This is the Jewish *Ain-Soph* outwardly, and it is the same with that Orphic night: "O Night, thou black nurse of the golden stars." Out of this darkness all things that are in this world came, as out of their fountain or matrix.<sup>3</sup>

## PRELIMINARIES

Before passing on to the practice proper, we need, at this stage, to deepen the preliminary exercises. It is important that, from now on, your practice be done in a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted. A sudden interruption during the "willed disassociation" now being undertaken could result in an unpleasant shock.

To begin enter your meditation space or laboratory, as the old alchemists called it, ascend the Tree of Assiah, and perform the Qabalistic Cross. Now invoke the four Archangels of the Presence: to the east Raphael; in the south, Mikael; to the west, Gabriel; in the north, Uriel. Think of them as actually guarding the circumference of your entire aura (Raphael faces you, Gabriel is behind you, etc.). This area extends about four feet all around your physical body. Imagine the archangels standing on the same level as your Malkuth center and as about ten feet in height. Raphael holds a sphere of sapphire; Mikael wields a red, tapering tongue of fire; Gabriel holds a crescent moon; Uriel bears a cube of alchemical Gold. You may use spoken invocations if this is helpful, and/or the lesser ritual of the Pentagram. Remember, however, that these banishings are intended to cleanse the various obscurations that are within your own sphere of sensation (aura). If you keep performing this particular ceremony within your personal laboratory or temple, focused upon the space rather than upon yourself, it will fail to build up an enduring numinous atmosphere .

The Qabalistic Cross, combined with the invocation of the four archangels, seals with sanctity the six directions: above, below, east, west,

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes), "Coelum Terrae" in *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, A. E. Waite, ed. (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919), pp. 213–214, 216.

south, and north. This is a microcosmic reflection of the great Cube of Space described in the Sepher Yetzirah and is a form of “squaring the circle.” The seventh direction is within you, the Immanence, called in the Sepher Yetzirah, the “Palace of Holiness in the midst.”

Next, perform the Parting of the Veil mudra and be seated. Perform the Interwoven Light and Fountain Breath exercises. When you feel centered, speak the following mantra:

Beneath the shadow of Thy Wings, O Thou the One Reality, I rest safe and secure. Now do I sink down into the still waters of the Primordial; let there be peace, within and without. And arising therefrom, let me vivify the Grail-Altar from the withdrawn Temple of Ruta; activating it from latency into the living, potent image of the King's Round Table.

As you speak this with intent, see the point of light within your Tiphareth center become the small eidolon of the Table Round, then project it before you as you come to the end of the mantra. It will grow to life size as you do so. As it rapidly passes from your physical sheath, see the table within the Great Hall of the castle, inside the Tower upon the Mound of Power. In short, using the table as the pivot, project the entire castle to stand before you, as if, you were floating, still in the air before the castle, at a great enough distance to afford you a total view. Build the image up. See the castle upon the green hill, gleaming beneath the White Sun overhead, its strong walls, with their fluttering banners, encircled by the glistening moat.

Now, project your awareness into the tower by “flying” into it through the oval window of the Chamber of Indwelling. Project yourself straight into the high-backed chair in the center of that chamber. This “flying” should not be imaged as taking place within in any kind of body or form. It is your awareness itself, sometimes called the “star of consciousness,” that is projected. The only sense is visual. You just “see” the image as you draw closer to it. Only when seated in the chair inside the Chamber of Indwelling do you image yourself as being within a body. This means that your mind-created body, seated within the Tower of the Art, is in exactly the same posture as the physical sheath you have temporarily vacated. This makes identification with the “inner locus” easier to achieve and more effective.

## THE PRACTICE

Having performed the preliminary practice as just described, rise from the chair in the Chamber of Indwelling. On the right side of the copper-sheathed door facing you is a clothes-stand on which hangs a cowled indigo robe. Beneath it are a pair of silver sandals. Rise and put on the robe, step into the silver sandals, and raise the hood of the robe. Open the door, step through it, and close it behind you. This door bears the enameled *apas-tejas* plate.

Descend by the lunar stairway to the Tiphareth landing, indicated by the High Priestess key, and enter through the low doorway and its rainbow mist into the Great Hall. Take your place at your siege and greet the Great Companions through the Grail.

Use the rest of this session, and as many others as you need, to totally familiarize yourself with the castle. Wander about, using the inner equivalents of your physical senses to objectify it. See the sights, touch the surfaces, smell the odors—the frankincense that always seems to pervade the chapel; hear the hissing sound made by the mighty forces at play in the Bridal Hall of Malkuth; feel the wind upon you on the battlements and the energy from the shining White Sun. Always use the correct spiral stairs to ascend and descend.

Use other sessions to examine the courtyard and the land that lies immediately beyond. Take the journey over the bridge to the edge of the forest. Familiarize yourself with it all—it is your inner kingdom; get to know it. Record the details in your journal. And be sure to manifest the castle in some way. Draw or paint it; make it in plasticine or clay; perhaps create a computer graphic image (be sure you print it out so that it is “earthed”). Until some form of manifestation is made, elements of the subconsciousness will not believe in your image. If that is the case, it is all pointless.

At the end of each session, return to the Chamber of Indwelling opening off the Da’ath landing. Close the copper door behind you. Take off the indigo robe and silver sandals, hang the robe on the clothes-stand. Sit in the chair in the center of the chamber. Project your consciousness through the window and back into your physical body, through the forehead. See the entire castle eidolon before you, then “pull” the table back toward your heart center. As the tower comes toward you, it will dwindle in size, then enter and coalesce with your physical body, the Round Table coinciding with your heart center. Stand and

“Close the Veil,” then perform the Qabalistic Cross. Thank the archangels and bid them return “to their own proper realm,” descend the Tree of Assiah, stamp your feet to assert your return to physicality, and write up your observations in your journal.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

In the past, we were mind-created spiritual beings, nourished by joy. We soared through space, self-luminous and in imperishable beauty. We thus remained for long periods of time. After the passage of infinite times the sweet-tasting earth rose from the waters. It had colour, scent and taste. We began to form it into lumps and to eat it. But while we ate from it our luminosity disappeared. And when it had disappeared, sun and moon, stars and constellations, day and night, weeks and months, seasons and years, made their appearance. We enjoyed the sweet-tasting earth, relished it, were nourished by it; and thus we lived for a long time. . . . But when evil, immoral customs arose among us, the sweet-tasting earth disappeared, and when it had lost its pleasant taste, outcroppings appeared on the ground, endowed with scent, colour, and taste. Due to the evil practices and further coarsening . . . even these nourishing outcroppings disappeared, and other self-originating plants deteriorated to such an extent that finally nothing eatable grew by itself and food had to be produced by strenuous work. Thus the Earth was divided into fields, and boundaries were made, whereby the idea of “I” and “mine,” “own” and “other” was created, and with it possessions, envy, greed and enslavement to material things.

*The Aggañña-Sutta*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “The Aggañña-Sutta of the Dīgha-Nikaya,” in Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1969), p. 76.



## THE PEACOCK'S TAIL

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*Think of the Soul as if it were a Castle made of a single diamond . . . in which there are many rooms. Let us imagine that this castle . . . contains many mansions, some above, others below, some at each side, and in the centre . . . is the chiefest, where the most secret things pass between God and the Soul. [I]f this Castle is the Soul there can clearly be no question of entering it, for we ourselves are the Castle . . . You must understand that there are many ways of "being" in a place.*

—St. Teresa of Avila<sup>1</sup>

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### THE TEACHING

There are two ways of working with images: creation by visualization, using the constructive power of imagination, and evocation, in which spontaneous images are allowed to rise up from the depths of consciousness onto our mental screen..

Images raised by evocation are hypnagogic images that are allowed to arise from the subconscious. Complexes in the psyche arise "fully clothed" with such images. Much of the old magical work using the Circle of Safety and the Triangle of the Art is a form of psychoanalysis. In *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, practitioners, after achieving stable communion between the lower self and the holy Guardian Angel, go on to evoke and master the demons. It is said of the adept that he "reigns with all heaven and is served by all hell."

This aspect of the Work is called the "redemption of the personality," whereby the unregenerate aspects in the depths of our unconscious are evoked to visible appearance, brought into the unifying light of consciousness, and thereby absorbed from their state of separation back into the integrated personality. Jungian psychology calls this

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<sup>1</sup> St. Theresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1974), p. 172.

“maturation.” Although the old language calls these complexes demons, it would be foolish of us to assume that they are evil per se. Just because something is in the shadow does not mean it is evil. Most of the interior demons we encounter are expressions of our fears of suffering, death, change, or rejection, and their forms mirror these fears. These fears are fundamentally part of our inheritance from the Nephesh, the vital soul of Yesod, which we share with all physical creatures. They are a consequence of embodiment, of our herd and survival instincts. They are not evil at all, in essence, but neither should they be allowed to dominate our awareness or color our actions.

Another interior manifestation is the “guide,” whom the medievalists also called a demon (since it tempted the mystic away from established orthodoxy) and the Greeks called a daemon, meaning a “messenger.” Carl Jung had his daemon, the Graeco-Egyptian teacher Philemon, as his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, and his paintings bear witness. Jung, who, at the time, had the most extensive alchemical library in Europe, also wrote, under Inner Plane dictation, *The Seven Sermons to the Dead*, which carried the telling subtitle, “written by Basilides in Alexandria, the City where the East toucheth the West.” We will explore this interior guide in more detail later.

### ***The Citadel***

The basic foundation is the Qabalistic Tree of Life; it forms the backbone upon which all else hangs. I use the term “backbone” because we are also dealing with the subjective Tree in each of us. The Middle Pillar of this subjective Tree is aligned with the spinal column of the human body and the positioning of the interior stars or chakras in the etheric body. The dragon (kundalini) is awakened and guided through its proper channels. Any practitioner employing these methods need have nothing to fear, save fear itself. But readers who choose to go outside of the parameters of this book and experiment without knowledge have only themselves to blame if they find themselves in difficulties.

The key to the whole method is the use of the projected castle. This ensures that the concentration of mental energies is focused on the etheric body, which has been built up by the involved visualization. This projected etheric vehicle, when withdrawn back into the physical at the end of the meditation practice, continues to work in a perfectly safe and self-regulated manner.

The mental castle is what, in the East, is called a *yantra*, or “form symbol.” When a yantra is enclosed in a frame—usually circular or

square—it is called a *mandala*. So our castle is a form symbol built up by the visualizing and creative imagination. Because its form is built up on the basis of the Ageless Wisdom, it is what we may term a viable form, capable of being a receptacle of power and energy which can charge it with mental light and spiritual grace.

The eidolon of the castle receives power. It is also thronged by all the presences and intelligences, including the masters and inner teachers. Remember, however, that, just as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, all the wonderful sights and scenes of the island were projections of the mage, Prospero, and of his spirit-servants, so too this castle is called forth by your creative activity and is a similar projection of yourself and your elemental spirit-servants who indwell the very cells of your physical body.

To exteriorize your inner conditions by the device of the castle is a very potent magic, and it must be carried out correctly to obtain the best results. Not only must your mental powers be employed, but the whole complex of spiritual, mental, emotional, and etheric energies must be drawn upon as well. In a certain sense, the projection of the inner, subtle vehicle in the form of an edifice, deity, or "body" is the missing key to Alchemy, without which all the alchemical texts are futile. However, even when you know the key for what it is, you are still far from being proficient in its application. This projection has grades of intensity. What I impart in this book is knowledge and tried and tested exercises that can lead you to consummate skill. The projection, which is, of course, the "separation of the subtle from the gross," is sometimes referred to as a "second" or "greater" death. In *A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*, Mrs. Atwood observes:

There is a twofold death; the one indeed universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other peculiar to the philosophers [alchemists] in which the soul is liberated from the body; nor does one entirely follow the other. That which nature binds, nature also dissolves; that which the soul binds, the soul likewise can dissolve; nature indeed, binds the body to the soul, but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature therefore liberates the body from the soul, but the soul may also liberate her self from the body. That is to say, if she know how, and have the right disposition awarded, she may dissolve her own conceptive vehicle, even the parental bond, and return consciously (the elementary principles remaining, nor yet

suffered to depart) under the dominion of another law to life. That was the way to “precious death,” spoken of by the Hebrews and Academics, this the “happy gate of blackness” celebrated by the old adepts, the “head of Hermes’ crow,” which is in the beginning of the work.<sup>2</sup>

It is due to the insistence in alchemical writings of the importance of exteriorization, that many commentators upon the Hermetic Art have gone down a false trail, believing that the word “exterior” meant that there was something *outside* the Alchemist that was necessary for the completion of the Great Work. Nothing could be further from the truth. As the Vajrayana text, the *Supreme Nectar-Elixir Dialogue*<sup>3</sup> states: “In order to attain the supreme Elixir . . . the highest pinnacle of the Tantric Path. . . . Cut through to the roots of Mind’s Inner Radiance.”

This citadel of your self is much older than your present occupation of it, for, being archetypal, it precedes your current incarnation. Below the levels we have been recreating there are much more primitive rooms. Some of these rooms, far below the surface, retain prisoners from your remote past. Others contain prisoners from more recent times. Far below this is the chthonic Hall of the Bride. And above it, in the Nuptial Chamber, is that Fiery Power that, if unleashed, could destroy the whole edifice as depicted in Key XVI, The Tower.

You have now constructed the citadel in the finer etheric, astral, and mental substances drawn out from your own aura, and so it has a close psychic link with you. As each chamber inside this Tower of the Art, corresponds to one of the subjective Sephirothic centers, you have thereby constructed a remote-control device. The tower is a means by which you can concentrate upon and direct energy to the chakras, without any concentration upon the physical centers at all. By working in the appropriate chamber in the castle, you can produce an effect upon the inner levels. From there, you work naturally through into physical, waking consciousness. So this etheric structure prevents damage to the physical body, but at the same time allows the spiritual powers of the etheric centers to unfold quite naturally. Most people incarnate today have a

<sup>2</sup> Mary A. Atwood, *A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery* (Geneva, IL: Yogi, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> From an unpublished Tibetan text.

fair inner development and, if the etheric links are made, they can bring through an appreciable amount of astral and higher awareness into waking consciousness.

### **The Golem**

The old Qabalists called a thought-created form that was built specifically as a vehicle for consciousness a *Golem*. Such a mental construction is not the same as the more usual magical thought-forms, which are ensouled with artificial or elemental intelligences. In a golem, we are dealing exclusively with the exteriorized subtle vehicle of the practitioner, which, at the conclusion of a session, is then re-absorbed back into a condition of subconscious latency.

The most popular story of a golem is that of the "Golem of Prague." During a time of severe persecution, to protect the Jewish community, Rabbi Loew created a golem. He built the form of a large man from clay and mud and, using secret Qabalistic knowledge (drawn from the *Sepher Yetzirah*), he animated the figure. When he inscribed *Emeth*, the Hebrew word for "truth," upon the forehead of the image it came to life and did the Rabbi's bidding. But, as in most stories of this kind, eventually the creature got out of control and Rabbi Loew was forced to destroy it. He did this by erasing the first letter of *Emeth*—the letter *Aleph*—so that the remaining letters spelled the Hebrew word, *Meth*—"dead." The golem instantly disintegrated and crumbled into pieces. Local folklore still claims that the dust of the golem is in the attic of the New-Old Synagogue in Prague.

As with all persistent legends, there is no smoke without fire. The golem is an artificial form (a product of the Art) built from astro-etheric matter. It is then animated by the consciousness of the practitioner. This is what is really meant by the letter *Aleph* in the legend. This letter is attributed to The Fool, or, as it was called, The Alchemist. The esoteric title of this tarot key is The Spirit of the Ether, or the Quintessence. *Aleph* also represents the number 1, signifying unity with God. This is why all true alchemical texts state unequivocally that the prerequisite for all alchemical work is prayer, dignification, the raising of consciousness into the presence of the Divine. And this is the purpose of the repeated preliminaries in the practice of ascending the Tree of the Body and invoking the Divine Names—to center consciousness in the "place where the three Lower Worlds meet." Only when the consciousness of the practitioner (spirit, the Quintessence) is projected into and indwells the

golem does the form become *Emeth*, alive in truth. And when the star of consciousness is withdrawn, the golem becomes inert, “dead,” just as an automobile is inert without a human inside to turn on the engine and to drive it.

This is similar to a technique in the Western Mysteries traditionally known as the “Body of Light.” This name can be misleading. Here “light” refers to the astral light, not to the Light of Spirit, because when such an artificial body is seen—and they can be perceived—it has a luminous appearance and emits a silvery radiance, the “light that casts no shadow.” Although the formulation, indwelling, and re-absorption stages for both the golem and the Body of Light are almost the same, their purposes are very different. A Body of Light is exteriorized for the purpose of travel, of transporting consciousness to a specific location, physical or supernatural. The golem—the Tower of the Art—is exteriorized for the purpose of making adjustments within the subtle body, to purify and activate the various centers (through the kundalini), and so to transmute and transform the physical body. In the Vajrayana, the Body of Light Formula is the second of the Six Yogas of Naropa, *The Yoga of the Illusory Body*. “Illusory” here means mind-created (essentially as are all the sheaths of consciousness) and has the same connotation as the alchemical term “artificial,” meaning a “product of the Art.” A practitioner who has acquired experience and skill with the Golem formula can very easily master the Body of Light technique. However, the reverse is *not* true; a car-driver is *not* automatically a competent mechanic. It is the Body of Light that Paracelsus and other medieval alchemists termed the *homunculus*; they were not referring to a little flesh and blood man, but to a thought-created body fashioned from subtle matter.

After having made this distinction, the tower can be used paradoxically, to transport consciousness for a very specific purpose. First, let’s be quite clear that consciousness itself doesn’t actually require any vehicle to be anywhere. Consciousness is omnipresent. But consciousness does require a vehicle to function, to be effective, upon any given plane. In very advanced practice, the tower is moved within the etheric counterpart of the Earth, first to the North Pole, where our planet receives most of the incoming cosmic radiations from the stars, and from there to other locations, even to the great diamond-crowned Tower at the principal abode of the immortal Sages, that august sanctuary which is, as its name states, the “place where the will of God is known.” This is a high level of practice that is only undertaken with direct tuition.

The creation and use of a golem is as old as the Qabalah itself. The earliest account is that of the patriarch Abraham himself. After initiating Abraham into the Qabalah, the Priest-King Melchizadek remained with the patriarch and instructed him throughout his creation of a golem. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, in his translation of and commentary upon *The Sepher Yetzirah*,<sup>4</sup> says: "Since Abraham was the greatest mystic and astrologer of his age, it is natural to assume that he was familiar with all the Mysteries of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Abraham was born in Mesopotamia, and he also lived in Egypt."

Throughout esoteric history, there have been many accounts—both skillful and clumsy—of practitioners engaged in the creation of the golem. Again, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, in chapter 2 of his commentary upon *The Sepher Yetzirah*, offers the following speculation, which indicates how close he was to understanding the way the golem is used in the practical Qabalah, which is Alchemy:

There is also evidence that creating a Golem was primarily not a physical procedure, but rather, a highly advanced meditative technique. By chanting the appropriate letter-arrays together with the letters of the Tetragrammaton, the initiate could form a very real mental image of a human being, limb by limb. This possibly could be used as an astral body, through which one could ascend to the spiritual realms. The formation of such a spiritual body, however, would also result in a tremendous spiritual potential.<sup>5</sup>

Here the Rabbi's speculation is of a golem as a Body of Light. What is important is his reference to "the letter-arrays together with the letters of the Tetragrammaton." The old texts refer time and again to how practitioners must have knowledge of how to arrange the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (permutation) in order to build the golem. This has been one of the principal "veils" by which the Sages have concealed the practical work of this stage of the Art. And, as with all spiritual keys, it is simplicity itself. For simplicity has been proven to be the most effective

<sup>4</sup> Aryeh Kaplan, *The Sepher Yetzirah* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993), Introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Aryeh Kaplan, *The Sepher Yetzirah*, p. 127.

concealment of all. The intellectual, rational, and reasonable adult mind is too complicated, too proud, to even consider the simple. Only the subconsciousness or one who has “become as a little child” perceives it. Hence, alchemists describe their Art as, “woman’s work (subconscious) and child’s play.”

The arrangement of the letters is in fact the twenty-two shining Paths of the Tree of Life. In Hebrew, as with other sacred scripts, the letters are regarded as being “alive,” because they represent states of consciousness. It is an occult maxim that, in the Upper Worlds, Powers appear as personalities. In consequence, the Hebrew letters and the tarot keys to which they are attributed are not only sacred tableaux, they are actually beings, personifications from the ocean of consciousness for the “intelligence of will,” the “eternal and triumphant intelligence,” etc. This is why—apart from the usual names, The Magician, Temperance, etc.—each key has its hidden or esoteric name, used in advanced practices, which is the title of the spirit-lord of that Path to which the tarot key and Hebrew letter are assigned. These titles are listed in Appendix I.

When, in the preliminary exercises preceding the actual practice, practitioners build up the Tree of Life in their aura, the paths are formulated as a consequence, since they are subjective reactions to the objective power of the Sephiroth. The Fountain Breath exercise then unifies the influences of all the Paths and the Sephiroth. This happens because there is only One Power that flows through all the paths and manifests in a ten-fold aspect as the Sephiroth, the outpouring of the Most Holy One that is Mezla, grace, by which the worlds are nourished and sustained. For grace is not some abstract poetic metaphor, but an actual etheric, astral, and spiritual substance. Alchemy names it “the water that burns” and “the fire that flows.” It is the First Matter.

So when practitioners perform the Fountain Breath, not only are the sum total of the energies of the Tree of the Body being brought into play and re-integrated as One force, but more energy is being brought into the practitioners’ personal auras, the alchemical “glass vessels,” through the Kether crown chakra. This energy is etheric, astral, and also spiritual in nature, because the Kether of Assiah is simultaneously the Tiphareth of Yetzirah and the Malkuth of Briah (see figure 9, page 132). And this is what is meant by “the letter-arrays together with the letters of the Tetragrammaton.” The letters are the Paths and the reference to the Tetragrammaton means the influence of the four worlds brought to

bear through the Fountain Breath. The reader will now see why we have stressed the importance of the preliminary exercises as an effective basis for all subsequent practice. For, when the golem is projected outward—exteriorized—it must contain substance drawn from the etheric, astral, and spiritual planes. So, unless practitioners are proficient in these exercises, the results will be poor.

### ***The Robe of Glory***

In this and the previous chapter, reference has been made to the Six Yogas of Naropa, with the intention of showing that this “Science of the Sages” is the spiritual heritage of all humanity, part of the primordial Planetary Tradition, rather than one belonging exclusively to either the Eastern or Western esoteric traditions. We have also intimated how a golem, or a body of light, was, and is, used by advanced practitioners to traverse the Earth—or more accurately, to travel within the etheric zone girdling the Earth. But in the cases of the greater adepts, this has other ramifications. For they, having integrated all their vehicles into a unity, the physical body attains the properties of the astral body and can so be teleported, not only to other physical locations, but also into other planes of existence and back again, at will. And, we are further given to understand that this ability manifests even before the full mastery—the *corpus incorruptibilis*—is attained.

For example, some of Dion Fortune's pupils attest that she physically stepped into Faerie (the Assiah-Yetzirah interface, the “Lower Eden”) and back again. While in 1980, at his monastery in Rumtek, Sikkhim, the 16th Gyalwa-Karmapa manifested the “rainbow body” during a ceremonial empowerment. His transfiguration was witnessed by many people and was caught on camera. Thorough professional examination of the negative and of a giant print showed that no ordinary explanation, such as double-exposure, was possible for the phenomenon.

Originally, among the Six Yogas of Naropa, there was also a seventh that some Tibetan traditions say was lost—although I am personally persuaded that it was probably withdrawn. The full title of this seventh yoga is “The Lord Naropa's Transcendental Doctrine Called The Great Chariot for Entering upon the Sublime Path, the Guide to Transmutation and Transference.” This same “transmutation and transference” is the esoteric meaning behind the title of Hermes-Trismegistos, the Thrice Great, for it refers to one who can step through all the three lower worlds at will. Also, in the Jewish tradition, Elijah (the Elias-Artisian of

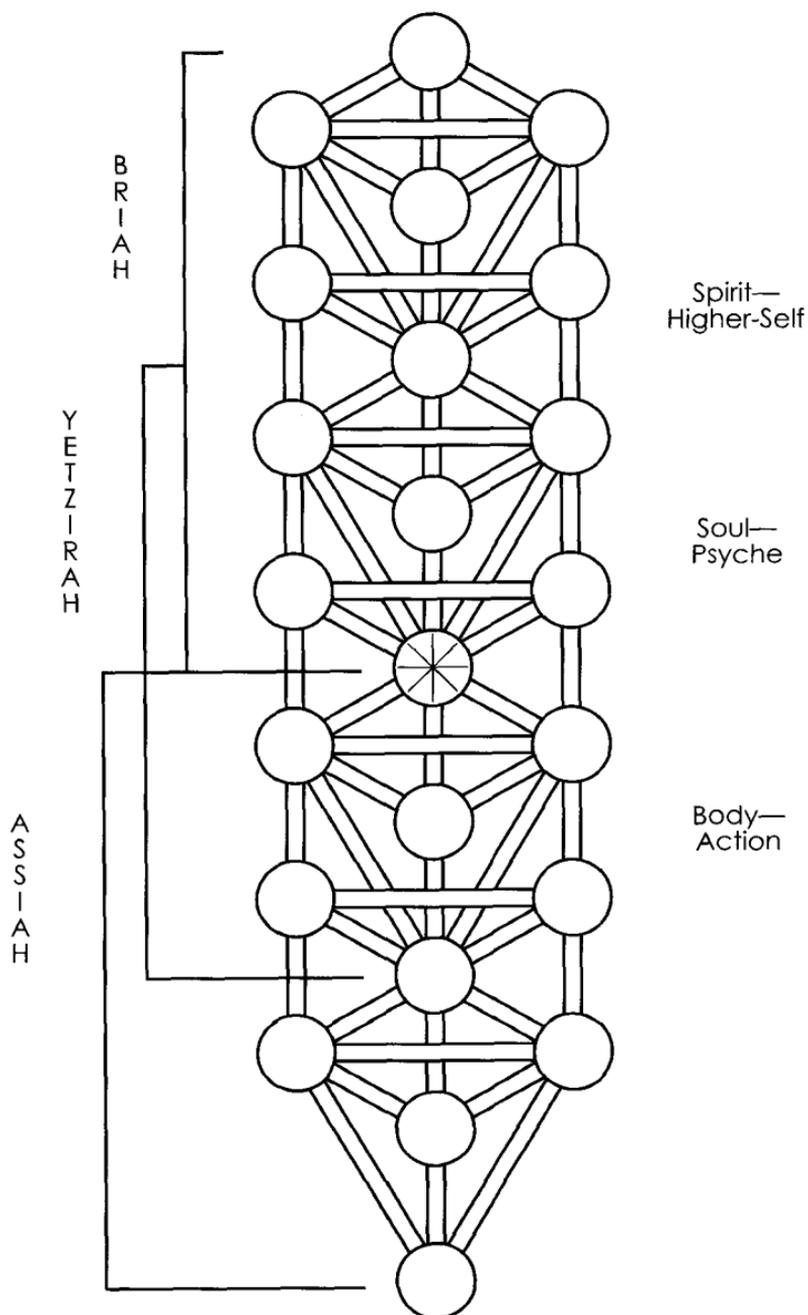


Figure 9. The place where the three lower worlds meet—Kether of Assiah, Tiphareth of Yetzirah, and the Malkuth of Briah.

the alchemists) can appear anywhere, in any guise, and at any time, which is why a vacant chair is placed for him at the seder table of Pass-over. The same ability to step through the world at will is told of Guru Rimpoché, Melchizadek, Jesus, the bodisattvas, and of many others. It is reported of the eighty-four Great Siddhas of Mahayana Buddhism (who include Naropa and Arya-Nagarjuna), that—apart from those few who have remained incarnate to teach others—most of them, after lives spanning between five and seven hundred years—were assumed *bodily* into the Paradise of the Dakinis. Indeed, many of the Mahasiddhas also took numbers of their pupils with them.

The Gnostics termed the solar, or rainbow body, the “robe of glory”—“robe” meaning a vesture or sheath for the spirit. The poet Bardesanes wrote *The Hymn of the Robe of Glory*, which tells of the soul's descent into matter and its ultimate re-ascent. The “pearl” mentioned at the end of the poem, is the “pearl of Great Price,” the Philosopher's Stone:

I saw it (a bright robe sent by his parents) making itself ready.  
 I heard the sound of its tones,  
 And I perceived also in myself  
 That my stature was growing according to his labours.  
 It was spreading itself out towards me,  
 It hastened that I might take it on.  
 And I stretched forth and received it,  
 With the beauty of its colours I adorned myself.  
 And my toga of brilliant colours  
 I cast around me, in its whole breadth.  
 I clothed myself therewith, and ascended  
 To the Majesty of my Father who had sent it to me.  
 And I was with him in his kingdom.  
 And he promised me also that to the gate  
 Of the King of Kings I should speed with him,  
 And bringing my gift and my pearl  
 I should appear with him before our King.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> G. R. S. Mead, trans, *Echoes from the Gnosis*, vol. 10 (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1908), pp. 35-37.

**The First Matter**

Alchemical texts contain many warnings that the Great Work cannot be completed until the First Matter has been grasped or apprehended. They teach that, when it is so grasped the peacock spreads its tail of scintillating colors and the end of the Great Work is in sight. So there are two aspects we need to expound directly here: first, how the *prima materia* is grasped and second, of what it consists.

“Grasping” the First Matter means to actually see it. Here we are not using any subtle veiling of language; we mean to literally see the Quintessence. Nor is this any form of astral or spirit sight, although it may be perceived internally in the early stages. Practitioners cannot be said to have grasped the First Matter until they have brought it within the range of their physical, visual perception. Most people do not see it—hence the alchemists’ cryptic jokes about the First Matter being everywhere, yet unseen by the many—because the necessary organ of perception is undeveloped in them. This organ is the physical manifestation of the Mercury or crown center, the pineal gland. When the Dragon’s fire, the kundalini, impacts upon the pineal gland, it begins to alter it by gradually fusing the separate grains of brain sand into a small crystal, golden-amber in color and shaped like a cone. The gradual fusion of the brain sand constitutes the “confection” of the Stone, brought about by frequent “cooking,” frequent employment of Kundalini Yoga, and frequent arousing of the dragon. Because of the Stone’s golden-amber color, it is often called the “Seed of the Sun.” Its conical shape explains why many alchemical texts refer to it as the “Mount of Attainment” upon which the The Hermit is shown standing in the 9th tarot key. In Qabalistic code, the Stone is what is meant by the term “Zion”—“. . . and the Lord shall be seen in Zion.” As in a crystal radio, the quartz crystal is capable of receiving and transmitting otherwise invisible ranges of energy, so the Stone of the Wise—which is the third eye of yoga—receives and transmits the One Radiant Energy that upholds creation. So the Sages and adepts actually see the First Matter, which is the root of all form and all substances. They see through the veil of appearances, gazing upon the thrice-radiant Darkness of the No-thing.

At first, the First Matter is perceived in states of profound meditation, what Vajrayana calls states of “deep abiding.” This advanced meditative state is called the “black of near attainment” in Tibetan texts, so confirming the alchemical texts in their injunction that the “black” of the First Matter has to be reached before attainment can be near. Upon reaching this stage, subjective consciousness fails. The Tibetan manuals call this “swooning”; a contemporary term would be to “faint.” However,

none of these terms is quite accurate, because we are dealing with a state of consciousness that transcends brain consciousness and that is just the point! Because ordinary self-consciousness has been swallowed up in the cosmic embrace of the Absolute, self-consciousness ceases to function and a new order of awareness unfolds. "Then I shall know as I am known."

This is why Buddhism and the Western Greater Mysteries both teach that there is no truly enduring or independent "being." For to gaze upon, and so to be immersed in, the First Matter is to abide in the void of Shunyata and to come to know that all is a great gesture (Mahamudra), transient bubbles upon the surface of the stream of consciousness. This is the reason for our earlier statement that magic is practical mysticism. Upon the Tree of Life this transition, from the levels of form to those of the Uncreate Realities, is to cross the abyss separating the Supernal Sephiroth from the other seven. Occult literature and teachers of the Lesser Mysteries often terrify their audiences with the horrors of the abyss, the void. They talk of "extinction" of "non-existence." And it is true that the abyss terrifies those still attached to individuality. That is why it is the true function of the Mysteries to prepare the mind for the plunge into the Divine Depths.

The blackness, however, is the sign of near-attainment, not the Goal itself. The peacock is only the mount for the Buddha of Infinite Light and an adornment upon the vessel in the hands of Amitayus, Buddha of Eternal Life. The radiant blackness gives way to Clear Light—"a Light that never shone on mortal eyes," the effulgence of the Absolute, the One Reality. The candle of separateness is blown out, because the Sun has arisen and the candle has served its purpose. By willfully losing the little, illusory self, one gains Eternal Beingness.

But what of the nature of the First Matter itself? Jung says: "The basis of the opus, the *prima materia*, is one of the most famous secrets of alchemy. This is hardly surprising since it represents the unknown substance that carries the projection of the autonomous psychic content."<sup>7</sup> It is, as we stated before, omnipresent and the root substance of all forms. Oriental texts term it *Akasha*; the alchemical texts of the Occident give it many names. Taoism, the alchemical practice of China, has the primal intuition that the universe must have some unborn origin (*prima materia*). This is given verbal form in the *Tao Teh Ching*, XXV:

<sup>7</sup> C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, vol. 12 of *The Collected Works*, Bollingen Series XX, R. F. C. Hull, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953, 1968).

There was Something undefined and yet complete in itself,  
 Born before Heaven-and-Earth.  
 Silent and boundless,  
 Standing alone without change,  
 Yet pervading all without fail,  
 It may be regarded as the Mother of the World.<sup>8</sup>

This First Matter is the medium that contains the universally diffused Radiant Energy. The Qabalah equates it to Binah—Beten, the “womb”—which carries the radiant Yod of Chokmah. Yod is shown as a single flame, the shape upon which all other letters of the Hebrew alphabet are based. Because the First Matter is dark, it is likened to Binah (black being the color on the Queen Scale for the third Sefhira); because it is full of infinitesimal points of light, it is likened to the iridescence of a raven’s wing or a peacock’s tail. These points of light are the *dharma-dhatu* of Mahayana Buddhist metaphysics and the *citta* or *prana* of Hinduism. In Qabalah, they are called *Chaiah*, the universal life-force attributed to Chokmah, the sphere of the stars. What is seen is energy passing into and out of manifestation. From Ain, the No-Thing, radiant energy passes through the Crown of Crowns—the Kether of Atziluth—as the radiance of Atziluth and so into relative existence. From Atziluth, it passes into the three lower worlds, forming their substance and the life-forms within each. Energy is constantly being released by each world and by every life-form. It passes from a higher world to the one beneath it, for each world is the support of the worlds below it. After reaching the physicality of Assiah and nourishing the life-forms there, energy passes out through the Malkuth of Malkuths (the sub-atomic level) back into the No-thingness once more. The all-pervading quality of this Radiant Energy is one meaning of the limitless light, Ain-Soph-Aur. It is the support of all life, extracted from the green bodies of vegetables, the red bodies of animals, and the white (transparent) bodies of water and air. The etheric vehicles replenish themselves upon it directly during sleep. The points of radiant light are the “potable gold” of Alchemy, for they constitute the very substance of every “pot,” every body, and, by alchemical practice, they can be increased and so transform and spiritualize the body into a finer instrument for consciousness. The adept consciously increases the amount of potable gold incorporated within the temple of the body by meditation and daily practice, by conscious breathing and by eating and

<sup>8</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao Teh Ching*, John C. H. Wu, trans. (Boston: Shambhala, 1961), p. 37.

drinking with awareness of the process of transmutation that occurs within the coils of the black dragon, the intestines. This is the "fixing of the volatile," whereby freely dispersed energy is absorbed and built into the physical body.

These radiant points of light that are the First Matter are represented in tarot by multiplies of the letter Yod falling from the sky. Yod is a flaming point of light, like the dharma-dhatu (seeds of reality) that crown the Tibetan chörten monuments. Consequently, the potable gold is sometimes called the "Yod force." This rain of Yods occurs in three cards of the Major Arcana, Keys XVIII and XIX, The Moon and The Sun. Our sun (the macrocosmic Kether of our solar system), like all other stars, is a condensation of and a center of radiation for the radiant energy. Our planet's Moon is a mirror for a certain range of the solar prana. We and all other kingdoms of nature draw their vitality from the Sun and Moon, either directly or indirectly. The third card to show the "dew of heaven," as the Qabalah calls the descending life-force, has especial reference to the practices in which we are engaged. It is Key XVI The Tower. Like the other two cards, it pictures Yods raining from the sky, but they fall on either side of the tower. They are not built into its structure. This tarot key is a depiction of the consequences incurred by foolhardy experiments, not only with kundalini, but with all powerful spiritual techniques. From the viewpoint of esoteric psychology, the blasted tower shown in this key is the ordinary, untrained personality—built up in a haphazard way, a product of upbringing, environment, education, and experience, both good and bad—that is destroyed when the high-tension Fiery Power courses through it. This power is represented in the card by the lightning flash, for lightning is not only a bolt striking from the thunder clouds, it is also electricity being discharged from the Earth upward. Kundalini arises from below (as The Emerald Tablet states) and causes a reciprocal downpouring. So, as with all the paths upon the Tree of Life, kundalini is a two-way channel. If, however, humans take their souls in hand and rebuild their personalities upon the blueprint of the Spirit, which is the most important aspect of our work with the Tower of the Art, those redeemed or regenerate personalities become good conductors for the "fire from heaven" and give light to many. This potential is expressed by the name given to Key XVI in some of the old French decks, "La Maison de Dieu," the House of God.

Lesser adepts build thought-forms of what is needful in the Yetziratic level—the "Magical Agent," as the astral plane is called. These forms then acquire vitality and manifest through normal channels,

although they can still appear magical to the onlooker. Greater adepts work directly in the First Matter, the “Great Magical Agent,” which is the womb in which all possibilities exist simultaneously. There, they fashion the energy patterns of what is needful, and their results appear miraculous to the onlooker.

Powers of the Spirit—*siddhi*, or “magical” powers—that are unfolded as a consequence of alchemical practice persist from incarnation to incarnation, although they usually fall into temporary abeyance during puberty. This has been amply demonstrated by numerous *tulkus*, Tibetan incarnate lamas. If the First Matter has been grasped, yet the Work remains unfinished by the end of an incarnation, the practitioner will come again, in a body already equipped and able to perceive the Quintessence. In the universe, nothing is ever lost. All abides forever in the Mind of The One.

## THE PRACTICE

Complete the preliminary exercises, exteriorize the entire castle, and project your awareness into it through the window of the Chamber of In-dwelling. Be seated upon the chair in the middle of that chamber and establish your presence in the tower, as you mentally pronounce the Latin word “Adsum.”<sup>9</sup> The word reverberates through all the levels of the tower. Rise and clothe yourself in the indigo robe of Akasha; place the silver sandals of the Moon upon your feet. Leave the chamber and proceed down the lunar spiral stairway to the Great Hall. Once through the western door of that chamber, hail the Great Companions, through the Grail, and pass therefrom into the Chapel of the Rose-Croix.

Before the altar, in the words that spring from your heart, dedicate yourself and your endeavors to the eternal and petition that the Divine protection may abide with you. Leave the chapel through the archway in the eastern wall, beyond the altar, turning left so that you are still within the Ida channel, with the cool breeze of that energy blowing behind you. Thus you are walking within one of the hidden passages that encompass the Great Hall of the Table. You come to the landing again, at the central column. Walk around it to the door of the castle-keep and out into the courtyard.

Immediately to your right, set into the castle wall, is a small closed door, a postern gate. When you open this door, you see that there is a stairway leading down to a murky underground passage, lit by burning

<sup>9</sup> “I am present.”

torches in iron sconces set into the walls. To traverse this passageway is to travel out through the subconscious mind into the town of Camelot.

Walk down the stairs and along the passage—it passes right under the moat and mound upon which the castle stands. At the end of the passageway, there is another flight of steps that end with a wooden door. When you emerge from this door, you find that you are in the back room of one of the merchant shops in the town. The door is set in a wardrobe against the wall. The merchant greets you; he is in service to those who sit with you at the table. He assures you that you may safely use this route anytime you need. Thanking him, you pass out of the shop and into the town of Camelot.

Your hooded indigo robe ensures that no one notices you, but you can observe all. The town “appears” as a medieval city, full of strange buildings, dark alleys, and with poor sanitation. This town is your immediate aura, reflecting personality traits, unrecognized complexes, and karmic obstructions from your long past. Your function here is to observe and note the images that appear to you as individuals and situations, and to gain insight into what they represent. But first, it is a fact-finding mission. Travel the town, take in its sights and sounds—there is good here as well as bad. Do not, at this stage, interfere. You may make adjustments when you are lawful sovereign of this land. Some things you may find unpleasant or distressing; it is to be expected. But you will also find hidden “gems” in unexpected places.

When you have explored a little, return to the shop and, bidding the merchant farewell, go through the wardrobe door and down the stairs, along the passage, and up into the courtyard, closing the postern gate behind you. Before entering the tower, it is important that you remove the stains of travel. Bringing unregenerate subconscious forces into the golem of the tower is very inadvisable. On the same side of the courtyard as the postern gate are the various outbuildings. In one, you will find a deep bath of water fed by a flowing fountain. Remove your robe and sandals and immerse yourself in its purifying waters. When you emerge, you find that the robe and sandals have been cleansed as well. When you are dressed again, enter the tower, walking around the central column and turning right into the concealed Pingala passageway that encompasses the Great Hall. The warm, dry breeze that fills this passage blows upon your face as you walk through it. You emerge through the eastern door of the chapel, walking around to face the altar, and there offer up to the Rose-Cross all you have experienced in an act of self-surrender to Divine transmutation. Go through to the Great Hall.

Sit here for a while with the Companions. You may, at this point, seek their counsel about what you have seen, or do it in another session. It may not be immediately clear what the various images you have encountered symbolize. The Companions may help with this and, more importantly, they may indicate which aspects of the Tree of Life should be reflected upon to help integrate these aspects of yourself. For, within the castle, there are chambers for all ten Sephiroth that you will be able to use to harmonize and integrate your personality. The castle is a reflection of the universe. Remember, too, that the forms you encounter in the town are disguised powers, which, although they may at the moment be imperfectly expressed, are still a part of you. You can create more appropriate channels for their manifestation. Nothing will be achieved by rejecting them; they must be owned because only then can something be done to effect change. To influence our outer environment, we need first to establish change here in the inner world.

Having thanked the Companions, rise from the table and return up to the Chamber of Indwelling. Remove the sandals and robe and project your consciousness back to its physical sheath. Draw the castle, by the table, back into latency. Perform the closing exercises and record your observations.

## AFTERMATH

Some of the foregoing practice will stir up deep emotional reactions. This is the purification of the metals, the tempering shown in Key XIV. The more consistently it is undergone, the greater the purifying that occurs and the more the process comes to be valued. Eventually, you may find yourself adopting the attitude that it is an adventure of self-discovery. It can even be amusing to watch the poses and devices the lower self uses to avoid integration.

There is no recommended number of times to perform this practice, for it is a discipline for life. There are times and seasons for this sort of cleansing and we all, from time to time, try to avoid it. The universe informs us when it's "that time again." Think of this practice as one of the labors of Hercules, a cleansing of our personal Augean Stables. In truth, without this process the Work is impotent. It is the refuse from our personal psychological dustbin (our angers, hurts, poises, mediocrity and fears) that fuels the Inner Fire; the more fuel we supply the brighter the Fire burns. For only a perfected personality can be transcended.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

The Great Work is, before all things, the creation of man by himself, that is to say, the full and entire conquest of his faculties and his future; it is especially the perfect emancipation of his will, assuring . . . full power over the Universal Magical Agent. This Agent, disguised by the ancient philosophers under the name of the First Matter, determines the forms of modifiable substance, and we can really arrive by means of it at metallic transmutation, and the Universal Medicine. This is not a hypothesis; it is a scientific fact already established, and rigorously demonstrable.

*Discite Crux*  
—Eliphas Lévi<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, A. E. Waite, trans. (London: Rider, 1968; York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1972) p. 113.



# THE HIDDEN IMMORTAL

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*Man as he now is has ceased to be the All.  
But when he ceases to be a separate individual,  
he raises himself again and permeates the Universe.*

—Plotinus<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

The Tower is an image of the Tree of Life, portrayed in the form of an edifice. This enables the practitioner to study and experience in detail the various interweaving influences that constitute a human being. In the present practice, the castle is being worked in the level of Atziluth, the Qabalistic world of Divine unity and of emanation. This may seem an odd statement to make at first, but there is good reason for it.

In Merkabah mysticism—the “Work of the Chariot”—it is said that to ascend into the heavens is simultaneously to descend into oneself. In practical mysticism, “above” equals “within.” Thus we see some diagrams in which the ten Sephiroth are portrayed as concentric circles, Malkuth being the outermost and Kether the center, representing the immanence within all. This is also portrayed in the Qabalistic diagram of the Cube of Space, in which Aleph, The Fool, is that aspect of consciousness that spans—and so unites—utmost depth and transcendent height. It is also fundamental in theurgy (sacred magic) to commence any spiritual practice or ceremonial working by aspiring to the Source, to affirm by invocation our union with the Indivisible One.

In this work, we take our commencement stage as Atziluth, and as we work the golem down through the four worlds—signified by the letters of the Tetragrammaton—we come to direct experience and gain

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<sup>1</sup> Plotinus, in Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, *The Wisdom of the Pagan Philosophers* (Boston: Tuttle, 1998), p. 37.

knowledge of our spirit, soul, and physicality, those vehicles that are the microcosmic manifestations of the four worlds. In this book, all the practices given are those pertaining to the level attributed to Atziluth. Practitioners will then be able to follow the directions for operating in the three lower worlds. The work in the realms of Yetzirah and Assiah, however, is best worked under direct supervision from one experienced in the Work, although practitioners need not be apprehensive of being left unguided. If the Work is done well at this stage, “those who oversee” will ensure that a suitable teacher appears—it is said “. . . and God shall send thee a master.” This is another reason why a written record of each practice needs to be kept, so that a competent teacher can see what has been achieved and which areas require more focus.

### ***The Anointed***

In Qabalah, the place of the Messiah is the place where the three Upper Worlds meet. It is the Kether of Yetzirah (full psychological integration), the Tiphareth of Briah (spiritual maturation), and the Malkuth of Briah (the Presence of the Divine) which is the Shekinah, the Co-habiting Glory. Messiah is Hebrew for “the Anointed”; the Greek noun is *Christos*, for “one upon whom all Grace rests.” The role of the Messiah is a function in the universe and in evolution, not a personality. The role is filled at various times by different Illumined Ones, in the same way that the office of the ruler of a Masonic lodge is filled by different brethren over the course of time. Any of the Sages who have filled this role provide a valid means of contact with this spiritual level, since, ultimately, they are but living symbols of the reality itself. That reality is the attainment of the state of consciousness expressed as “I and my Father are One.” Alchemical prints and tales delight in the story of the Son and the Father, separated and then re-united into one being. The Hebrew name for the Philosophers’ Stone is *Aben*, a word that combines the words *Ab*, “father” (Chokmah), with *Ben*, “son” (Tiphareth). *Ab* and *Ben* are also the “hidden” names of Atziluth and Assiah. This is an intimation that the Great Work, willed by the Absolute, is the manifestation of a physical body that is capable of manifesting the Divine Glory, a solar body that is the alchemical Gold and the rainbow body that is a prism for the Clear Light.

Arguments and disputes about the various incumbents of this office of Messiah—the sectarian intolerance that has plagued humankind for so long—have no place in the Royal Art. They indicate a spiritual immaturity that reveals an unfitness for the Work of Unification.

In Hinduism, individuals who display this type of spiritual immaturity—an unwillingness to give honor to anyone's gods but their own—are called *Pashu* (from the root *pash*, meaning "bound"). Such people are ignorant of the larger reality, the all-encompassing unity of the Absolute. They have a tendency towards obscurantism and actually practice a type of idolatry towards what is ultimately just "form" and "name." They can easily be identified as they tend to speak contemptuously of religious faiths and practices other than their own. Superior to the Pashus are the *Viras* ("heroes"), those individuals who acknowledge that spiritual realization, however attained, is the result of interior identification, the union of "I" and "Thou." This mystical truth underlies all symbols and is the goal of every true esoteric ceremony.

For Christian alchemists, Jesus, as the Christ, is seen as one of the master alchemists who has already achieved the Great Work. This is shown by the accounts, given in the gospels, of his healing miracles, his mastery over the forces of nature, his transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension. His esoteric teachings, strongly denied by orthodoxy, are recorded in the gospels, and are clear for any instructed in the "language" of the Mysteries.

Jesus is seen as the embodiment of the *corpus glorificatum*, the glorious solar body. In his remembrance feast, the Eucharist (identical to those of Melchizadek, Osiris, and Amitayus), he gives of the red and white substances, alchemically changed (transubstantiation) into channels for his universal consciousness. The theurgic ceremony of the Mass, as Jung held, is the great alchemical rite of the West. In it, Christ feeds others upon himself, until they are strong enough to walk the Way for themselves. Then, after "being made like unto him," they enter into the presence of the Father's glory.

Alchemists who are not Christians do not deny the attainments of Jesus. His alchemical achievements are among the best-known in the world. Sadly, however, they are perceived as a "great exception" rather than, what they are in fact, a "great example," a call to the heights.

### ***The Regent***

Upon the inner levels, principles assume personality. In this way, contact may be gained with a living being in whom a spiritual force is "personified" and thereby brought within our human grasp. When we are present at the Round Table, a telepathic contact is made with the Companions that enables us to relate to and enter into actual, living contact with beings of many grades of evolution. Some belong to our own

human species, others are members of different evolutions. In both cases, some have attained, far back in the depths of time, to that identification with The One that is the consummation of the human journey. Others are but a little removed from our ordinary levels.

At the Round Table, the Companion who sits in the siege directly opposite you is the Regent of the castle. A “regent” is one who wields authority and rulership over a kingdom until the rightful sovereign comes of age. In the inner kingdom, the Regent is the principle of spiritual enlightenment that exists within the practitioners *in potential*. The Regent acts as a temporary Yetziratic Kether, the psychological crown. In Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, this “principle of enlightenment” is called *Sattva*; in Alchemy it is called Mercury, the universal solvent, which perfects the Stone.

Mercury is the alchemical symbol for consciousness because the metal mercury, quicksilver, is used to coat glass to make mirrors. The mirror, in both Eastern and Western traditions, is often used as a metaphor for the inherently pure and transparent nature of mind, pure awareness, the light of Primordial Consciousness. It is in the “mirror” of human consciousness that God beholds God.

The Regent rules over the inner kingdom until practitioners achieve a certain level of unfoldment in which they are able to take responsibility for themselves on all levels. Consequently, the Regent is of great importance. At the table, the Regent sits in the siege of the Sun sign, directly opposite you because, astrologically, the zodiacal sign directly opposite your own natal sun, represents those lessons to be learned and assimilated in this incarnation. Ruling your inner kingdom and learning the lessons of your star pattern, your horoscope, are two ways of saying the same thing, for both hold the secrets of the unique expression you are of the One, “I Am.” The advantage of using the inner kingdom as a route to self-knowledge is that the images and scenes used speak directly and powerfully to the deep subconscious, which holds the power of renewal and regeneration.

The Regent invariably appears in male guise, robed in white, and wearing a silver circlet upon his head engraved with the astrological symbol of Mercury ☿.

### ***The Withdrawn One***

Of the many figures who throng the interior realm of Logres, the wise Hermit who lives in the enchanted Forest of Brolicade is an important one. Psychologically, of course, this is the Jungian archetype of the

Wise One. He is more, however, in the esoteric psychology of the Mysteries. This solitary figure is a personification of the Wisdom of Chokmah, expressed through the Compassion of Chesed, informing the "divine child" in Tiphareth. Tarot Key IX, The Hermit, is attributed to the 20th path on the Tree, uniting Chesed and Tiphareth. But this key also represents the Kether within, the SELF of the Self. Named *Yechidah* in Hebrew, meaning the "unique and indivisible," this is the Divine spark. The Hermit functions, within Logres, as the Maggid, the inner teacher of Qabalistic tradition and is the emissary and ambassador of the worlds above. He is named "Menes"; he is the Dweller upon the Summit and Guardian of the Virgin's milk, he who comes in the Mercy and the Power of the Light.

The expression "Divine spark" can be misleading, as can any metaphysical term taken too literally. The word "spark" gives an image of a fiery particle thrown away from a central fire. Some have taken this literally, seeing humanity as "sparks" that originated in the Light, but which have flown out and away from the Source. This view is contrary to the witness of the Sages and the teachings of the Mysteries. The term "Divine spark" refers to the Immanence of God within each heart. But the Infinite One is not a pie that can be cut into slices. Where the Indivisible One is, at any single point (or spark) there the All-Holy abides in the fullness (pleroma) of Wisdom and Love and in the plenitude of Divine Power. For there is within you now THAT which surpasses the attainments of even the greatest master. And this is what is represented under the guise of the Hermit Menes: the Ancient of Days within the innermost depths of each human soul.

## THE PRACTICE

Having completed the preliminary exercises—relaxation, rhythmic breathing, ascending the Tree of Assiah, the Interwoven Light and Fountain Breath, the mantra and exteriorization of the castle golem—project your awareness and indwell it. Be seated upon the chair in the middle of the Chamber of Indwelling and affirm your presence in this vehicle with the word "Adsum." Having vested, proceed down to the Great Hall via the lunar spiral stairway. Sit at the table and salute the Companions, through the Grail. As the golden image of the holy cup shines before you, you see beyond it the features of the Regent of the kingdom. You acknowledge him, knowing now what he represents, and from the Grail, his voice comes to you:

Heir to the Kingdom, you know that this land of Logres has fallen under an evil glamor. There are many things to be put right and many evil beings who must be restrained and prevented from doing further harm. But know too that, dwelling herein, there are also many who are true servers of the Light. And there are also sacred sites—pools, wells, and fountains, groves, isles, and hills of power—where Spirit may be contacted for the healing of the land. I advise you now to leave the castle and to journey through this land that is your heritage. This is necessary, for how otherwise will you come to understand the problems of the inhabitants you are destined to rule?

Thanking your Regent, you rise from the table and pass on into the Chapel of the Rose-Croix. There, upon the altar steps, lie the simple robes of a wayfarer, stout sandals, and a strong hawthorn staff. Divest yourself of the indigo robe and the silver sandals and put on these clothes. Gazing upon the Rose-Cross, place yourself under the protection of the Eternal. Then, staff in hand, go through the Great Hall, around the central column entwined by the spiral stairways, and out the keep door into the courtyard.

Go through the portcullis, over the drawbridge, over the moat, and down the castle mound; cross the bridge that spans the deep and swiftly running river. Ahead of you lies the great Forest of Brolicade. Your path winds through it for many miles. Take note of what you glimpse along the way. Nothing is without import in Logres.

At last, you glimpse shining water through the trees ahead, and come to the shores of a great lake, set like a shining crystal in the emerald heart of the forest. In the center of the lake is a small island. You are wondering how to cross to it when a gentle voice speaks:

There is a bronze bell hanging from yonder tree, ring it and the barque will come from the Mystic Isle and give you safe passage.

Looking to the speaker, you see an elf of light. She is beautiful beyond mortality, violet-eyed, with silver hair falling past her knees. A coronet of crimson roses and golden wheat is set upon her head; she wears a green brocade robe, ornamented with seed pearls, and a trailing cloak of willow leaves. With the courtesy that all wayfarers in the inner worlds *must* observe, you address her: "In the One's Name I give you greeting." Her

flower-crowned head bows at the mention of the Eternal, and she smiles. Protocol—and safeguards—observed, the ethereal faerie woman introduces herself by style and rank.

I be Lady of the Green Wood, and hold court as Queen in that hollow hill that is the Elf-Hame of the Evening's Star. And you be—Oh I know, the trees whispered it—the “one who is to come,” that promised sovereign who will heal the land and restore it to the Heart of all Brightness.

But you have not come to tarry with me, for we will meet again in the Red Lion's Chamber. I am here to tell you of he, upon yonder isle, who is to be your mentor to prepare you for rulership. But know, his methods of instruction are different from those used in your outer world.

Go to him always with a question held in your mind. Every journey must have a purpose. When before him, hold your question gently, then reach out in mind and spirit to him, the Dweller on the Mountain, Menes, the Hermit, the Magus of Power. Expand your aura to encompass him and he will embrace you within his. Then, as your mental concept is put forth in this way, you will find that it is being adjusted and altered to another pattern, as the mind of Menes “informs” it, until there wells up in your own mind the knowledge of what must be done by you in order to bring this teaching into actual use and power. It is a high telepathic communion, mind to mind, whose effects will work out in whatever problems you may have placed before the Hermit, the personification of the Divine Will.

The form of Menes is a thought presence. Principles are personified here in these inner worlds, so that, upon this level, it is a person of power and wisdom who is instructing you, the teacher-within. But remember, upon your return to the earth body, record all that you have received in this high telepathic union as soon as possible, for its details and flavor will soon fade, and it is the sorrow of humans that they forget.

You thank the Elven queen and go to the bell that hangs from the lowest bough of a great oak tree. As you pull the rope, the bell rings out. From the island in the lake a vessel comes; as it approaches the shore you see it is a low-sided barque with a dragon prow. Soon it rests by the shoreline and you step in and sit upon the crimson cushions.

As the barque sails back over the mirror-like waters, you turn about to wave farewell to the Lady of the Woods. She is still standing upon the lake's edge. She spreads her arms and shape-shifts into the form of a white falcon, flies up into the sky, circles once, then vanishes into the forest canopy. As the barque sails across the lake, you meditate on what you wish to ask the Hermit. From the words of the Elven queen you know that the question must be related to the Work and to spiritual progress, for this is a high contact, consulted only in transpersonal issues. The barque gently bumps against the shore, rousing you from your meditation, and you step out onto the green grass. The isle is an orchard of apple trees that are simultaneously in blossom and in fruit, the golden apples and pink-white blossoms bright in the sunlight. The rich scent of warm earth and the hum of harvesting bees makes the island a haven of delight. You walk happily through the apple trees until you come to a hut in the island's center. It is round, with a thatched conical roof. The hut's white walls are ornamented with spiral motifs; ammonite fossils adorn the door frame, over which hangs a black and white bull's hide.

Through the door emerges the figure of a man with a long white beard, robed and hooded in grey. The Elder smiles in welcome and beckons for you to approach. As you come up to him, you see his features clearly. It is the most remarkable face you've ever seen—a countenance before whom civilizations have risen and fallen; piercing eyes that out-gaze a sun, yet for all this, are ensouled with the warm light of compassion. Remembering protocol, you greet him: "In the One's Name I give you greeting." He inclines his venerable head, then speaks melodiously: "From those who see the Light of the Most High, face unto face, I give greetings. Be welcome, my child, and enter in peace."

You follow the Hermit into the round hut. In the center of the floor is a fire pit in which burns a smokeless fire. The walls of the hut are draped with blue hangings; one is embroidered in gold thread with the Tree of Life. Before this are two comfortable chairs and a small table holding a goblet of wine and a platter of wheat bread spread with honey. Menes motions you to one chair, although you don't sit until he does. Sitting before him, you watch quietly as Menes blesses the bread and cup. Then, breaking the bread, he shares it with you. He offers you the goblet of red wine, you drink and give it back to him; he drinks in his turn. A sense of deep peace pervades the atmosphere and you feel as if you have always known this place and the Elder somewhere deep in your far past. Now, face to face, you expand your aura to encompass the Hermit and sense that Menes does likewise. Not only do the two spheres of sensation

overlay one another, they interpenetrate. Once you have adjusted to this level of energetic working, you mentally present your question and wait in quiet anticipation for what is given. This is the real meaning of Qabalah—the Reception—receiving from one who knows, from one of the Elder Brethren.

When the communion is over and the two identities re-established, Menes rises to indicate that it is time to go. You kneel and ask his blessing and, for a moment, outside of time, you experience a foretaste of supernal bliss. The Hermit comes to the door of the hut with you, pulling back the tanned hide, and together you step out in to the warm sunlight. “This isle,” he says, “is an epiphany of the Holy Orchard, the realm of Atziluth; it is a place of refuge for the refreshment of your soul. And the still waters of this lake have profound healing properties. Use both wisely, my child, and fare you well. I shall visit you in the castle.” He re-enters the hut and you walk through the sacred grove back to the waiting barque.

The vessel bears you swiftly across the healing lake, the still waters shining silver in the late afternoon sun. Awaiting you on the shore is a squire from the castle, with a pony and a handsomely caparisoned horse. “The Lord Regent bade me bring you this steed,” he tells you. You mount the horse and, with the squire following on his pony, you ride through the Forest of Brolicade. By horse, the journey is soon over and, as sunset approaches, you are riding back into the courtyard of the Castle of Camelot. You dismount by the mounting-block near the stables, go through the tower keep and enter the Great Hall. Passing through to the chapel, you find the Regent awaiting. After thanking him for the horse, he assists you out of the wayfarer’s gear. You reach for the indigo robe, but the Regent presents you with a white robe of linen, saying:

This is the Inner Robe of Glory, to be worn beneath the indigo Outer Robe of Concealment. It will remind you henceforth of your essential nature; which is undying Light.

Deeply moved, you put on the white robe, admiring its fineness, then the silver sandals of the Moon. The Regent then places the hooded indigo robe over your head. Taking the hawthorn staff, you reverently lay it on the top altar step, giving thanks to the *Mysterium Magnum* who has guided you on the path.

Withdraw from the Chapel of the Rose-Croix, go through the Hall of the Round Table, reverencing the Grail before going up the solar spiral

stairway and into the Chamber of Indwelling. There, remove the sandals and indigo robe, but retain the white linen vestment. From now on, whenever you exteriorize your subtle bodies, you will automatically be clad in the white robe. Return to physicality, absorb the golem into subjective latency, and perform the closing exercises. Record the impressions of your encounter with Menes immediately.

## AFTERMATH

Work this practice until its details are familiar and you come to the consciousness-shift that mentally uniting with the hermit provokes. Once the details are fixed, use this journey whenever you have need.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

By the Pentagram is also measured the exact proportions of the great and unique Athanor necessary to the confection of the Philosophical Stone and the accomplishment of the Great Work. The most perfect alembic in which the Quintessence can be elaborated is conformable to this figure, and the Quintessence itself is represented by the Sign of the Pentagram.

*Transcendental Magic*  
—Eliphas Lévi<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, A. E. Waite, trans. (London: Rider, 1968; York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1972), p. 70.



# IN MEMORY OF ARTHUR THE KING

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*In this Stone there lieth hidden, whatsoever God and the eternity,  
also heaven, the stars, and elements contain, and are able to do.*

*There never was from eternity anything better or more  
precious than this, and it is offered by God, and bestowed upon man;  
every one may have it that doth desire it, it is in a simple form,  
and hath the power of the whole Deity in it.*

—Jacob Boehme<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

Readers familiar with the Arthurian legends, may wonder why none of the practices given in this book, enact the famous scene of Arthur drawing the sword from out of the stone. The reason for this is that, as soon as you commence to perform the practices you have, in effect, drawn the “sword of spiritual will” from out of the “stone of material inertia.” Furthermore, each time you sit with the intention of performing the Work, the royal sword is freed from the stone and you again prove your unalienable right to rule your inner kingdom.

*Solve et Coagula*, the motto of Alchemy, is repeated in text after text. “Dissolve and congeal” is the literal translation, but “solidify” is a better translation of *coagula*. Psychological commentators upon the Art have taken *solve* to refer to the releasing of psychic energy held within emotional complexes in the subconscious. This is valid, as far as it goes, but

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob Boehme, *Threefold Life of Man* (Liepzig, 1620, English translation 1650; London: J. Sparrow; reprinted London: Watkins, 1909; Sloane Collection of the British Library), text taken from the Internet.

the Children of Hermes (the alchemists) meant more than this; they meant a certain, secret technique—one that practitioners following this book have been mastering, namely, the separation of the subtle body (*solve*) from the gross body, and its reintegration with the host physical body (*coagula*). The exteriorization and reintegration of the golem, the inner citadel of the soul.

The purpose of this is to enable alchemical practitioners to safely perform the Work in both its White and Red stages. The principal aspect of the work is the “cooking” or “distillation,” which is the rousing of the Dragon of Kundalini. Eliphas Lévi defined the Great Work as “before all things, the creation of man by himself.”<sup>2</sup> This means that the Fiery Power of Kundalini must be the creative power, and so it is. In Yoga, Kundalini is the *shakti* (bride, partner, or consort) of Brahma, the creator-god of the Hindu pantheon. In Qabalah, Kundalini is *Shekinah* (the bride of Adonai), the inferior nature, the medium through which the superior power, transcendence, operates. So, Kundalini is the power of the Creator concealed within human form. Its repeated arousal (“cooking”) results in the transfiguration and spiritualization of the physical body. Some alchemical texts use “blinds,” based on *gematria*, to indicate how many times this distillation (cooking or heating; all three terms are used interchangeably in alchemical works) process should be undertaken. A common blind is 27. The sum of 2 and 7 is 9. The 9th tarot key, Strength (the secret of all spiritual works), is the pictorial representation of Kundalini in its stage of arousal—the Red Lion. The cooking is repeated time and again until the signs of attainment—fruitage—are obtained. The time span will vary from practitioner to practitioner, because the stage of spiritual unfoldment when commencing the Work varies, as do the karmic obscurations that require purification.

It is rightly said that, “the Vase of the Art is the Soul (Yetzirah); the Fire of the Art is Spirit (Briah) and the Furnace of the Art is the Body (Assiah).” In his book, *An Alchemical Treatise on the Great Art*, Antoine-Joseph Pernety, a Benedictine abbot and the librarian to Frederick the Great of Prussia, repeats the injunction of earlier alchemists, when he hints that “the Vase of the Art must be of glass and oval in form.”<sup>3</sup> “Glass” here refers to the translucent appearance of the aura and its flickering colors. “Oval” refers to the shape of the auric egg. The “vase”

<sup>2</sup> Eliphas Lévi, *Transcendental Magic*, A. E. Waite, trans. (London: Rider, 1968; York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1972), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Antoine-Joseph Pernety, *An Alchemical Treatise on the Great Art* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1995), p. 159.

is the subtle body and no other. The “fire” of the Art is the radiant energy of Atziluth (the Mezla), mediated through the agency of the Higher Self (Briah, the spiritual world), the true Alchemist. This is intimated—yet veiled—in Key XIV, Temperance, where the angel holds a burning torch in one hand and an urn of water in the other. The concealment lies in the pictorial separation of the fiery and fluid qualities of the one spiritual influence. Combined, the torch and urn would reveal the “water that burns” and the “fire that flows”—the quintessential First Matter.

The alchemical furnace, the physical human body, is termed the *Athanor*. Like many alchemical terms, it is of Chaldean origin and comes to us through the Hebrew, *eth ha nour*, meaning the “essence of fire.” The term *athanor* is thus an analogy for how the physical body extracts the Radiant Energy. Like a furnace, the body burns fuel (food), extracting the Life-Force through digestion and releasing the inherent energy. In Alchemy, faeces passed from the body are called the “ash.” Paracelsus once promised to show a group of intelligentsia the First Matter and, to their disgust, uncovered a box of faeces. What he was showing them was what was left of the athanor’s fuel after the Quintessence had been extracted. The “black poisonous dragon” referred to in some alchemical texts, is the intestinal tract, which produces acid and bile. The burning action of the furnace of the physical body is augmented by the action of the alchemical “bellows” (the lungs), which “fan” the fire to greater heat. The imagery of the bellows has two applications. The first is the normal act of respiration which extracts prana, the radiant energy, from the solar-charged atmosphere and passes it into the bloodstream. The second is the conscious use of breath made by the practitioners of Alchemy and Yoga, in which breathing, brought to conscious awareness, actually stimulates the fiery power causing it to increase—from “green” to “red”—and to ascend. As in the Eastern discipline of *Pranayama*, the physical body is made conscious through the spiritualizing stimulus of *prana* in its most accessible form, the process of breathing.

I keep stressing that I refer here to the physical human body because that is the only organism on this planet that can increase the amount of energy it receives at will. It is for the same reason that Buddhist scriptures assert that a human body is a necessary requirement for Enlightenment, speaking of it as a “precious opportunity not to be wasted.” Furthermore, we are told that, even those Inner Plane adepts (discarnate humans) who have reached a stage of advanced spiritual unfoldment, but who have not, as yet, achieved the golden solar body that is the fruit of the Great Work, have to reincarnate again in order to attain that deathless vehicle.

**The Dross**

The only alchemical book in Hebrew is called the *Cleansing Fire*. In any heating process, impurities are brought to the surface which then have to be skimmed off. The “dross” and “scum” of Alchemy are the karmic obscurations and mental misconceptions we all have acquired while imprisoned by the illusion of separateness. The “skimming” process is interior reflection, resulting in adjustment—shifting consciousness in order to respond to life rather than just react to it from the animal level. Meditation increases the amount of dross to be assimilated, but Kundalini Yoga (in both the Tantras of Vajrayana and in the Hermetic Art of Alchemy) throws up more of the dross than any other known process. This is exactly what “accelerated evolution” means. This is what Temperance (Key XIV) means—the purifying of the inner metals in the fire of Spirit.

If, therefore, the Fiery Energy is to be allowed to play through our personalities, it will be necessary to first look at the channels through which that power will flow and see that no blockages or diversions exist. Otherwise, the power might be deflected, with dreadful consequence. For kundalini imparts illumination to the wise, but bondage to those who profane its unifying sanctity.

This is the purpose of the practice given in chapter 11, to cleanse as much dross from the psyche as possible at any one time. The most important part of this process is not the recognition of the dross (vital though this may be, many people stay fixated at this stage of recognition), but its transformation, its redemption (Qabalistically called a *Tikkun*), through the restoration of the imprisoned energy into the overall dynamic of the psyche. And to that end, in Qabalah, we use the Tree of Life in Yetzirah as a map of the psyche. Discovery of the essential impulse, of which a manifestation (in thought or action) is a distortion, enables us to redirect the energy back to the appropriate Sefira of the Tree, and then to build a more appropriate channel that will serve us well. To aid in this recognition, the counsel of the Great Companions at the Table of the Grail often proves invaluable. In cases of great difficulty (provided the practitioner can retain a transpersonal mental-emotional stance), an issue may be taken to Menes upon the holy isle.

The major issue is the “desire-nature.” To clear the decks, let us first declare, with the Sages, that desire itself is not a spiritual impediment. Desire arises in Kether, as the Divine impulse to manifest. Kether is will or consciousness-in-action (in Hebrew, “will” and “delight” have the same meaning). Consciousness itself is ineffable, indefinable, and hidden within *Ain*, the Absolute. To will something, however, is for the light

of consciousness to be focused into a concentrated beam of pure intention. This is one meaning of Kether's title of *Nequidah*, the Primordial Point, signifying the beam of the Primal Will, from which all other wills emanate.

On the Tree of Life, Malkuth, the tenth Sephira, is the result of this Divine desire, hence the Kether-Malkuth relationship. Without Malkuth, the other nine Sephiroth are meaningless and, in a certain way, impotent. For, although Malkuth is the fragile, transient blossom of the Tree of Life, it is the full manifestation of that which is intended by the Primal Will to Good, in Kether. To use the analogy of a physical tree, no matter how strong the root, trunk, and branches of a tree may be, if the tree fails to blossom, it remains infertile, will not produce fruit or seed, or reproduce its kind. It remains, in fact, un-creative.

Desire is not the spiritual impediment here, but rather "attachment." These are not the same thing at all. Attachment binds and fetters, while it is the inherent nature of desire to seek ever new and more perfect expressions. In a certain sense, the mystical quest itself is the result of a soul tiring of the transient manifestations within creation, resulting in a profound sense of dissatisfaction with phenomena—a "divine discontent," as it is sometimes called—and a search for That which alone endures, which ultimately satisfies, the One Reality. This discontent is usually the result of many previous incarnations in which accomplishments upon the physical level have been attained. It arises in a soul that has drained the "cup of earthly pleasure" to its dregs yet is unsatisfied. The saying "It takes a great sinner to make a great saint" comes from the perception that, to achieve anything—spiritual progress included—requires a strong desire. The hunger for "things which are eternal" is ultimately the greatest safeguard of the Mysteries. Souls who have, in the past, "tasted" of the wine of adulation, triumph, and rulership and have experienced them for the "frauds" they are, are not tempted when others offer these baubles, in the hope of buying the spiritual treasures held by the Sages. Hence, to undertake the completion of the Great Work in a single lifetime requires a certain "ripeness" of the soul itself; "green apples" on the Tree of Life are, as yet, too young and inexperienced to undertake it.

Alchemy teaches this sublimation of desire under the metaphor of coins, metal monetary discs. The coin is a "blind" for the Pentacle, the magical tool representing the Earth of the wise and the world of Assiah. The Pentacle appears on the table of The Magician in Key I and is the last suit of cards in the Minor Arcana. The Pentacle is the symbol of

manifestation, of a force being brought through “in earth,” as ceremonial workings call it. In some of the old texts, the Pentacle is named the “Shekel of Solomon,” which, with “Rod of Aaron,” the “Sword of David,” and the “Cup of Moses holding manna” are the four elemental tools. The writer of the *Turba Philosophorum* says:

I will give you a fundamental axiom, that unless you turn the aforesaid copper into white and make visible coins, and then afterwards again turn it into redness, until a Tincture results, verily, ye accomplish nothing. Burn therefore the copper, break it up, deprive it of its blackness by cooking, imbuing, and washing, until the same become white. Then rule it.<sup>4</sup>

The metal copper, the rose flower, and the color green are all empirically assigned to the planet Venus, which is the mundane chakra (the macrocosmic manifestation) of Netzach. Within the personality, Netzach is the seat of the desire-nature. Green, in Alchemy, always represents the manifestation of a power as it appears in nature as being incomplete, since the Sages hold that creation is still in process, that it is, as yet, an unfinished work. So the copper coins spoken of in the *Turba* are the manifestations (coins) of our desires (copper).

All desire, whatever its physical manifestation, originates at the Divine level. Hence, it is written: “I am the Lord of good and evil alike” (Isaiah 45:5–6). This is a hard teaching and requires much contemplation. Love, affection, and nurturing intimacy are manifestations of the Divine Unity. The drive to lose oneself in another is a manifestation of the same desire that, in its highest expression, is the hunger of the soul to return to its source. For, ultimately, it is That which you are seeking which causes you to seek. Manifestations such as blind lust and selfish gratification, however, arise equally from the same Divine impulse toward unity. All the Sephiroth, with the exception of Kether and Chokmah, have their shadow side—the “vice of the Sephira,” as it is traditionally called.

Binah—avarice and aloofness

Chesed—bigotry, hypocrisy, gluttony, and tyranny

Geburah—cruelty, sadism, and wanton destruction

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<sup>4</sup> A. E. Waite, trans., *Turba Philosophorum* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1970), p. 28-29

Tiphareth—hubris, spiritual pride  
 Netzach—lust and shallowness  
 Hod—falsehood and dishonesty  
 Yesod—the egos's usurpation of the rightful role of Tiphareth  
 Malkuth—inertia, ignorance, and complacency

So the manifestations, the human-built channels of thought and action, are often evil, even though the originating impulse and energy is divine in origin. This is a consequence of human free will. This is why the Qabalah holds the difficult, and easily misunderstood and abused, teaching that, within the heart of every evil there is concealed a spark of the Divine. How could it be otherwise, since there is only One Reality, one Life-Power?

Because this is a difficult teaching—"strong meat," as opposed to "milk for babes"—and a pitfall that may lead readers into the blind alley of a self-righteous and moral judgment, let us further impart here that there is no evil action—seen on television news or read in the newspaper—that any of us has not performed in some incarnation, in our round of lives. Each and every human being has the innate potential to become either a Hitler or a Buddha. Moreover, even the soul that once incarnated as Adolph Hitler in the 20th century will one day become a realized Buddha, for ultimate perfection is assured. Omnipotence *cannot* fail and God *shall* be all in all.

This difficult teaching should not be taken as license to experience or tolerate evil, as some modern sorcerers have advocated. The vocation of the initiate is to resist evil in all its manifestations, within and without. The purpose of this teaching is to promote in us compassion for all human conditions, whereby we learn to "hate the sin, but love the sinner."

Westerners are still in recovery from puritan influences in their history, so we must be accurate in our understanding that sexual orgasm is a fleeting foretaste of Divine Bliss. The ecstatic sensation experienced during orgasm is not any different from the perpetual Bliss enjoyed by the Sages. Although the Sage may appear as a fool to the world, in fact, he or she does not exchange the joys of the world for something less, but for something more—for those abiding realities of which the temporal manifestations are only ephemeral copies.

To return to the quote from *Turba Philosophorum*, to "turn the afore-said copper into white" means to discover the Divine impulse behind the manifestation—the color white is a reference to Kether, the Primal

Will. By taking an individualized desire back to its Divine impulse, any inappropriate manifestation can be undone. As the *Turba* puts it: "Burn therefore the copper, deprive it of its blackness . . . until the same become white."<sup>5</sup> But that is only half of the work, for desire will always manifest somehow, somewhere. Unsatisfied desire lies at the root of much psychological neurosis and physical disease. Thus it is necessary to make an appropriate channel for the energy, a "visible coin," based on the macrocosm (in the Qabalah, mapped by the Tree of Life) and tinged with the "redness" in the quote from the *Turba*. Red is the color assigned to Geburah in the Queen Scale (the color chart of spirit) and Geburah is the seat of volition and of *macrocosmic* Kundalini. To make an appropriate channel of expression that reflects the Divine desire without distortion is to "rule it." This is why The Magician in Key I wears a red overrobe, which he can take off or put on at will. The Magician, through his transparent receptivity to the Limitless Light, cultivates roses (fragrant desires) in the garden of Eden, within time and space. As a Qabalistic meditation puts it: "God placed Adam in Eden to grow roses."

The completion of this process of redemption is shown in the glyph of the Rose-Cross, where the rose of Venus (Netzach) blooms ruby-red (Geburah) at the center of the gold cross of sublimation (Tiphareth) and within the flower glistens the "dewdrop" which is the distilled white brilliance of Kether, the Mezla. The human being who has become a living expression of this glyph is one in whom the personal desire-nature has become co-centred with desire of the Divine. The Sages give us to understand that this liberation from attachment does not prevent us from still enjoying the pleasures of the senses. Knowing the Essence we can still enjoy the appearance, but know it for what it is. It is like being fluent in two languages. And beyond this attainment is that of the fully illumined Sage—a "Golden Rosicrucian"—one in whom all sense of personal origination has passed away in the complete realization and subsequent actualization that everything is Spirit. In this discovery, in this enlightenment, the SELF of the Self is discovered, for:

Then shall the Vision of thy Lord be granted unto thee,  
And seeing Him shalt thou behold  
The Shining One  
Who is thine own true Self. . . .

<sup>5</sup> A. E. Waite, trans., *Turba Philosophorum*, p. 29.

And all thy habitations shall be blest  
 By the White Brilliance  
 Which descendeth from the Crown.

*The Meditation on Samekh*<sup>6</sup>

## THE PRACTICE

After the preparatory exercises, exteriorize the eidolon of the castle and project your consciousness into the Chamber of Indwelling. For the first time, as you manifest there, you are clothed in the white robe. Put over it the hooded indigo robe and put on the silver sandals. Once robed, descend via the lunar spiral stairway and enter the Great Hall. Pass through the hall and into the Chapel of the Rose-Croix. There, as you prepare to make your adoration, you notice that the Sword of Power is missing from the altar. Continue with your offering of self, then return to the Great Hall and take your place in your siege at the Table Round.

Mentally reach out in welcome to the Great Companions and feel their response as a living force, shining back to you from the Grail. Suddenly, the veil over the Grail is swept upward by an unknown wind and burnt to nothingness by the inner sun above, revealing the sacred Cup in its naked glory.

As if this were a signal that some obstacle within you has been removed, the telepathic mind-waves of the Companions impact upon you with greater force and dynamism. In response to this new level of concerted consciousness, your aura flares, then expands to embrace and interpenetrate the aura-fields of the two Companions who flank you. Their auras, in turn, encompass and interpenetrate you. Then the three, embrace the six, who embrace the twelve, until all seated at the table enter into an energetic unity of at-one-ment.

You feel your consciousness soar to levels undreamed, held within the united group-mind of the table. You feel winds from mighty wings and glimpse beings of dazzling light, singing to one another across immense distances. All around the ascending sphere of consciousness that is the Fellowship of the Table appear the stars of heaven, galaxy upon galaxy, tiered in cosmic splendor one upon another. Lines of radiance appear, linking star to star, until the deep darkness of interstellar space is crisscrossed by a shimmering net of light. The radiance increases and intensifies until all is enfolded in a blaze of Supernal Light and you are

<sup>6</sup> "The Meditation on Samekh," in Paul Foster Case, *The Book of Tokens* (Los Angeles: Builders of the Adytum, 1989), pp. 140-141.

lifted into an ocean of glory and unconditional love, where you are known utterly.

Like sound ascending a musical scale, the radiance increases, passing even beyond the frequency visible to spirit, until all is absolute blackness, yet pervaded with the iridescence of a raven's plumage. Here, within the thrice-radiant Darkness of Ain, you are alone with the Alone, the All-One.

After an eternity, which is yet a microsecond, you simply open your eyes to find yourself seated at the Round Table, with the Companions, in the Great Hall. But in the center of the table, the point of its blade poised above the Grail and the ruby of its pommel catching the light of the sun above, gleams the *Sword of Power, Excalibur*. As you watch, a fluid substance resembling a golden oil runs from the jewel-pommel down the length of the blade to drip slowly into the sacred vessel, as if the light of the inner sun were converted into a "fluid" by the pommel-stone, thence to flow down and be collected by the Grail.

Gradually, the *Sword of Spirit* sinks down into the Grail, sheathing its entire length, in a way impossible upon the outer plane, into the Cup. For a brief moment, the pommel, grip, and hilt shines above the Cup, a radiant symbol of the Crucified One—then this too sinks into the bowl of the Grail and is gone from sight.

You look around in wonder and see that the Companions have vacated the sieges and are now standing to the east of the table, facing each other in two rows that form an avenue to the gold curtain across the door to the chapel beyond. The Regent beckons you to approach. You do so, and feel the shuddering response from your lower self that so often indicates that a higher range of energy is coming in, that something big is afoot. Rising from the table, you walk clockwise around it to the east. As you walk between the twin rows of Companions, to the waiting Regent, here and there you receive a gentle smile of encouragement.

The Regent draws back the gold cloth and, placing his hand upon the *akasha-tejas* symbol on the door, he pushes it open. As he precedes you along the short passageway, you become aware that the Companions have fallen in behind and are following you inside. Thus, the entire Fellowship of the Table Round processes into the Chapel of the Rose-Croix.

Following the Regent, you can see that the interior of the approaching chapel is brighter than on previous occasions. Once inside the sanctuary, the Regent steps aside and you see, standing atop the altar steps, a figure that fills you with awe.

It is Menes, the Hermit, but changed, transfigured almost beyond recognition. Gone is the shabby robe and his gentle expression. His face is suffused with a spiritual majesty. Here stands Menes "uncloaked" and revealed as a heavenly hierophant, a High Priest of the Great Mystery that men call "God."

He is robed in the sacerdotal robes of glory: the pure white of Divinity, the blue surcoat of Spirit, the violet and scarlet of Form and Action. Upon his breast glitters the *koshen*, the breastplate of twelve jewels which indicates that, in him, the twelve spiritual types, the twelve sieges, have been integrated and fulfilled; the Earth has no more to teach him. He is crowned with a white mitre, upon which letters of fire shine, declaring: "Holy unto the Lord."

Menes stands with his hands resting upon the quillons of Excalibur, the point of its blade resting lightly before his feet upon the top altar step. This is Menes the Oros, the Dweller upon the summit of the Mountain of Attainment, a Lord of Light.

The chapel has expanded to accommodate all the Great Companions who encircle you and the altar. Above and beyond them float six glorious angels, three on each side, each bearing a tall, golden candlestick holding a burning taper. And shining above all, like the immovable axis of the universe, stands the Rose-Cross. The alchemical gold of the cross reflects the candle flames and the radiance of the angels who hold them. The Rose of Ruby emits a sphere of rainbow light and the dew-drop within the flower burns with an incandescence like the heart of a star. Into this scene of inner beauty and power you have come, to stand now at the very center. Silence falls upon all things.

The Regent takes your forearm and guides you up the altar steps, then gently places a hand on your shoulder to indicate that you should kneel. You do so. Your eyes are level with the knees of the Menes; you can see Excalibur's bright blade inscribed with arcane characters and, beyond, the tiny bells on the blue tunic's hem. In a voice that reverberates with power through the levels of existence, Menes declares:

"Under the authority of Those who see the Light of the Most High, face unto face . . ."

He raises Excalibur and proclaims:

"And by the virtue of this token of sacred sovereignty, I receive you into the noble Company of the Grail Quest and sign you with the Seal of Fire."

Touching you thrice with the flat of the sword's blade, he intones the chivalric formula of dubbing:

Upon the head: "*In Nomine Dei*,"

Upon the right shoulder: "*In potentia Sancti Michaeli Archangeli*,"

And upon the left shoulder: "*Et in memoria Arthuri Regis*."<sup>7</sup> Amen, Selah, Amen."

Thus "sealed," you close your eyes and bow your head.

When you look up again, the chapel is empty. Somewhat dazed, you rise and give thanks to the Eternal. You see Excalibur, sheathed once more in its jeweled scabbard, back in its accustomed place upon the altar. Turn to descend the altar steps. By the entrance to the passage to the Great Hall, the Regent awaits you; by his side stands a figure. Its "form" is of one of the legendary knights or ladies of the Round Table. By an unspoken communication from the Regent, the knowledge flowers within you that this being is the spirit-guardian of the chapel in your castle. You acknowledge the guardian: "In God's name, be welcome in this place and may the blessing of the Divine be upon you for this service." As the relationship between the two of you develops, this particular guardian will become a special comrade and guide.

You return to the Great Hall; the Companions have resumed their sieges. Their faces express pure delight at your acceptance by above. They rejoice in your achievement and you share your joy with them through the unveiled Grail before bidding them farewell.

Returning up the solar spiral stairs, you enter the Chamber of Indwelling and divest yourself of the indigo robe. As you place the robe upon its stand, you see that, upon the breast (over the heart, when worn) there has appeared a small gold Latin cross with a ruby at its center.

"A rosebud," speaks a voice from an unknown source and there is a sense of Divine mirth in the air.

Wondering, you return to Assiah, absorb the eidolon, and close down, to record your subjective reactions in your journal.

## AFTERMATH

Once the identity of your chapel's spirit-guardian is known to you (which knight or lady from the Arthurian mythos), it is suggested that

<sup>7</sup> "In the Name of God, in the power of holy Michael the Archangel and in memory of Arthur the King. Amen, Selah, Amen."

you make a small shield and paint it with the guardian's arms. A small amount of research will enable you to find this out. Place the shield in your sacred space, as a link to and focus for the guardian, for it may act as a bridge between the worlds.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

From the forehead of each Lord of the Sun a narrow beam of brilliant light projected, and where they met in the center of the circle was a vision so magnificent none of them [the candidates] would ever be able to forget it, nor would they ever be able to describe it. It was as though they saw in one marvelous moment the beauty and the harmony of the whole of existence represented in a kind of living, vibrant Tree of spheres that was growing at once upward and downward, rooted in realms so high no one had ever penetrated their mysteries, its trunks bearing branches shimmering with life, reaching down till they brushed the earth. . . . while simultaneously it was rooted in earth and reaching up through all the green and growing spheres to the high realms of the Shining Spirits and beyond. There was a continual flow through trunk and branch and leaf and root. No part was left without change and movement and meaning—from the gigantic stars on their majestic and ordered courses to the minutest component of the tiniest most primitive cell. Each had its place and purpose. Each contributed and was essential to the Whole.

They felt faint with awe. This was theirs. All this was theirs! They as human beings had the gift of consciousness beyond all others in the earth-realm to glimpse such reality. They could no longer justify any action they might take that did not take this vision into account.

They bowed their heads, and as they did so they felt the High Priest's finger upon their forehead and knew that the vision had been sealed in.

*The Silver Vortex*  
—Moyra Caldecott<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Moyra Caldecott, *The Silver Vortex* (London: Arrow Books, 1987), pp. 142–143.



# AROUSING THE DRAGON

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*To give Light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death . . .*

—Luke 1:79

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## THE TEACHING

As quoted before, the *Sepher Yetzirah* describes kundalini as the “Secret of all Spiritual Works.” Notice that it says “*all* spiritual works,” because even if a soul approaches the Divine through the long route (in contradistinction to that of “accelerated evolution”), the gradual spiritualization of the physical body will still occur through the agency of kundalini. It cannot be otherwise, since kundalini builds, grows, and maintains all bodies in all worlds. The word “works” in the quotation also has the meaning of “wages,” “payment for good work.” For it is the delight (in Hebrew, “delight” and “will” are one and the same) of the Most Holy One to bring its self-realized life expressions (evolved humans) to freedom from the wheel of death and rebirth, conferring upon them deathless bodies which are capable of maintaining Cosmic Consciousness without fluctuation. This is why God alone is called “the Omnipotent Master of the Art,” *Deus Omnipotens Magister Artis*. The physical alchemist does not, in fact, complete the Great Work. It is the Divine Immanence within the alchemist who perfects the Work “in the twinkling of an eye” (“eye,” meaning “stone”).

The Sanskrit noun “kundalini” literally means “the coiled one.” This refers to the reservoir of the Fiery Power coiled at the base of the spine, and also to the spiral movement of the one radiant energy. The Qabalah teaches that the original kundalini center is in Malkuth (the laboratory of the Holy Spirit) and that the Yesod center is a storehouse for that energy. Kundalini is also called the Serpent Power, because when the ancients observed the serpent casting its skin, the snake was taken to

represent reincarnation, regeneration, and immortality. The Tibetan name for Kundalini is *Tigle* and in theosophical writings, it is called *Fohat*, a term borrowed from Chinese alchemy, which is Taoism.

This Fiery Power is very real. It is cosmic electricity, and any unwise blocking of the channels through which it may emerge into the conscious self is fraught with danger. Self-purification is imperative before commencing this arousal stage. So the practices given in the chapters preceding this one are vital. I do not accept any responsibility for readers who attempt to awaken this power without observing the guidelines for practice given, much less for those who pick from here or there and play with it. Some Hindu texts refer to Kundalini Yoga as “clasping the tail of the tiger”! This book teaches how to “train” the tiger, but, if someone chooses to leap into the cage of an untrained great cat, well. . . . Two novels written by H. Rider-Haggard (who was associated with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn) present a profound study of the effects of Kundalini upon the personality. The first, *She*, shows the effects of the fiery power upon an unregenerate personality. Its sequel, *Ayesha: The Return of She*, tells of subsequent redemption and of the great pains expiation entails. Anyone engaged in practical psychological work will have come across examples of what can happen if such an “invasion from the unconscious” takes place. The wrathful and fierce aspects of the tantric deities in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon are enhaloed by flames of high energy. They are permeated and encompassed by the Fiery Power that consumes mortality.

Kundalini is cosmic electricity, the universal life-principle, the conscious energy that takes form as all things and builds everything from within. The control of this energy in its subhuman forms, by mental means, is the primary secret of the Great Work. This “cosmic electricity” is called *Chaiah* in Qabalah and is attributed to Chokmah. It is the radiant Yod-force held within the medium of the First Matter, the “womb” of Binah.

In the Italian Renaissance text, *The Kabbala Unveiled*, Chaiah is described as “the highest form from Atziluth, . . . therefore the intangible, illimitable, indefinable idea in the Soul of the Great Absolute Incomprehensible God.”<sup>1</sup> Chokmah is the “sphere of the stars” and stars and suns are the first physical manifestations of the limitless light pouring through the crown of Kether. (The Lakota Native-Americans call the stars the

<sup>1</sup> S. L. MacGregor Mathers, trans. *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1983), p. 34.

“breath of Wakan-Tanka,” the Great Mystery.) This manifestation is the result of a condensing, a concentration of an otherwise free-flowing energy. In one sense, Chokmah—the All-Father—is the originating point from which commences the manifestation of the mystery of our selves. In one Hellenistic initiation ceremony, the candidate declares, “I am a child of Earth, but my race is of the starry heavens.”<sup>2</sup> For every point upon a sphere is not merely part of that sphere, it is the sphere itself manifesting at one point. A “point” has an inherent sense of selfhood.

So both the Fiery Power (Binah) and the Life-Force (Chokmah) are not separate things, but two, complementary manifestations of the One (Kether). Because of the distorting veil of illusion—the belief in separateness—we perceive them as separate things. Always affirm, however, that the primal condition of all aspects of life and all manifestations of consciousness are, in reality, an indivisible unity. Any philosophy, school, or teacher that leads students away from this primal unity, confounds the nature of the Absolute and leads them into even deeper bondage to the illusion of separateness, becoming subtly and yet more deeply imprisoned within the veils of Maya—within the “Vajra-hells” as they are termed in the Tibetan Tantras.

### *The Winged Serpent*

The serpent is the symbol used by the wise when they wish to compress all their knowledge of the Great Magical Agent (the Quintessence) into one representation. The Quintessence—the First Matter—is that glory “veiled with all concealments,” as the *Zohar* says, the Fiery Power of Kundalini hidden within every form. The principal reservoir of this energy in the subtle body is at the base of the Shushumna channel, corresponding to the sexual organs. On the Tree of Life, this region is the Sephira Yesod—the Foundation of all Life. Astrologically, it comes under the rulership of the zodiacal sign of Scorpio, the scorpion. Scorpio is ruled by Mars, the planetary manifestation of Geburah, which, as mentioned before, is the focus for macrocosmic Kundalini. Further, the archangel of Yesod is Gabriel, the “Mighty One of God,” whose name has the same root as the noun, Geburah. So Yesod—the interior metal lead and the Muladhara chakra—is the repository for the individual reserve of Kundalini. This is housed, in the golem of the Tower of the Art, in the *luz* within the Nuptial Chamber.

<sup>2</sup> “The Petelia Tablet,” in Dion Fortune, *The Circuit of Force*, Gareth Knight, ed. (Loughborough, Leicestershire, UK: Thoth, 1998), p. 51.



The Work: on the lower left (Hod), the waters of the intellect are panned. On the lower right (Netzah), the desires are cooked and skimmed. The center shows the Higher-Self Angel (Tiphereth) holding the embryonic solar body. On the summit, the Alchemist is “with God” (*cum Deo*), in super-consciousness. Theophilus Schweighart, *Speculum sophericum Rhodostauroticum*, 1604.

The kundalini force, because it builds new bodies and destroys out-worn ones, is called the “the giver of life and the bringer-in of death,” which is why the scorpion of death is assigned to it. But because this is the very same force sublimated, or raised, by both Alchemy and Yoga, it has various symbols, pictorial and alphabetical, to represent its stages of ascent.

The Fiery Power is imagined as the “scorpion of death” that becomes the “serpent of wisdom,” then the “eagle of aspiration.” This transmutes itself into the “phoenix of rebirth,” and the entire process culminates in the “dragon (the winged-serpent) of immortality.” Alchemy calls the act of raising kundalini “borrowing strength from the eagle.” This is why The Fool’s wreath of victory is crowned with a scarlet (fiery) wing-feather of an eagle. Furthermore, Isaiah teaches: “They who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isaiah 40:31).

The healing (reintegrating) and transfiguring power of kundalini is shown, in Exodus, by Moses raising up the brazen serpent (Hebrew, *Nachash*) which removes the poison from the children of Israel. Until the time of King Hezekiah, the original standard of the brazen serpent raised upon the Tau cross (Tau being the Hebrew letter-code for the Muladhara chakra) was kept and venerated in the adytum of both the Mosaic Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon.

By *gematria*, the number 358 is that of the serpent of temptation in Eden and also of the Messiah, the Anointed One. This reveals that the serpent is the “tempter.” Kundalini is the source of the illusion of apparent separateness, and so is the “father of lies.” Yet, when overcome (transmuted), kundalini becomes the very instrument of our “salvation” (literally, “a safe passage home”). That by which we fall is also that by which we can rise again.

The great alchemical symbol for the completion of the Great Work is that of the serpent swallowing its own tail. This represents that Origin and Goal are one, that the beginning and the end—Aleph and Tau, Alpha and Omega (Azoth)—are subsumed in eternity. So, The Magician in tarot Key I wears it as his girdle, under the red overrobe of desire. The serpent biting its own tail means that the serpent power feeds upon itself; it is self-sustaining. Scientifically, this is correct; the sum total of universal conscious energy remains ever the same. It enters into various forms of expression, and these feed on one another. Hence the serpents on the caduceus of Hermes represent the law of endless transformation and

conversion. The Sepher Yetzirah assigns the physical sense of taste and the biological function of digestion to Teth, the Hebrew letter of strength, the tarot picture of kundalini. Digestion literally means “feeding,” and this refers to the extraction of prana from the fuel put into the Athanor. This is also why the Hebrew letter of the planet Mars (macrocosmic energy) is Peh, meaning “mouth,” because it is through the mouth that fuel is put in the furnace to feed the fire.

The alphabetical symbolism of the Fiery Power in its stages of arousal are the three Hebrew letters, Teth, Lamed, and Samekh. These are assigned to the tarot keys Strength, Justice, and Temperance, respectively. It is the shape of these letters that denote these stages. Teth (ט), shows the dormant serpent, the three lines of the letter representing the three coilings of the sleeping, but dreaming, Fiery Power. Lamed (ל), the letter of Justice, is rooted in the saying “Equilibrium is the basis of the Great Work.” This has two meanings: that karmic obscurations must be dealt with during the entire process, and that the arousal must be accomplished by a balanced method and integrated in a balanced way, without excess. The shape of Lamed depicts the serpent rearing, ascending the spinal column. Samekh (ס), the letter of Temperance, the Higher Self, shows the serpent swallowing its own tail, signifying the completion stage of the Work, when the thrice-refined alchemical gold is removed from the furnace.

The Bible refers to Kundalini under the “veil” of the primordial dragon, Leviathan, a myth probably borrowed from the Tiamat legend of Sumeria and Babylon. According to the *Midrash*, Leviathan came into being on the fifth day of creation—five, the Quintessence. Legend says that Leviathan gives out great heat, especially from his mouth, that causes water to boil. His eyes possess great illuminating power. The name “Leviathan” comes from the Hebrew root “to coil” or “to twist” and is another reference to the spiral motion of the One Thing. Furthermore the *Midrash* goes on to say of Leviathan that “He is first [or “chief”] of the ways of God.” It is said that, at the end of time, at the advent of the Messiah, Leviathan shall be hunted down and slain. Archangel Gabriel, will lead this hunt, referring to the Yesod center. From the shimmering hide of the dragon, Leviathan, God shall fashion tents (habitations, dwellings), girdles (the first tarot key), and adornments for the righteous. The rest of the hide will be hung upon the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, to light the city. The Sepher Yetzirah identifies Leviathan as the celestial dragon, the constellation of Draco. As in Chinese legend, this is the

heavenly dragon that flies up to grasp the radiant pearl of wisdom in its jaws. Macrocosmically, this pearl is the axis of heaven, the northern pole star; microcosmically the pearl—the pearl of great price—is the Stone of the Wise.

In Western legends, it is the negative aspects of the dragon—the “bringer-in of death”—that are emphasized. Yet, even in the tales of St. George or St. Michael slaying the dragon with a spear, are veiled the teaching of the power of the tamed (slain) Serpent Power ascending through the spinal channel represented by the spear.

In the inner worlds, according to ancient Egyptian beliefs, before entering the kingdom of the gods, a soul had to be devoured by the most ancient of creatures, a great winged serpent with four legs (a dragon) wearing the fiery Red Crown of Lower Egypt.

But it is in the Orient, where the Ageless Wisdom has not suffered persecution to the same degree as in Europe and America, that the legends which stress the holiness of the Serpent Power persist. The blood of the dragon forms amber (tree resin, referring to the One Tree); its saliva is violet and was used as ink by the early emperors of China to write upon tablets of gold. In Taoism and Vajrayana, there are references to Sages becoming dragons. The boat in which the Eight Immortals of Taoism sail, has the prow of a dragon's head with the fiery pearl clasped in its jaws, to symbolize their attainment.

This great attainment is also hinted at in the Arthurian mythos. For Arthur, the once and future king—the undying crowned one, who ruled “between the sunshine and the rain, in the royal days of the seven wonders”—was entitled the Pendragon, the chief dragon!

## THE PRACTICE

Perform the preliminary exercises, the mantra invocation, project the golem of the castle to objectivity and transfer your consciousness into it by the Chamber of Indwelling. Robe and descend to the Great Hall. Seated at the Table Round, greet the Companions, then enter the chapel. There, dedicate your work to the greater glory of God. Remembering that the Spirit of the Highest dwells within you, proceed.

Pass back through the Hall of the Table and through the western archway, to stand on the landing of Tiphareth before the image of Key II. Descend the lunar spiral stairway down to Malkuth, the Hall of the Bride. There, greet the spirit-guardian. Then, at the altar, offer yourself

## AFTERMATH

Each time the foregoing practice is performed, the following practice should be performed. This is a quiescent practice, in which you simply sit at the table, with its fellowship, bathing in the harmonizing light flowing from the Grail. By so alternating a session of arousing the dragon with a session in which you "rest" in Tiphareth, you will balance and integrate the effects of the released energy. Do not make the assumption that the two Companions who assisted you in the Nuptial Chamber will always be the same two, they may or may not be. This meditation should be performed approximately thirty times before moving on to the one given in the following chapter. The ideal times of day for performing this practice are just before dawn or at dusk, for these are the times when the Akasha Tattva bathes the Earth. Also when undertaking intense kundalini work, you should avoid sun-bathing as excessive *prana* can overload the physical system.

Once you have absorbed the castle at the end of a practice session, after arousing the Fiery Power, do not allow yourself to replay the scenes in fantasy during the day. This will be a tendency at first and must be firmly resisted. If it occurs, turn your mind to something else by a short, sharp act of will. If this proves insufficient, do some physical activity, giving it your full attention. The arousal must be completely "handed over" to the subconscious for implementation. The role of the self-conscious was fulfilled by doing the practice itself. The implementation cannot occur if the self-conscious mind, through idle fantasy, keeps digging up the planted seed to see if it has sprouted yet.

Eventually the alchemical process of the Dragon's arousal must be worked downward through the three lower worlds of Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah. For each world will awaken the Fiery Power in accordance with its own nature, and without any unnatural "forcing." Forcing is the usual cause of trouble for dabblers in the Art. The Fiery Power burns more brightly as it permeates each sheath corresponding to one of the four worlds and certain physical and psychic signs may manifest. These are never quite identical for each practitioner but there are some that occur in many cases. The physical body may begin to tremble before the arousal, the mouth may fill with saliva, the anus contract and the eyes roll upwards. Inner sounds may occur, the sound of a bell or a waterfall or the humming of bees; these indicate an increase of basic vibration and the *unfoldment of clairaudience*. There can be a sense of being a "witness" in the body, of floating, feeling vast or minute or a sense of "headlessness." You may see dots of light, a shimmering like heat-haze, geometric shapes

or you may see physical objects even with the eyelids closed. Not all practitioners will experience most or even any of these symptoms. The Fiery Power—illuminating and integrative in nature—produces whatever experiences are necessary for a practitioner's spiritual progress, according to the individual's habit-patterns, karma, and merit.

Once the power of mental visualization becomes empowered by the Fiery Power, the whole science of the mental creation and energizing of thought-forms falls into place. Practitioners will find their thoughts becoming powerful—for good or evil. This truly magical ability, once developed, will have to be used; there is no neutral course. Even when, by the normal means, the inner consciousness and the fiery power become dormant—as they must in the stressful bustle of Western life—it will yet be found that the sensitized imagination is a far more focused and effective tool. For this is the natural result of developing any faculty or skill; it cannot be developed in isolation. This is why all is offered to The One, for in fulfilling His will alone lies perfect peace.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

A savage dragon lives in the forest,  
 Most venomous he is, yet lacking nothing:  
 When he sees the rays of the Sun and its bright fire,  
 He scatters abroad his poison,  
 And flies upwards so fiercely  
 That no living creature can stand before him,  
 Nor is even the Basilisk equal to him.  
 He who hath skill to slay him wisely,  
 Hath escaped from all dangers.  
 Yet all venom, and colours, are multiplied  
 In the hour of his death.  
 His venom becomes the Great Medicine.  
 He quickly consumes his venom,  
 For he devours his poisonous tail.  
 And this is performed on his own Body,  
 From which flows forth glorious Balm,  
 With all its miraculous virtues.  
 Hereat all the Sages do loudly rejoice.

The Book of Lambspring<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "The Book of Lambspring" in *The Hermetic Museum*, A. E. Waite, ed. (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1991), p. 286.



# 14

## THE CLAVICULE

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*The path to immortality is hard, and only a few find it. The rest await the Great Day when the wheels of the universe shall be stopped and the immortal sparks shall escape from the sheaths of substance. Woe unto those who wait, for they must return again, unconscious and unknowing, to the seed-ground of the stars, and await a new beginning.*

—Hermes-Trismegistos<sup>1</sup>

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### THE TEACHING

The golem of the castle edifice and its surrounding kingdom is a thought-form built and established upon the inner levels of existence. These inner levels are the spiritual and mental planes, or Briah, and the astral and etheric levels, which are Yetzirah and, most importantly, the world of Assiah where it interfaces with Yetzirah. Each and every time the golem is exteriorized, it is built up yet more strongly. And when it is projected, it is, like all thought-forms, visible to the dwellers upon the inner levels and to incarnate seers, physical humans with clairvoyant sight.

The reabsorption of the castle at the end of each practice withdraws the thought-form from objective view, because the withdrawal causes the thought-form to enter back into a condition of subjective latency. This does not mean at all that the golem is lost or destroyed, but rather withdrawn, as a human being would be in sleep and dreaming.

Within the Anahata chakra, at the point in the etheric heart center where the Light of the Immanence ever burns as an infinitesimal point of brilliance, the castle, with all its indwelling beings and powers, rests in latency until, at the next practice, it is once more exteriorized into objective existence in the subtle realms.

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<sup>1</sup> Hermes-Trismegistos, "The Divine Pymander," in Jeremy Catto, *Alchemy: the Art of Knowing* (London: Aquarian Press, 1994), p. 57.

Under the image of the castle and the town of Camelot—that fleeting wisp of glory—we have been focusing upon the separate levels of consciousness in an incarnate human being, and, at the same time, marrying up these symbols to the mandala of the Tree of Life. The golem is a remote-control mechanism that acts upon the etheric and physical centers in our physical bodies without the dangers which arise from direct concentration of thought upon those centers. Concentration upon any part of the physical body causes an increase in the blood flow to that area. Such concentration, when unduly prolonged, can result in a disturbance of the millions of complex processes necessary to keep a body in normal health. These processes are usually under the direction of the subconscious mind. So it is the withdrawal of the golem back into latency that actually “instructs” the subconscious to make the adjustments necessary to build the “new body” of alchemical adeptship. Therefore, this happens in a natural way beneath the threshold of normal awareness. The subconscious mind—the subjective “Isis” of the Art—will not respond to mental violence (enforced concentration), but will only consent if wooed by macrocosmic symbols, the “flowers” of the Divine Nature. Therefore, understand clearly that, the technique of the golem’s withdrawal back into latency is one of the most important points in Alchemy. It is the *coagula*, the making of the “coin” that will multiply, through frequent practice, to become the golden treasure hoard guarded by the Dragon.

By undertaking the alchemical practices given in this manual—which are meditations with far-reaching consequences—the projected golem is “programmed,” set to certain energy patterns. When it is later withdrawn back into the physical vehicle, it continues to work safely and silently upon the interior stars, the chakras. This is done at the subconscious level, by the embodying aspects of consciousness. There, the fire of the Dragon, known in the East as kundalini, begins the holy work of transformation and transfiguration.

Naturally—since we are unfinished beings, still in process—as the integrative energy of the Dragon’s fire begins to rise, it does come up against any psycho-etheric obstructions that may be present. This may lead to minor symptoms in the physical vehicle (hence alchemists speak of their “suffering”). Unless these symptoms become alarmingly powerful and persistent, they are no cause for worry. They will pass as the physical vehicle becomes more accustomed to the more intense frequencies of Fiery Power. If the instructions are carefully followed, practitioners will be able to extricate themselves from any difficulties with a little patience and common sense. In all types of development—

physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual—there are points where some disturbance of the previous condition shows itself. These points are “growing pains” and will not adversely affect practitioners unless the mind is filled with all kinds of superstitions, negative thoughts, or feelings concerning the matter. If symptoms such as intense physical shaking, skin rashes, sensations of burning, chronic diarrhea or constipation persistently occur, it indicates that the Subtle Fire has not entered the central column, but has instead stimulated the body’s own physical heat. To correct this, suspend the arousal practice and spend more time traversing the spiral stairways and formulating the landings of the Tower, building the central column more effectively. Unless these symptoms become alarmingly powerful and persistent they are no cause for worry, they will pass as the physical vehicle becomes more accustomed to the more intense frequencies of the Dragon’s Fire.

In very extreme cases—where the symptoms persistently occur even while performing the preliminary Fountain Breath exercise—then, go to the Nuptial Chamber and replace the image of The Magician with that of tarot Key VII, The Chariot. The zodiacal sign of Cancer is represented by The Chariot, and the Mars force is at its weakest expression in this particular sign. Using The Chariot instead of The Magician has the effect of dampening-down the Fiery Power to an acceptable level. While using Key VII for a while, the physical body can make adjustments to enable it to channel the Kundalini in its pristine state and then the practitioner can revert to using Key I in the Nuptial Chamber.

### ***The Sapphires***

Inner-plane temples within the Upper Worlds, since they are not confined by the laws which govern matter in the three-dimensional world, are capable of being much larger on the inside than on the outside (like the tardis in the BBC television series, *Dr. Who*). They can also contain more chambers than any edifice built in physical matter. The only restrictions they appear to have are those limitations imposed by the mind of the human visitor. The same may be true—if we will it to be so—of thought-built edifices constructed by practitioners of the Art. And since the castle golem is to become a true reflection of the macrocosm—so that the individualized microcosm may be refashioned in its likeness—our eidolon, or thought-form, will contain additional chambers we have not yet entered.

These are, of course, the chambers of the Sephiroth upon the side pillars of force and form on the Tree, i.e., Chokmah, Binah, Chesed,

Geburah, Netzach, and Hod. The entrances to the halls of Chokmah and Binah—the Chamber of Starry Wisdom and the Chamber of Great Bliss, respectively—have already been indicated by short flights of stairs leading up from either end of the Da'ath landing that also leads to the Turret Room and the Chamber of Indwelling. Both of these doors bear an alchemical symbol—Chokmah, that of sulphur  $\ddagger$  and Binah, that of salt  $\ominus$ —because the supernal triad is the root or highest source (called *gunas* in Sanskrit) for those expressions of consciousness present, in varying degrees, in all incarnate life. Binah, the subconscious aspect of pure mind, is the root of salt that, arrestive or crystallizing, binding and form-building, is called *tamas* in Yoga. Chokmah, the self-conscious aspect of pure mind, is the root of sulphur (*rajas* in Sanskrit) and is fiery and passionate, for it is the diffused Yod-power which is also the “potable gold” of the Art. While Kether, the Superconscious or Enlightened aspect of pure mind, is the root of Mercury (without which the Great Work cannot be started or completed) which is the same as the *guna* of Sattva. The alchemical Mercury and the Sattva of Yoga are both described as being illuminative or light-transmitting, vital and reflective in quality. The metal mercury is liquid and flowing (therefore outpouring from above to below is intimated) and the surface of each globule of this metal is a mirror reflecting its environment, as the dewdrop resting in the heart of the rose reflects the white brilliance.

Each of the Sephirothic chambers in the castle is also a subjective temple for the influence of that sphere. They all follow a general layout, although certain details peculiar to each chamber will “unveil” themselves, appearing to practitioners as experience is acquired and subsequent unfoldment occurs.

All of these chambers have floors tiled with alternating squares of appropriate colors. There is an altar in the center of each hall bearing a burning lamp representing the Divine Presence expressed through that particular Sephira. In the east, there is a high-backed ritual throne; the incumbent is the hall’s “chamberlain,” who owes fealty to the castle’s sovereign (or, at this stage, answerable to the Regent). The chamberlain of the hall may or may not be one of the Great Companions, or a new contact entirely. Each hall also has a spirit-guardian who guards the threshold. On the walls of each chamber are tapestries depicting the relevant tarot keys which open the ways to the other Sephiroth.

To travel a particular pathway, go to the starting hall, via the Chamber of Indwelling and the Great Hall of Tiphareth, and there reverence the divine (symbolized by the altar’s lamp) by the appropriate title within

that Sefhira. Then approach the tapestry of the tarot key to the path, gaze at the key, and intone the Hebrew letter of the path and its key. The tapestry becomes a glowing three-dimensional representation of the tarot key. Stepping through the key, you find yourself within a rotating tunnel of vibrating light. The color of the tunnel is that of the path on the Tree of Life (e.g., Daleth, emerald green; Qoph, red-violet, etc. The color attributions are listed in Appendix I, for those unfamiliar with them.)<sup>2</sup>

The indigo robe will also change color as you walk the path, changing to a color identical with the tunnel. When you emerge, it resumes its indigo color. Akasha contains all the color variations of which manifest light frequencies are capable. Some schools have needlessly complicated the path-color attributions by attributing four colors to each path, one for each of the four worlds. This has been shown to be totally arbitrary and as having no practical use. The color scale for the paths is the same in *all* four worlds. What does change is the light intensity of the paths—from clear (not murky) color shades in Assiah, increasing in radiance, up to a colored incandescence in the world of Atziluth which resembles frozen fire-works.

At the end of the tunnel, you emerge from a tapestry, bearing the same tarot image, into the hall of the Sefhira at the other end of the connecting path. If the path is not being used on the return journey, for whatever reason, it should be sealed by intoning the Hebrew letter once again. The act of attention directed at the tarot key, combined with intoning the related Hebrew letter, acts both to open the path and to lock it closed. The chambers of the Sephiroth of the Middle Pillar of the Tree—Malkuth, Yesod, Tiphareth, Da'ath, and Kether—are accessed by ascending and descending the spiral stairways of Ida and Pingala which are entwined around the central column in the Tower. The tarot Keys, XXI, XIV, and II indicate the position of these Sephiroth on the column.

Once the Sephirothic chambers have been described (see figure 10, page 184), we will return to the paths and the ways of traveling them in detail, for they are the routes by which you will travel into the unseen.

The Hall of Starry Wisdom—Chokmah—has an altar of thrice-refined gold. Two great pillars—one of silver, the other of obsidian—uphold the

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<sup>2</sup> The only color shade that is a “blind” is that attributed to the letter Yod and The Hermit; usually described as yellow-green. In actual practice, this energy appears as vivid green (like that of Daleth) but suffused throughout with golden motes—the “potable gold” of Yod.

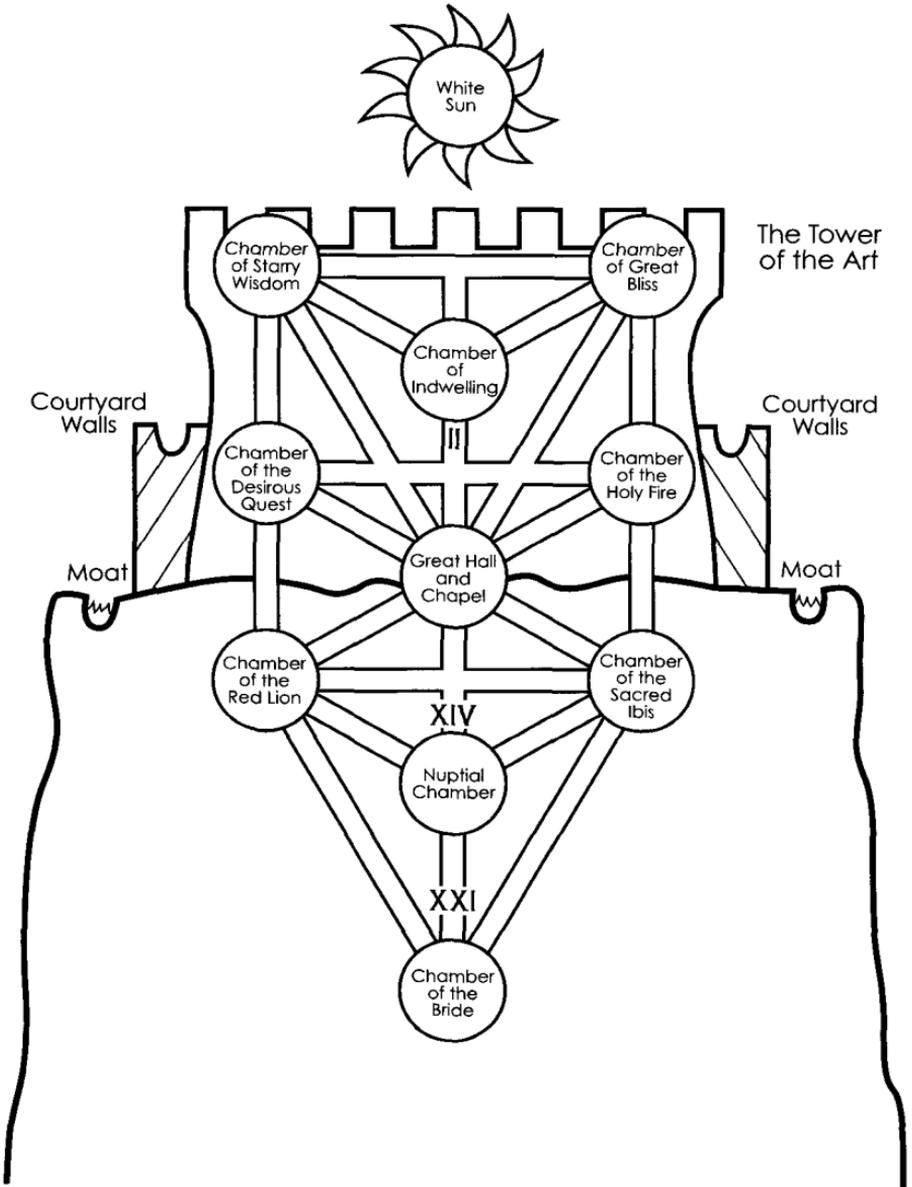


Figure 10. The sephirothic chambers and the Hill of Power.

dark domed roof, which is set with diamonds in the star patterns of the constellations. The floor is tiled in alternating squares of red and silver. The throne in the east is fashioned of sapphire. The tarot tapestries that adorn this hall are those of Keys 0, III, IV, and V.

The Hall of Great Bliss contains an altar of jet. The walls and floor are of darkest indigo, supporting a faceted crystal dome that refracts the white brilliance from the White Sun over the battlements. There are three pillars, two black and one of scarlet marble. The eastern throne is of purest alabaster. The tarot tapestries which hang in the chamber are those of Keys I, III, VI and VII.

Beneath the Chamber of Starry Wisdom is the Hall of the Desirous Quest (Chesed). It has an amethyst altar and four pillars, two of lapis and two of crystal. The walls are of translucent sapphire, the roof a white dome. The eastern throne is of gray granite; the floor squares are white and blue; within it are hung tapestries of the tarot Keys, V, VIII, IX, and X.

Beneath the Chamber of Great Bliss—Binah—is the Hall of the Holy Fire (Geburah). It has an altar of ruby and five pillars, two of jet, two of carnelian, and one of emerald. The walls of crimson marble are surmounted by a black cupola. The throne is of obsidian and the floor tiles of alternating black and scarlet. The tapestries are VII, VIII, XI, and XII.

Beneath the Chamber of the Desirous Quest is the Hall of the Red Lion, corresponding to Netzach. It has an emerald altar, walls of jade, and a floor of malachite and copper tiles. Seven pillars, three of green marble, three of amber and one of scarlet, support the jade dome that is carved with leaves to resemble a forest canopy. The throne in the east is of coral. The tarot tapestries are X, XIII, XVI, XVII, and XVIII. The chamberlain of this hall is usually connected with the Lordly Ones, the Elven folk from under the hollow hills—perhaps even the elfin queen from the enchanted forest of Brolicade.

Finally, set beneath the Hall of the Holy Fire, is the Hall of the Sacred Ibis, the subjective Sephira of Hod. The altar is an unflawed crystal. The amber walls are topped by a domed ceiling of sapphire. The floor is of alternating tiles of ivory and gold. Eight pillars line the chamber, four of deep blue and four of milky marble, and the throne is of jasper. The tarot tapestries are those of Keys XII, XV, XVI, XIX, and XX.

Note that in figure 10, the Sephirothic chambers are in reversed position to that usually shown on the Tree of Life. This is because the golem of the Tower is projected from the physical body, where Binah,

Geburah, and Hod are on the right-hand side, and Chokmah, Chesed, and Netzach upon the left-hand side. This becomes clearer if you remember that the turret-room corresponds to the face, the Chamber of Indwelling to the nape of the neck, and the spiral stairways to the spinal column. Once, however, the practitioner attains the east, and is enthroned as the rightful sovereign of the Inner Kingdom, the Sephiroth will then be in their usual configuration, for the “conversion” will have taken place.

### ***The Leaves of the Tree***

It is written in the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine, that “the leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the nations.” These “leaves” are the shining paths of the Tree of Life, which are thirty-two in number. In Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the grade of Prince of the Royal Secret is the thirty-second degree of that rite. The first ten Paths are the holy Sephiroth themselves. The remaining twenty-two are those Paths which unite the Sephiroth, and to which are assigned the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (the Script of Flame) and the twenty-two tarot keys of the Major Arcana. The Sephiroth are objective by nature—although our various and changeful reactions are not—while the Paths themselves are distinctly subjective. “Pathworking,” as traveling these paths is termed, is a voyage of self-discovery, diagnosis, and deep, interior self-healing. No practitioner has a “smooth ride” on all the paths. “Thinking types” encounter problems on those paths on the free-flowing force side of the Tree; “doers” have trouble with the structured form side of the Tree; and “feelers” tend to react poorly, at first, to either of the two extreme poles. Each path is a two-way conduit (the old Hebrew word actually means a “canal”) for the energies of both the Sephiroth it unites. The tarot cards of the Major Arcana are called the “keys,” because they open the paths; they are pictorial representations of the ideal consciousness of that particular pathway. But they are also much more than this. Each key is the spirit lord of the path assigned to it.

At first, the paths are walked on the subjective, microcosmic level. Here you explore your own inner dynamics. But a time comes, when the paths open up onto their objective, macrocosmic, equivalents. Then you are in full projection upon the actual inner planes of Existence. We need to explore these two modes of pathworking to avoid unnecessary pitfalls and traps, for travel in any world—as physical city-dwellers know—can be a hazardous if certain rules are ignored.

***In the Worlds Above***

At first, you walk the subjective Paths within your aura, using the castle or a more conventional Tree of Life diagram. Then you pass out, onto objective or macrocosmic pathways of the inner worlds. As time passes and you again experience, becoming familiar with the subjective astral ways, you will at times escape from the subjective within to awareness and function upon the objective inner realms. This direct perception of the astral realities is very unsettling at first; it often causes practitioners to fly in terror back to the familiar symbols. But remember, as with all symbol systems, we are seeing “as in a glass, darkly,” using signposts rather than actual experience of the destinations the signposts indicate.

Once the direct perception of the true astral levels has been gained and the hold of the sensory mechanism weakened, you may begin to explore the levels directly, for you are now the Master of the Images (a Ba'al ha-Da'ath) and are no longer controlled by them.

So far, we have proceeded as if you were alone upon the Paths—apart from the symbolic flora and fauna that act as indicators of the forces and beings around you. It is now necessary to speak of the definite guidance which, even though you may previously have been unaware of it, is constantly being exercised over you by unseen guardians. From the first tentative efforts that you make, you are always under the close and benevolent observation and guidance of a being who is very closely connected with you, one who belongs to the same inner plane group or order. This guardian is known in some traditions as your “supervisor.” This type of surveillance is often the first duty of someone who has comparatively recently become a free and accepted member of the inner group. In case of need, the guardian can call immediately upon the power of the order. Guardians may also, if necessary, speak as the expression of the totality of the minds of all members on the inner levels. These members, by pooling their telepathic faculty, can unite in sending out a concentrated beam which is received by the guardian. So they speak through the guardian as a unity, a “voice” for the group mind of the entire order. When one inner entity becomes the mediating channel through which an entire group communicates, the results are most interesting and remarkable. (In the angelic evolution, a similar manifestation is known, when one member of an angelic host speaks with the corporate authority of the entire choir—e.g., one angel of Yesod speaks as the totality of the Host of the Cherubim and as the direct ambassador or envoy of the Archangel Gabriel.) But under ordinary circumstances,

the guardian only channels the power of the group, and this power is ever at your disposal, should you need it.

At a certain point in subjective pathworking, you will become aware of your guardian. This contact enables you to pass from the subjective to the objective Paths, into the realm of light which casts no shadow, the astral light wherein is held, among other things, the collective unconscious of Jungian psychology.

Eventually you are led to the inner haven you seek—the celestial *Yeshiva* (college) of the inner order of which you are a constituent part. Through that order, you may be brought into the larger planetary group of all men and women consciously serving the Divine Will. This planetary group is variously called the Great White Lodge, The Withdrawn Order, the College of the Holy Spirit, the House of Israel, and by other names.

You will also become aware of other beings, the spirit lords of the Paths being walked. It is vitally necessary that you work on all the Paths of the Tree, neglecting none, for all-around development is vital. Indeed, it is said: “Equilibrium is the basis of the Work.” Each path has its own spirit lord, because each path is an expression of certain factors in the makeup of the universe, seen and unseen. The spirit lords are those bright spirits who, by their own essential natures, are living expressions of those universal factors. When you “walk” a particular Path, you automatically come into the influence of the spirit lord of the Path, who administers under the authority of the Halls of Justice.

Unswerving devotion to truth on your part is your Ariadne’s thread through the maze of the astral planes of Yetzirah. It is by that devotion to truth that you contact the path’s spirit lord. As Plotinus wrote: “There is no religion higher than Truth.” Should you fail in this devotion to truth, you automatically come into opposition with the path’s spirit lord and the resulting reaction will close the astral ways to you. If, however, you remain devoted to the understanding of truth, then the power of the spirit lord of the path flows and is made available to strengthen you in the sacred Art. The “names” of these spirit lords of the shining paths are the esoteric titles of the 22 tarot keys, and are listed at the end of this book, in Appendix I.

However, not everything that appears as a being of light is one. Also, a “form” may be a “wish-fulfillment” projected from—and clothed by—the store of images contained within your own subconscious mind. To test when the “form” of an apparent being appears—to determine whether it is indeed produced by an objective being, or whether it is a

projected part of your subconscious complexes—a “Word” or “Name” is used which represents for you the Divine. The Word and Name have to be meditated upon over long periods, and pictured by a symbol as well. You must practice—and this is very important—until the Word automatically and immediately calls up the sign. Then, if a being appears and the use of the Word and Sign causes the appearance to vanish, it will be fairly certain that such an appearance was nothing more than the personification of a complex in the depths of your subconscious. In esoteric schools that utilize ceremonial initiations, the Word and Sign of the Grade held are used. Some Native American nations use the image and Word of the “Children’s Fire”; other practitioners use the Name and Image by which they reverence the Divine, the Buddha, or the Christ, etc.

At the same time, any false apparitions should be noted. At a later date, these may be deliberately evoked into appearance. In fact, if there is a subconscious complex that is powerful enough to project itself in this way, the sooner it is dealt with, the better. Let it be evoked to imaginative “visible appearance,” for imagination is the magic mirror. Any images that come with it and any subjective emotions which arise in its company should be carefully noted and made the subject of careful meditation. This will often give a clue to the origin of the figure and, at the same time, may dissipate the form and return the energy previously trapped within the complex it represents into the general store of psychic energy. This form of magical auto-psychoanalysis is a very effective method if carefully carried out. It is a valid *tikkun*.

### ***The Hidden Paths***

Only after the Paths have been walked do practitioners come to those secret paths of the Tree that have, until now, been veiled in secrecy. These are the “Paths of Concealed Glory,” sometimes called the Invisible Paths. They are so called because, until practitioners have “grasped the First Matter,” they are difficult to perceive. These so-called Secret Paths of the Tree are the multitudinous *nadis* or etheric channels that permeate the subtle bodies anatomy, described in yoga. The same concept is found in the meridians of acupuncture. Macrocosmically, they are the “ley lines” that unite centers of energy upon our planet and the beams of energy that join each star to every other star in existence. The secret paths are the “threads,” of the Web of Being.

Because depictions of the secret paths of the Tree of Life are very rare, I show them here (see figures 11 and 12, pages 191, 192). Study of this diagram shows how the Concealed Paths unite all Sephiroth which

are not already joined by a “visible” Path. What this teaches is that all the Sephiroth—the ten-fold aspects of One Majesty—are in fact united and therefore influence one another. Thus any single Sephira contains within itself the influences of all the other nine Sephiroth. This is one meaning of the much-quoted, but little understood, Qabalism: “A Tree in every Sephira.” These Secret Paths indicate that Mezla—the one substance, the quintessential First Matter of Alchemy—touches, permeates, and unites everything. And this is also why diagrams of the Tree of Life are usually drawn on a black surface, to convey that the First Matter (the manifestation of Ain) surrounds the Tree (existence) and utterly pervades it. The First Matter is, as said, the “water which burns,” the “fire which flows”; but it is also the celestial manna, the sustenance of all things, the heavenly dew that is the Glory flowing from the face of God.

## THE PRACTICE: STAGE 1

### ***The Custodianship***

Having performed the preliminary works and indwelt the golem with your consciousness, descend from the Chamber of Indwelling to enter the Great Hall. Once there, be seated at your siege at the table. Notice that the siege on the left of the Regent is empty. It is the Siege Perilous, the empty seat that will, according to prophecy, be filled by the one who will achieve the Grail-Quest and thereby heal the land of Logres. It is the place of the ruler-elect of the castle and its lands. The Holy Grail now moves to that segment of the Round Table before the Regent. The Regent reverently lifts the Grail and, in procession with all the Fellowship of the Table Round, enters the Chapel of the Rose-Croix.

At the altar, the Regent fills the Grail with wine and elevates it into the Divine Light for consecration. A white dove, bearing a white wafer in its beak, swoops down from the light, drops the heavenly manna into the upraised Grail and vanishes into the dewdrop within the mystical rose.

Turning about, the Regent calls each in turn to *drink from the sacred Cup of Cups*. You are called last of all. Having drunk, remain standing beside the Regent upon the altar steps.

Each Companion of the Table Round again comes to the altar and, placing one hand upon the Grail and the other between your joined palms, swears fealty to the castle and to you, its true sovereign. When the ceremony is complete, the Company recesses back into the Great Hall.

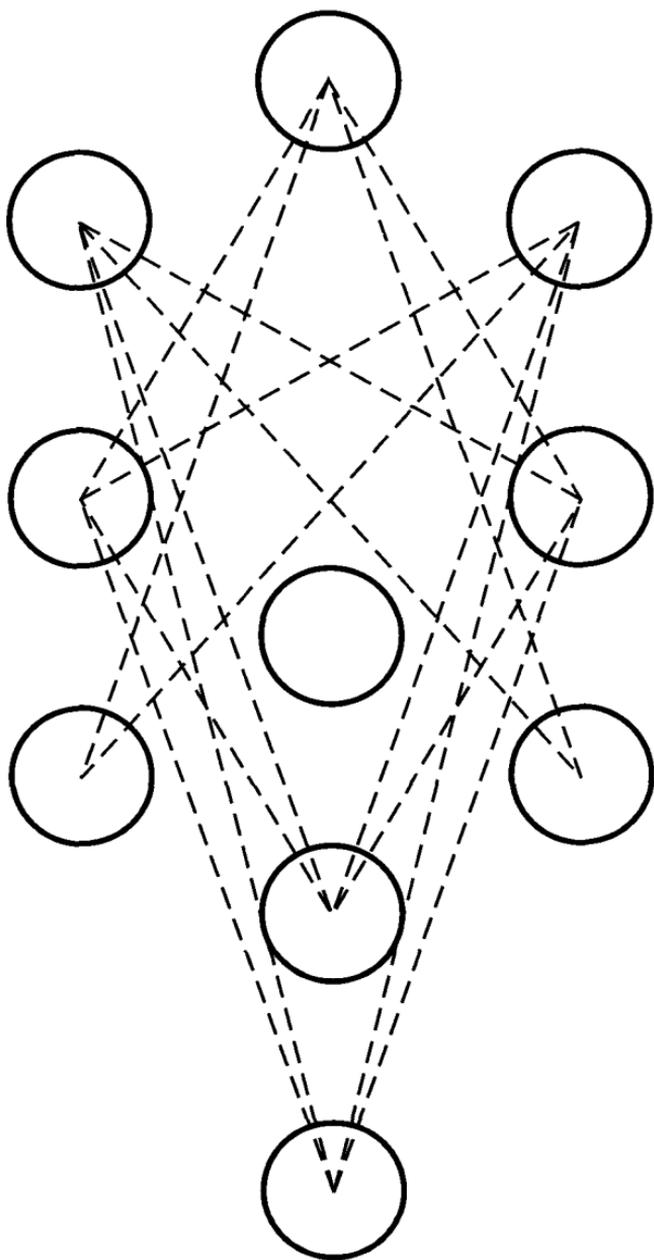


Figure 11. The Paths of Concealed Glory, the so-called “Invisible Paths,” are hidden from those who have not yet seen the Unity, revealed by the omnipresence of the First Matter.

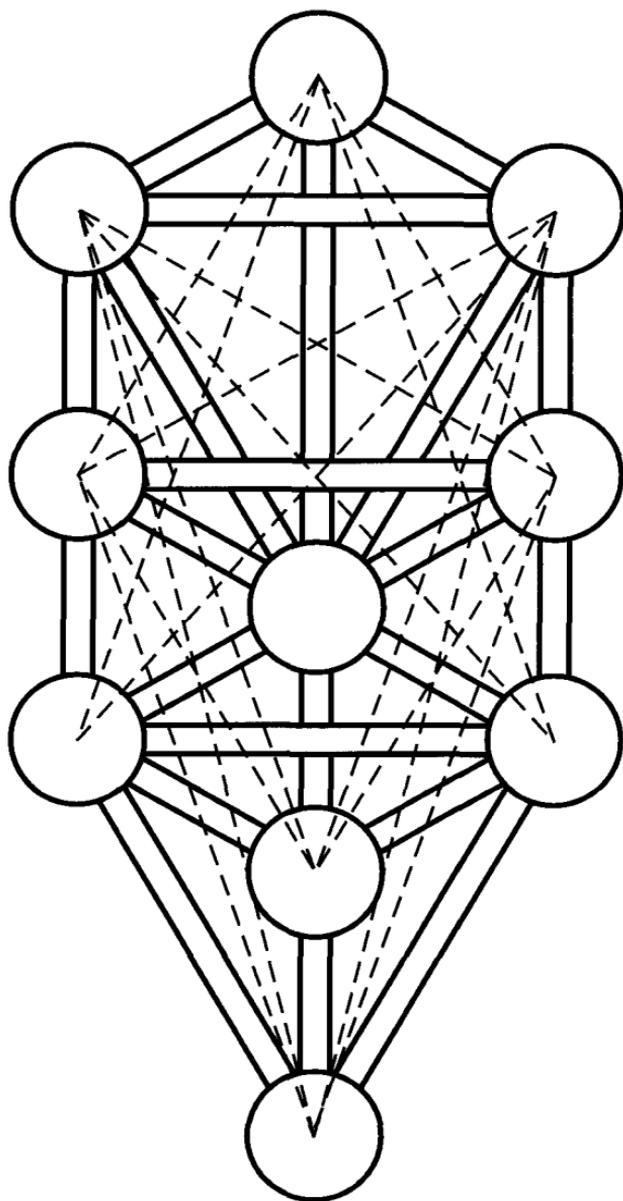


Figure 12. This diagram shows the Concealed Paths as well as the usual twenty-two Shining Paths, diagrammatically teaching that each single Sephira is united to all the other Sephiroth of the Tree. The Sephiroth are not ten separate “things,” but ten interdependent aspects of the One Majesty, ten facets of the luminous Jewel of Eternity.

Now, follow the Regent up to the Turret Room of Da'ath. Once within the chamber, you see, lying upon the black control stone, over the incised symbol of the Tree of Life, a silver *crux anasta*, the ankh which is the ancient Egyptian sign of eternal life. This is the clavicule, the key to all chambers and pathways in the *entire* castle complex. Taking up the key, the Regent raises his eyes to the White Sun shining through the roof-window of the Turret Room. Then, having drawn that influence down into himself, he declares "The Sovereign-to-be is come and now stands before Us. Receive thou this Clavicule to the portals of the Starry Ways." He passes you the key, thereby entrusting the clavicule into your keeping.

Together, you both return to the Great Hall and back into the chapel. On the altar, by the Sword of Power, rests a small cushion. The Regent tells you that this is the appropriate place for the clavicule to be kept and reminds you to come to the Chapel of the Rose-Croix, there to invoke the blessing of the Eternal upon any journey you may undertake within, or without, the Tower of the Art.

You both return to the Round Table and, assisted by one of the Companions, the Regent solemnly installs you in the Siege Perilous at his left hand. Once seated, take some time to view the Great Hall from this different perspective. Thank your Companions of the Spirit, the Grail brethren, in the Name of the All-Holy One. Ascend back to the Chamber of Indwelling and withdraw all back into latency.

## AFTERMATH

Always undertake journeys throughout the castle in the company of the Regent, for his advice will be invaluable. Visit each Sephirothic temple chamber and greet the chamberlain and the hall's spirit-guardian. "Walk" each of the twenty-two visible Paths. The purpose of all this is to bring to consciousness all the subtle centers and channels. Spending time in the chambers and journeying each of the Paths clears any obstructions or distortions. When all this has been successfully accomplished, arouse the dragon. You will find the difference most effective and interesting.

## THE PRACTICE: STAGE 2

### *The Vigil*

Project into the Chamber of Indwelling. When you pass through the copper door, you discover that the whole castle is dark, silent, and deserted.

Descend to the chapel. The only light is the dewdrop that gleams in the heart of the Ruby Rose. Upon the altar lies the royal sword, the silver clavicule, and, between them, a circlet of alchemical gold adorned with the head of a dragon. And at the base of the Rose-Cross is a lit lamp, symbol of the Immanence that indwells you forever. This is the night of solemn vigil. No one approaches you, for, on this night, you must be alone. This is a time for introspective reflection—the “weighing of the heart.” Look deeply within, search out any doubts or fears, bring them into the light of the Rose-Cross for examination, and then absorb them.

Look to the future. You will soon be the anointed and crowned sovereign of your own inner kingdom, the land of Logres, which, from the moment of your coronation, will come into blossom once more, after many, many years of being a wasteland. To you, the sovereign, all in the castle, city, and land will look for justice and wise guidance. You have free will in all things. What will the future name you? An Arthur, a Parsifal, a Solomon? Or a Mordred, a Klingsor, a Judas?

Meditate on all this. But remember that this is your Divine heritage, willed for you before time began by the Divine Source. When you feel it appropriate, ascend the altar steps, elevate the lamp so that its flame and the Rose’s dewdrop coincide and become one, and offer the ancient invocation of the priest-kings, a prayer that was old when Atlantis sank:

Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe;  
 Holy art Thou, Whom nature hath not formed;  
 Holy art Thou, the Vast and the Mighty One,  
 Lord of the Light and of the Darkness.  
 Here I stand and offer unto Thee, O Adonai, my spirit, my soul  
 and my bodies; to be a holy and continual sacrifice unto Thee  
 and to Thy Great Work. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

From the heart of the God-nourished silence that follows, you hear a Voice speak: “Let the White Brilliance descend!”

When what then happens has happened, return to the Chamber of Indwelling and withdraw.

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<sup>3</sup> A prayer from the “Oral Tradition,” transmitted to initiates of the Qabalah mouth-to-ear, from teacher to student.

## AFTERMATH

Repeat the Vigil practice for as long as is necessary.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

There is above the Celestial Lights an Incorruptible Flame always sparkling; the spring of life, the formation of all beings, the original of all things. This Flame produceth all things, and nothing perisheth by what it consumeth. It maketh itself known by itself . . . It encompasseth the heavens.

The heart should not fear to approach this adorable Fire, or to be touched by it; it will never be consumed by this sweet Fire, whose mild and tranquil heat maketh the binding, the harmony, and the duration of the world. Nothing subsisteth but by this Fire, which is God Himself. All is full of God, and God is in all.”

The Chaldean Oracles<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “The Chaldean Oracles,” in G. R. S. Mead, trans, *Echoes from the Gnosis*, vol. 8 (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1908).



# THE CROWN OF LIFE

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*Only those who do the Work for its own sake are initiated.  
Only the individual who wants to make manifest what  
Kabbalah reveals can be an initiate.*

—Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

It will now have become clear why the old alchemical texts refer to “our Mercury,” “our Gold,” and “our Sulpher”; for the Great Work is an internal process and all the vessels of the Art are interior; being in some cases the physical body, and in others the astro-etheric vehicle of the Practitioner. The entire human being is the laboratory of the Great Work. There are many instances of this given in the tales of the Mahasiddhas, where they urinate the elixir of life; Aryadeva for example. But “within” equals “without.” Our personal world, in all its rich diversity, is a manifestation of our interior consciousness. This is why an initiated mage, the alchemist, effects changes in the outer world by making changes within. Hence, Key V, The Hierophant, is assigned to the *inner* world as the inner teacher who informs all else and The Emperor represents the same being/force operative in the outer world. The Emperor is a ruler, a sovereign. If the outer world is inharmonious, it is because the inner world is as well. However, these two worlds—inner and outer—interpenetrate as in the geometric construction of the vesica-piscis (see figure 8, page 110). They are, in fact, united, since they are both the product of consciousness, of mind. In truth, everything is mental in origin, arising from the Divine Mind or the Primordial Stream of Consciousness. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, *The Work of the Kabbalist* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1985), from the preface.

reported that when giving a public lecture Swami Vivekananda said to his listeners: "In forty years of living I have seen nothing but God, and neither have you."



The Ruler of the Inner Kingdom. Note the use of the Dragon (Kundalini) as the Sovereign's footstool. Lambsprink: DeLapide Philosophica figure et emblemata, in Musaeum Hermeticum retormatum et amplificatum, Frankfurt, 1678.

However, there is a time-delay phenomenon between causes being set in motion in the inner world and their effects appearing, fully manifest, in the outer world. This needs to be taken into account so that you do not become disheartened or fall prey to melancholia, as the old alchemical books term it. Lama Anagarika Govinda explains this delay between causation and result in his book, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*:

The corporeal form may be compared to a heavy pendulum which, even after the original impulse has ceased, goes on swinging for a long time. The longer and heavier the pendulum, the slower the rate of oscillation. When the mind has already reached a state of peace and harmony by having balanced or counteracted through a change of attitude the after-effects of previous actions, the karmic effect (*vipāka*) crystallized in the bodily form can still oscillate for a long time before complete harmonization has been achieved in the form of bodily perfection. This can only be hastened by a conscious penetration, spiritualization and transfiguration of the body, as it is reported of certain *Siddhas* and, above all, of the Buddha, whose body is said to have been of such unearthly beauty and radiance, that even the golden robes which were offered to him, lost their luster.<sup>2</sup>

The means by which the “conscious penetration, spiritualization and transfiguration of the body” occurs, is the willed arousal of Kundalini, the form-making power, which triggers off the descent of the “nectar” or “elixir” from the interior Mercury center of Kether throughout the physical body. This occurs as the result of the deep absorption (*dhyanī*) into Cosmic Consciousness. The indication of the down-flowing of the alchemical elixir (Yoga terms it “nectar”) is a feeling of transcendent bliss that gradually fills the body, resulting in Samadhi, shown as Key XII, The Hanged Man. The “Elixir of Life” is Mezla, for the bloodstream (the “blood of the Red Lion”) is the microcosmic aspect of Mezla. It is known that certain states of consciousness—psychic and mystical—cause minute quantities of chemicals to be released into the bloodstream. These chemicals are released by certain glands that are the physical expressions of the upper chakras. The principal one is the pineal gland, the site of the potential Stone. The pineal gland has a pivotal function in the formation of the physical body. When an ovum has been fertilized, the pineal gland forms three and one-half days after conception, and is directly responsible for the formation of the subsequent foetus. As it is with the formation of the natural body, so it is with that of the supernatural body. The proportions of the chemicals released into the bloodstream are minute and cannot be gauged from the self-

<sup>2</sup> Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1969), p. 69.

conscious level, but are regulated by the subconscious, as the “corporeal or incarnating intelligence,” Key XVIII, The Moon. So The Zohar calls Gabriel (Archangel of Yesod, the Moon, our Silver) the dispenser of the medicine of God. In other words, the Red Work is effected through the agency of the White Work beneath the threshold of self-awareness. It is for this reason that use of recreational drugs is inappropriate for the Work and why it is forbidden by esoteric schools.

The spiritualizing effect of the elixir is gradual and cumulative. It needs to be persisted in (yoga terms this persistence “milking the heavenly cow”) through the stages of acclimatization and permeation, until eventually, complete saturation is attained. The Buddha Shakyamuni taught that the body of a meditator who attained the state of deep absorption (*dhyani*), would be completely filled with bliss (like Jetsun Milarepa). This is because in the intermediate level of practice Kundalini is confined to the spinal column, but in supervised, advanced practice, the Fiery Power permeates and saturates the entire organism, even down to the toes, to Malkuth.

The deathless body is represented by two images, which vary according to cultural setting. In the Mystery streams of Atlantis and Egypt, the “new body” is imaged as a boat or ship, a vessel for the spirit. In both locations, a river is the principal means of transport—the River Naradek, in Atlantis, and the Nile, in Egypt. So the invocations of those traditions speak of creating a new barque for the soul’s journey to Light, Life, and Love. In Qabalah and in the Yoga of India and Tibet, the new vehicle is termed a “chariot,” principally because this was a common means of transportation, but also because originally, chariots were used by royalty alone. The symbolism of tarot Key VII, The Chariot, is replete with this teaching: the rider is the Higher-Self (Krishna as the charioteer in the Bhagavad-Gita); the car of the chariot is the physical body (it is cubic in shape to show that the Stone is actually found in physicality); the four columns holding up the starry canopy indicate the elements; and the two sphinxes drawing the chariot are both aspects of the Lower Self, the incarnate soul, and the physical senses through which it interacts with the material plane. The best-known use of this image is that of Elijah ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire—fire here being an image of the Radiant Energy. It is taught that Elijah, not having tasted death, appears from time to time to help Israel in her need. Also, several advanced Qabalists have been personally instructed by Elijah, the prophet acting as their Maggid, their inner teacher. In Alchemy, the final stages of the Great Work occur when the mysterious Elias-Artisan comes. This name—Elias-Artisan—is simply Latin for the great teacher of the Art, Elijah.

Like the old royal chariots, the chariot of the solar body has four "wheels." "Wheel" is the root meaning of the Sanskrit word, *chakra*, used because of the chakras' rotating motion. The four chakras that are the "wheels" of the fiery chariot of the spirit are the Mercury and Venus centers to the front and the Sun and Mars centers to the back. This is the *Merkabah* which was seen in Ezekial's vision in the Valley of Bones, the omnipresent throne of Adam-Qadmon. The name *Merkabah* is also given to the Jewish mystical system of the post-Temple period.

### ***The Golden Vehicle***

In Qabalistic philosophy, all manifestation is regarded as the living, luminous garment of God. So too, in the microcosm, that "spark," that "point" of eternal light is present and active in *every* atom of our bodies on *all* levels.

Modern science, by the use of mechanical and electrical laws, has brought humanity into a position where it has indeed joined the ranks of the forces behind evolution, but this is only half of what may yet be done. For, as the number of those who master the alchemical Art grows, more and more men and women will find themselves becoming channels of those hidden powers which are the creative energies of the universe. Such people will directly perceive and work with these living forces, dispensing with any material, mechanical, or electrical aid. Governing the ethereal energies of the planet, they will, by the catalytic action of certain processes within their own organisms, modify and transform the material realm around them. This change will not be effected in the crucible and the retort of the material scientist, but in the athanor and the crucible of the true alchemists' own inner organisms. Working upon the raw material of the Soul of the World (the *anima mundi*), they will produce those material effects which are today regarded as the fine flowering of materialistic science.

The etheric shapes of all past forms lie latent in the astral light of the universe, and with that astral light we are inseparably connected. This astral light was anciently called the "coils of the celestial Dragon." When the Fiery Power of the inner self is aroused, the physical body may be rebuilt from ruin and restored to perfect health because of the inner healing ability (the "universal medicine"), which depends upon this innate knowledge from the immemorial past. Under certain conditions, this innate knowledge can dematerialize and re-materialize the physical body and reform it with new and healthy patterns. Moreover, this same mastery over the gross matter of the physical body can extend to a similar mastery over external nature.

The universal medicine is an actual physical substance, produced by alchemical Sages from their own physical bodies. High adepts may entrust the elixir to students, but, of course, the students cannot reproduce it. In appearance, the universal medicine looks like red powder, often referred to as the “red tincture,” since it permeates all it touches. I had the privilege of guarding the tincture for a period of time. It was produced by a great alchemical Adept of the 20th century.

There is nothing which is past—no form of beauty or of grace—which does not still exist in the depths of the astral light. When those who are remade in the pattern of the new human, the Sages, choose to use their creative power, whatever in the past was of goodness, beauty, or truth may be brought *once more* into material manifestation. Such mastery over nature is predicated in the “Resurrection body” by Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theology. These same powers are the characteristics of that body of clear light, built by the power *Kryashakti* spoke of in the Eastern esoteric schools. Completion of the Work—Enlightenment—is not extinction or a passing from Life. It is life in its fullness, in its plenitude. We humans, as a species, have as yet only a fragmentary perception of what universal life is. The Sages have not passed out of life, but they are freed from the need for birth and death. It is from the Wheel of Births and Deaths, (commonly called the “Wheel of Life” by the uninstructed) that the Sage is freed. This liberation is the result of the Sage having passed to the center of the wheel—the still point, the zero, the Aleph. In Hebrew, the words for “I” and “No-Thing” (Ain) are spelled with the same letters (א'ן), only the phonetic pointing varies.

It was the perfecting of the deathless solar body, whose embryo is the “solar drop” within the heart center, that gave rise to the ancient Egyptian custom of embalming the dead and covering them with gold. The Egyptians described mummification as being “sealed in splendor.” The Tibetans also practice a form of mummification in the case of the physical remains of very highly-realized lamas. Such mummies are called *mandong*. The body is embalmed with salt and lacquer and covered with goldleaf, then robed and enshrined within a chörten made of precious metals. The body of Je-Tsong-Khapa (1357–1419 C.E.), founder of the Gelugpa tradition, was so preserved and venerated at Ganden Monastery, near Lhasa, until it was desecrated by the Chinese invaders, although relics have been preserved and taken to Bodhgaya in India. The late senior tutor of the present Dalai Lama, Kyab-je Ling Rinpoché, was the first lama to have been accorded this great honor in exile, after the Chinese rape of the Land of Snows and the subsequent Tibetan

Diaspora. In fact, all exoteric religious beliefs concerning immortality are rooted in the innate knowledge (within the collective unconscious) of the solar body as a potential for all humanity.

### ***Effect in the Outer World***

The study of esoteric science, if carried out effectively, has the end result of altering the personalities of practitioners so that they become centers of radiation, their thoughts and emotions powerfully affecting other people through telepathic radiation. Those whom this knowledge and practice may help are unconsciously drawn into closer contact with these practitioners. Sometimes, a chain of circumstances brings someone who is ready for the knowledge—often a total stranger—into contact with the practitioner. The directing intelligences who determine these matters may be living men and women of the senior grades of the spiritual Hierarchy, or they may be incarnate beings of similar grades of unfoldment.

There are those who have trod the Path and accelerated their evolution in accordance with the Will of the Eternal. These illumined Sages have learned the lessons of Earth. They have so advanced their latent capabilities, that they are Masters of Life, free of the kindergarten of Earth. They are now Neophytes of the Mysteries of the Cosmos. These masters then turn their attention to the struggling race of humanity, with whom they are still linked. It is the Sages who, through their pupils, organize from behind the scenes the various esoteric groups and organizations. Those who try, with purity of motive, to hasten their evolution are helped by these masters and their pupils through the various esoteric schools.

As we develop relationships with companions in the inner worlds, we also are given points of meeting therein. In deep sleep, in trance, and at death, we unite with our companions as they come together in the Great White Lodge and, in our degree, we take our places in the Great Council which, under the eternal, forms the invisible government of the world. But remember: indwelling each of you, is that spark of the Divine which makes you, in your own Self, a Child of the Eternal and so united to all these Great Ones.

Although the higher levels of that council and grades of that Lodge of the "holy spirits of the Face" are convened in realms beyond anything that our image-making minds may build (beyond the worlds of form: Assiah and Yetzirah), yet in the deep astral plane—the interface between Briah and Yetzirah—there are great edifices built up in the matter of that

realm, and it is in these invisible lodges, the “temples built without hands,” that we gather with our companions before ascending higher.

Because all is a unity—the One-in-All that is also the All-in-One—these Great Ones, the Lords of Compassion, are as much within us, in potential, as they exist within the objective macrocosm of Cosmic Life. In his book, *The Philosopher’s Stone*, Israel Regardie wrote:

In these secret psychological or spiritual depths there exist, so I contend, the archetypes of all the saints that ever lived, the Divine images of their attainments. Hermes, Basil Valentine, Sendivogius, Synsius, Khunrath, Eudoxus, and all other beings we consider great not only in Alchemy but also in mysticism and religion—these beings have left indelible traces in the deeper parts of our own souls. . . .

Since these beings were illuminated, and abundantly blessed and Divinely gifted, it is evident that we too are already, here and now, likewise illuminated. We also are similarly Divinely blessed and Divinely guided, if only we would realize it. We can realize it. They realized it. They were but men even as we are now. They achieved and accomplished the supreme transmutation. We also can achieve. That transmutation already exists in us now—at this very moment of space and time. All we must do is somehow to realize it. Then the transmutation is made manifest and clear. As we come to understand that Jesus and Buddha, Hermes and all the other adepts and saints of all time already exist deep within us, then by reflection upon their lives and their words we make manifest what hitherto had been concealed. We evoke them from within, and become consequently that which we have invoked. . . . The Philosopher’s Stone of Divine understanding and knowledge will then have been concocted.<sup>3</sup>

This is the true esoteric teaching that lies behind the exoteric dogma of the “Communion of Saints.”

### ***A Crown of Life Will I Give Unto Thee***

In the *abishekas*, the tantric empowerments of the Vajrayana, the recipients are invested with royal regalia to signify their inheritance as sons

<sup>3</sup> Israel Regardie, *The Philosopher’s Stone* (London: Rider, no date), pp. 203, 204.

and daughters of the Buddhas, and to represent the *Sambhoga-Kaya* (solar body) of the bodhisattvas, who are represented in sacred iconography wearing jeweled, royal ornaments when in their *Ziwa*, their peaceful, aspects. In the ancient ceremonial presentations of the Mysteries, the candidate is often invested with royal regalia. (See *The Golden Ass*, by Apulius, a Roman priest of Isis.)<sup>4</sup> “This is true in modern ceremonials as well.

Eliphas Lévi recommended that mages conduct themselves as priests and as monarchs-in-exile. Investiture with the regalia of a sovereign transmits, at a deeper level than the surface mind, the knowledge that we are the offspring of the omnipotent Ruling Power of the universe and that, within us, that same Ruling Power will order all things well—if we “let go and let God.”

### ***Preliminaries***

The following practice should be read several times, as you would a theater script, to become familiar with the details. Then, having chosen an auspicious time, undertake this practice only once, but with power and intention.

## THE PRACTICE

Having established warded and sacred space, invoke the four Princes of Heaven and perform the preliminary exercises. Exteriorize the castle golem and transfer your awareness into it. Once within, assert your presence as the indwelling consciousness. Put on the indigo robe over the white one and place the silver sandals upon your feet. From the Chamber of Indwelling, go to the head of the lunar stairway and walk down it. Feel the moist, cool breeze blowing in your face as you descend. Tread the stairway all the way down into the Bridal Hall of Malkuth. There, make your dedication to the Eternal seeking to manifest the Divine Will on Earth.

Going to the solar spiral stairway, ascend the stairs, feeling the dry, warm breeze blowing up behind you. Walk up the entire stairway, back to the landing of Da’ath. From there, enter the Turret Room and, after pulling the purple cord, walk up the golden stairs and onto the battlements. Go to stand upon the window inset into the floor of the battlements. You

<sup>4</sup> Apulius, *The Golden Ass*, P. G. Walsh, trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

are standing within the symbol of the six-rayed star on either side of your feet are two sacred letters of the Tetragrammaton: יהוה—Yod-He-Vau-He (“That which was, is and shall be”), the One Reality, for “Thy Word is a light unto my feet.” Looking to the White Sun above, open yourself to its illuminating influence. Let the light permeate and saturate your entire being until all is light.

You have no idea how much time has passed, “for a thousand years are as but a moment with Thee.” Gently, a presence makes itself known, a tinkling sound like silver bells. It is the elfen queen from the enchanted forest.

“In eons past,” she says, “before the current turning of the zodiac, in Mu, when even Atlantis was a dream unborn, there came to the green and sapphire Earth from the sphere of the Morning Star, Great Ones—Lords of Light—to initiate consciousness within embryonic humanity.”

As she speaks, she seems to be “seeing” the scenes she describes; and you catch images of these primordial times in her violet eyes, as she reads from the imperishable record.

“After humanity had been established upon the Way of Life, many of these ‘mid-wives’ withdrew back beyond the Veil of Ain-Soph-Aur; but some remained to guide and protect, until the end. One of their number has been upon the Earth ever since those far-off days. He is the Hidden Watcher, the spiritual King of the World, who received the *Kalachakra* teachings of Time, and has transmitted them to the Sages and their pupils. From this tower, to the east, you may, one day, perceive the diamond-star of his terrestrial abode, the ‘Place where the Will of God is known.’ Now come sire, your kingdom has been bereft for long enough; for the land and its ruler are one.”

She takes your forearm and together you move to the stairs leading back down to the Turret Room. You notice that the indigo robe of concealment has vanished, for you are robed in purest white.

Passing through the Turret Room, you see a name written in the open book in letters of black fire. Remember it, for it is your awarded Throne Name. Go now to the spiral stairways and descend, via the Moon channel, to the landing of Tiphareth.

There, before the arch veiled with rainbow mists, your Regent awaits you. He smiles at your approach and inclines his head.

“Remember, my liege,” he advises, “That it is not in physical distance but in selfish emotional and mental vibrations that there lies the only real ‘distance’ between you and the rest of life. You are indeed, now and always, one with all that lives.”

Then, with the elven queen on one side and the Regent upon the other, process through the rainbow colored mists and forward to your destiny.

The Great Hall has expanded to accommodate the gathering. It is lit with burning candelabra and hung with garlands of midsummer flowers. The eight tarot tapestries that adorn its walls glow with three-dimensional color and it is thronged with a great assembly of beings. Some you know, but many, as yet, you do not. There are representatives of the life-forms with which you share your planetary home among the stars—ambassadors, in grade upon grade, of innumerable lives: animal, bird, reptile, insect, fish, and the whole of the vegetable kingdom, the trees, flowers, and herbs, as well as those nature spirits and elementals who are personifications of the living elemental essence which lies behind all phenomena. There also, in rank upon rank, are the spirits of nature, the Shining Ones, the Lordly Ones who dwell in the Hollow Hills, the Angels of Music and Sound, the Angels of Healing, the mighty Warriors of the Light, who are indeed “Stars of the Morning,” and the Cosmocratores, the universe-builders. And beyond them all stands Menes—robed as at your dubbing—representing that mighty, all-embracing consciousness who is the viceroy, under God, of this planet. There are present beings from all the kingdoms of creation, from all known evolutions, for this is a delegation of the universal life-expression in which you have your integral and unique part to play. But all present in this hall do have one thing in common: there is joy upon every face.

The Companions of the Round Table form an avenue, each one holding a glittering, upraised sword, and you walk beneath this shining arch of steel to the center of the Hall. The Round Table has sunk into the floor—to become an indigo dais on the white-gold floor. The gold zodiac signs about the rim make of it a potent circle of cosmic magic. In the center of the dais is set the great statue of the Black Isis, raised from the Nuptial Chamber. Upon her lap, bathed in a sunbeam from above, rests the sacred Grail, transformed into the eidolon of the holy, golden Child—that Child spoken of in *The Zohar* who gives instruction in the secrets of Heaven.

You give reverence to the Co-Emergent Mother and to the holy Child she nurtures. Then, still escorted by the Elven Queen and the Regent, you follow Menes around the raised dais and, entering beneath the phoenix-blazoned shield, pass into the hallowed peace of the chapel.

There, the Regent divests you of your sandals and white robe. Ascending the altar steps, before the luminous Rose-Cross, you make, in

the words Spirit gives you, your petition, offering, and oath of fealty to the Divine. Invisible hands lift you up and onto the Cross of Gold, your heart chakra co-centered with the Ruby Rose, your arms outstretched upon the cross, hands upturned in *kenosis*, in self-emptying. With “soul sight” you gaze longingly upon the White Sun blazing above the tower. Then, the voice of Menes proclaims: “Thou with thy hands outreached upon the Cross of Sacrifice hast drawn the All-Power unto thy Self!”

You are brought down as you were lifted up. Assisted by the Regent, Menes sanctifies you with the oil of consecration, visible symbol of the Mezla. Then, robed again in white and shod in silver, they escort you back into the Great Hall and the gathered assembly.

The image of Black Isis no longer bears the Grail Child. Once more in the form of a cup, the Grail is held now by an ancient, beautiful woman robed in rainbow vestments. She is Maria-Prophetissa—a patroness of the Art—Miriam the High Priestess of the Shekinah and sister to Moses the Lawgiver. You stand on the dais before the eidolon of Isis, facing those gathered. The Great Companions approach, one by one, each holding a cushion that bears an item of the royal regalia. Menes, assisted by the Regent and the spirit guardian of the chapel, invests you with the sacred garments and ornaments that prefigure spiritual energies.

Over the white robe is placed a blue tunic, which is girt into place with a silver belt of twelve links, each bearing a sign of the zodiac. To one side of the silver belt is attached Excalibur, the sword of spiritual royalty; on the other side hangs the Clavicule of Wisdom, the key to this mystic citadel and its starry paths. The robe of state, a voluminous mantle of deep indigo, is placed about your shoulders. It will serve you now as did the indigo robe of the past. Finally, a crystal orb surmounted by a gold cross is placed in your left hand. It is the “Perfection of the Pentacle.” Then the Regent and the spirit guardian from the chapel place you upon the lap of Great Isis, the enroyaling throne. By this act you are indissolubly united to the kingdom.

You sit there, bathed in the light from the inner sun, upon the lap of the Great Mother, your feet upon hers, upheld against the breasts that are filled with the “milk of the stars.” Menes approaches, holding in his hands the gold circle, the royal diadem adorned with the dragon’s head. He raises it high above you, where it flashes in the sunlight. Then he lowers it and gently but firmly places it upon your head, while he softly breathes the utterly simple—yet potent—invocation, “God save the King (or Queen)!”

The invocation is taken up and repeated by all assembled: "God save the King (or Queen)!" While heralds proclaim it from the walls of the castle, messengers ride out to announce it to all the inhabitants of Logres and the church bells in the town of Camelot ring out a joyous peal.

Maria-Prophetissa now approaches, bearing the Grail. She holds it for you to drink from. For a moment, you are aware that the descending beam of sunlight has transfigured into a being of gold light, a being of celestial and eternal beauty. You are enfolded and overshadowed by the Higher Self. And as the cup is lowered from your lips, you see that the veiled shield upon the hall's western wall is now uncovered and upon it gleams a symbol, *your* personal sign of power. You have now received a new name and a sign by which to exert authority when needful.

Now, in procession, the Great Companions of the Table approach and, as you give to each one the "kiss of peace," they are absorbed into you, taking their places within, until only the Regent remains. He will remain in the Turret Room and minister to you there.

Rising from the throne of the goddess, you pass back into the chapel and there restore the sword, clavicule and royal orb to the altar. You are about to leave when Menes tells you, "The Scepter of Power you have not yet received; it lies within the heart." With the Regent, you pass back up to the battlements and look out upon the land. It is clear and bright, the miasmatic mists have gone, the trees are in blossom, the fields ripe with wheat, and the rivers, ponds, and streams sparkle pure and uncontaminated.

Lovingly leaving the Regent in the Turret Room, you return once more to the Great Hall of Tiphareth. Within, the assembly is gone, the Table Round is re-established and all is as it was before your coronation, except that your siege has been rotated to the east, before the entrance to the chapel, and is now the siege of the sovereign. You take your place, bathing once more in the harmonizing light of the Grail. One by one, the thought-presences of the Great Companions appear in their sieges, for they are without and within. All save one place—that on your immediate right—is filled. This vacant place is for the various inner teachers who will in turn come to instruct you in various aspects of the Work. You will know when a new teacher comes, for the name will be inscribed in the Book of Knowledge within the Turret Room. Through the Grail, give thanks to the Eternal and to its ministers, in whose company you sit at the Table Round.

Return to the Chamber of Indwelling. There, divest yourself of the regalia—all save the white robe and Rose-Croix lamen—and place the dragon diadem upon the cushion that awaits it. Then withdraw consciousness from the golem and absorb your citadel and kingdom back into latency and seal the ceremony. Record, rest, and . . . “God save your Majesty.”

## AFTERMATH

In the company of the Regent, go to each of the Sephirothic halls within the tower, following the sequence of the Lightning Flash. Within each chamber, intone the relevant Divine Name—by which the Absolute is adored in that Sephira—and kindle an ever-burning lamp upon its altar. Momentarily, be seated in the throne of the hall, then renew the Chamberlain’s right to preside therein on your behalf. This procedure needs to be done in all the halls of the spheres—except Tiphareth—before passing on to the final practice.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

Bodhgaya, where the one, who for 2,500 years people have considered to be the Savior, the Liberator, the Conqueror of Suffering, meditated here; struggled through the battle with himself and triumphed.

Here, after having found the Path of Life beyond all lives and all deaths, Gautama—the Buddha—decided to set the Wheel of the Doctrine in motion and to give Man the teaching of the Noble Truths, which embodies the true vision of What IS. And also to teach about the Path that leads from Darkness to Light; from Illusion to Truth; from Death to Eternity. . . .

Here, beneath a tree . . . the noble Prince who had given up the throne . . . and who had become a monk to free himself and to free other beings from all pain and suffering. Here Gautama—the Muni of the Shakya clan—on the morning, that followed a night, that will be blessed forever; became Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Awakened One, the Perfect One.

Arnaud Desjardins<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *The Message of the Tibetans*, produced by Arnaud Desjardins, Alize Diffusion, 1963, videocassette.

# 16

## SARRAS

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*For we are no more strangers and foreigners; but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God. In Whom all the building, fitly framed together; groweth into a holy temple in the Lord. . . . Except the Lord build the house; they labour in vain that build it.<sup>1</sup>*

—The Holy Eucharist

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### THE TEACHING

The Egyptian school is the fountainhead of the Western Mysteries, the Mother Lodge having been established there as the abode of the Bee King. In *The Kybalion*—that book of wisdom written by three Hermetic initiates, it says:

In ancient Egypt dwelt the great Adepts and Masters who have never been surpassed, and who seldom have been equalled, during the centuries that have taken their processional flight since the days of the Great Hermes. In Egypt was located the Great Lodge of Lodges of the Mystics. At the doors of her Temples entered the Neophytes who afterwards as Hierophants, Adepts and Masters, travelled to the four corners of the earth, carrying with them the precious knowledge which they were ready, anxious and willing to pass on to those who were ready to receive the same. All students of the Occult recognise the debt that they owe to these venerable Masters of that ancient land.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the "Shorter Form of the Holy Eucharist," in *Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Three Initiates, *The Kybalion* (Geneva, IL: Yogi Publication Society, 1908).

It was in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria that all the best in the Egyptian and Grecian Mysteries was brought together by the School of a Thousand Years, and so passed into the mystical and esoteric stream within the early Christian church. It was from the Inner Temple of the Grail that—in the time foreseen—there originated that mythic impulse which, having already been planted in the Blessed Isles of Albion (Britain) in far earlier times, under other names and forms from the land now lost, became the “Matter of Britain.” Being revived by the new impulse, it spread from Britain to Europe, becoming “clothed” in the poems and songs of the trouvères, the troubadours, and the Minnesingers as the high romance of the Holy Grail. This is why the Arthurian mythos is used in Western Alchemy. The spiritual influence of the Graeco-Egyptian Mysteries, that flowered in Alexandria over two thousand years ago, is ensouled by the high spiritual power which ever flows from the Withdrawn Temple of the Grail, and is profoundly linked with the Arthurian mythos.

## THE PRACTICE

This is a long, intense, and demanding practice. It will take you deeper than before and will be of much use in times to come. For it is an integration of the several stages of the Work and the linking of those of us who labor below with those who oversee, above. This practice may be undertaken in four parts (as indicated), or, upon special occasions—high festivals or on retreat from the outer world—it may be worked entirely in one session. The Companions of the Table Round will indicate those times when it is auspicious to do so.

In alchemical imagery, when the King’s heir has been reunited with the Father, even the “servants” of the castle and the “subjects” of the kingdom (all of one’s vehicles with their constituent parts) are enroyaled thereby.

### ***Stage 1: The Journey***

After performing the preliminary Interwoven Light exercise, exteriorize the castle golem with the mantra and project your consciousness into the Chamber of Indwelling. Once there, robe in the royal regalia: over the white robe place the blue tunic, don the girdle-belt of the zodiac and the silver sandals, and, over all, assume the indigo-purple mantle. As you place the gold dragon diadem upon your head, you hear again “God save the King (Queen).” Descend to the Great Hall. On entering, hail the Companions through the Grail, then pass on into the chapel. Ascend the

altar steps and make adoration to the One from whom your sovereignty is derived. Then attach Excalibur (by its scabbard) and the castle key to your silver girdle and take up the orb. Return to the Hall of the Table. There, the Great Companions arise from their sieges and, together, you process into the courtyard of the castle.

It is approaching sunset and already the castle walls bear lit flambeaux to illuminate the scene. Escorted by the Companions, now bearing burning torches, you pass through the courtyard, across the drawbridge over the moat, and down the mound to the river. There, by the stone bridge is moored a strange boat. The vessel is built of cedar wood from far Lebanon. From the center of the deck rise three great masts, each surmounted by an ancient crown. There is a spindle of yarn attached to the middle of each pole; the yarn on one side is green, the yarn on the center pole is white, and the yarn on the other side is red. Beneath this curious triple canopy lies a large bed covered with purple silk. Upon the foot of the bed lies a scabbarded sword. Toward the stern of the boat is a solitary mast with a furled sail. In the foredeck is set a high-backed chair, placed just behind the ship's tall prow that bears an unlit lantern.

Three figures await on the quay. As you approach, you see that they are women. Each one is veiled, but, in the light of the Companion's torches, you espy a gleam of jewels on their heads through the veils. Their concealed royalty is confirmed when they greet you with a slight inclination of their regal heads, the customary courtesy given between monarchs. One of the queenly figures is robed and veiled in white silk, and she bears a distaff and mulberry branch. The second is robed in blood-red brocade and veiled in the same hue; she bears a naked sword that emits a high-pitched note. The third, the Senior, is robed and veiled in midnight-blue velvet; she carries a fan made from the wing of a black swan. She is attended by a large, heavy-coated cat with tufted ears set upon its ruffed head. The lynx—the totem of the inner-plane sisterhoods and fraternities—regards you with topaz eyes and silent interest. Then, without a word, these three sisters—for such they are—precede you up the gangplank onto the deck of the ship. There you wait.

From the castle comes the sound of a choir singing some celestial anthem. Turning, you see a procession emerging from the gateway and coming down to the bridge. Leading is the chapel's spirit guardian, followed by six bright angels, each bearing a lit candle. They are escorting the Regent, who is carrying some object in his hands. Although covered from view, wrapped in red samite, it gives out a halo of shimmering,

fiery light that outshines the flames of candle or torch. The heavenly singing is all around as the Regent comes to the riverbank. The Companions bow to what he bears and, as he comes on board, the three sister-queens curtsy. The Regent goes to the ship's prow and beckons you to him with his eyes.

"You stand," he says, "aboard the Ship of Solomon, the mystic vessel that carried the teachings of the Tree of Being—the holy Qabalah—to these lands. The three poles hereof are the pillars of that Tree which grew from the seeds sent from Paradise and planted in the skull of Adam. Their crowns, more ancient than time, are the *Zazahot*. And the spindle-threads are those of *Madim*, *Galagalim*, and *Nogah*. From these, Providence weaves the warp and weft of the *Pargod*, that curtain which hangs before the Throne of Divine Glory."

"In this vessel of holiness, and attended by these royal priestesses, you will travel to Wisdom's sacred city. But in so doing, you will pass out from your own subjective inner kingdom and into the objective inner levels of the macrocosm. And so are you accompanied and sealed about with signs of protection, for the journey is long and deep, to that dimension wherein the starry realm becomes the footstool of creation, wherein the soul is swallowed by the cosmos, to find itself again after another manner. Therefore to you, the rightful sovereign of this realm, we commit this beacon light to guide you, and your lawful subjects await your return and the benediction that it will bring."

The Regent opens the lantern atop the ship's prow and, uncovering the object he has borne from out of its ruby cloth, he reveals the Holy Grail. Reverently, he places it inside the lantern and closes the glass door. Within the lamp, the Grail blazes out with unconcealed radiance, its golden light casting a bright path upon the flowing surface of the river. Solemnly, you hand the royal orb to the Regent to signify that he rules in your stead while you make this pilgrimage. The kingdom is in good hands. The Regent disembarks, the gangplank is drawn up, the mooring ropes are released, and the Ship of Solomon gracefully sails downriver.

On board the sister clad in white stands beneath the single mast; the priestess robed in scarlet takes up vigil by the foot of the great bed, and the dark sister sits upon the chair at the prow. You stand at the stern, watching the lights of the castle recede as you are carried away. After a while, all that is visible is the White Sun atop the tower. The craft sails around a bend in the river, and that too is gone from your sight. You look toward the prow where the Grail shines, golden and serene,

and, by the light cast, you can see the river. Here and there along the river's banks, you see gleamings—fireflies? As your eyes grow accustomed to the gloom, you perceive forms lining the banks, their eyes reflecting the passing Grail. They are your subjects, the creatures of this kingdom and realm—men, women, and children; birds and creatures. There is the white hart and there, the young faun with his friend the centaur-foal. All have come to quietly bid their sovereign a safe passage. Something is cast from the shore to land on the deck. It is a posy of forest flowers. You pick them up and wave to show you have them; a multitude of voices softly murmur, "God speed your majesty."

The Ship of Solomon comes to the mouth of the river and enters into the sea. At first, the breaking waves cause the ship to lurch in the troughs and peaks, but that soon passes and the vessel sails smoothly upon the mighty waters. The shoreline fades from view; the promontory disappears. All that is left is the murmur of dark sea, the Grail light, and the stars overhead, bright as diamonds in a dark velvet sky.

The dark-robed sister comes to you. "We journey far," she says. Her voice has a rich sound, deep yet with an otherworldly quality. "Take your rest upon the bed." You accept the suggestion and stretch out on the purple bed. The dark Priestess sister stands regarding you for a while, then, nodding to her sword-bearing sister at the bed's foot, she resumes her seat in the ship's prow.

At first, you lie with your eyes fixed upon the Grail in the lantern. Then you look above at the night sky. The constellations wheel majestically in their galaxy-turning dance. Directly above shines Orion, the heaven-striding giant, followed by the glittering beauty of Sirius, the Dog Star. "Behold," comes the dark sister's mind-speak from her seat at the prow, "the starry image of Adam-Qadmon, the heavenly Fool of Aleph with the faithful white dog at his heels." You look and realize that this celestial Fool faces the opposite direction from that of the tarot key with which you are familiar. The phrase from the Emerald Tablet, "As Above so Below, but after *another* manner," takes on a depth of meaning here. "Another manner" can also be seen as an image that, like a mirror, reverses the image while reflecting it. The microcosm reverses the macrocosm and many of our human foibles are built upon our mistaking the reversed image for That of which it is a reflection.

The wheel of the zodiac turns above you as you lie on the bed of Solomon the Wise. Around the horizon of the vault of the night sky—at right angles to one another—gleam four bright stars: in the east, Formalhaut, the Southern Fish which lies beneath Aquarius; to the south,

Regulus, the heart of the lion, in the constellation of Leo; westward glitters Antares of Scorpio; and in the northern sky shines Aldebaran, the eye of the bull, in Taurus. Above, Ursa Major named “Arthur’s chariot” in the West and “the Seven Rishis” in the East. Rearing above them all is, Draco, the celestial dragon, flying up to grasp Polaris, the immovable height of heaven.

As you watch the slowly turning suns, a song steals upon your ears—sung by the sister at the foot of the bed on which you lie, sung by the sword-bearing, scarlet-veiled one. The song was old when the pyramids of Khem and of Yucatan were unborn and chanted on the Sacred Mountain, for which the pyramids were a remembrance—the Mountain of the City of the Golden Gates in the Lost Land that now lies dreaming beneath the waves. To the ancient, evocative cadence of the song, your eyelids close and you dream a dream—a vision within a vision. Remember it. Oh, remember!

[The practice may be halted here. To do so, focus on the royal orb and you will find yourself standing before it, held in the Regent’s hands within the Turret Room of the tower. Pass to the Chamber of Indwelling and, from there, to your physical body. Absorb the castle golem into latency. When you wish to continue this practice, project the castle, and then project your consciousness into it. Enter the Turret Room to stand before the Regent. “See” in the crystal orb within his hands the scene in the practice as you left it. See yourself in that scene, then mentally step into it and continue.]

### ***Stage 2: The Vision***

You wake with the light of dawn upon your face. The first thing you see is the Grail gleaming in the center of the rising sun, with the three sister-queens standing before it, making the Dawn Adoration upon the blue sea. Turning your head at the sound of a rumbling purr, you find the lynx lying upon the pillow next to you, its paws folded beneath it, like some living sphinx that graces you with an enigmatic expression. You rise from the purple bed and walk to the ship’s stern, in order not to disturb the royal ones in their devotions. The sail on the single mast has been unfurled in the night and, in the increasing light, you see that it bears a design of three seated figures. In the center is Christ Pantocrator, one hand raised in benediction, the other holding the Book of Life. To his side sits Osiris, the Risen One, wielding the crook of the

shepherd and the flail of discernment. On the other side, sits Dionysos, ivy-crowned god of ecstasy, clad in a panther's skin and bearing the thyrsus-wand. These three Saviors face outward from the sail.

You hear these words: "Time and again the Way-Showers to the path of enlightenment come. In every age and clime, to all peoples, these manifestations of Redemption appear. Yea, and in every life too. For ultimately, That which redeems and that which is redeemed are one—and this realization is the redemption itself." You turn to see the dark-veiled queen moving from behind you to her chair in the stern.

You begin to follow her, but, as you pass the scarlet sister, standing once more at the foot of the bed, you stop, for she is humming a tune—the melody of the chant she sang last night. Your dream surges up into self-awareness and you commit it to conscious memory. Then the scarlet-clad sister points to the sword across the bed. She speaks: "This is the sword of King David, who slew the giant of delusive appearance with the whirling motion of the Stone and who danced before the other Ark, the 'throne' of the Shekinah, when he brought it into the Place of Peace. The scabbard of this sword is the skin of dolphins, a memorial to the Lost Land and the preserving Ark of the Seed-Bearers."

You thank the warrior-priestess for the teachings and retrace your steps to consider what you have learned. But now, beneath the sail-mast, sits the white-robed queen. She is weaving at a loom with white yarn drawn from the spindle upon the central crowned pole standing amidships. After watching her deft fingers weaving the jade shuttle through the threads for a while, you ask her why she is so engaged. "For thee," she replies. Puzzled, you ask her what she is making. "A new robe for thee. Beneath the mulberry trees, the Virgins of the Sun sat and spun and wove the robes for the sacred sovereigns. I weave thee a new garment, a new vesture. It shall be thy robe of inner glory." You watch as the fine white cloth falls from the loom and, with deep-stirring awe, you realize that it is seamless.

From amidships comes a shout! A woman's voice giving tongue, as when her warriors return in victory, "IAO!" From the prow now it sounds, "IAO!" And for a third time, from the stern, it rises, "IAO!" Rushing to the ship's prow, you see upon the horizon a white pillar shining in the morning light. The ship speeds across the waves toward it. And, as you draw closer, you see it clearly: a tall lighthouse, some two hundred feet high, whose marble-clad walls reflect the Sun.

"The Pharos," you breathe, many things now becoming clear.

“Alexandria,” replies the dark one.

In a little while, the Ship of Solomon sails about the octagonal base of the lighthouse, which has a small temple to Isis-Pharia nestled at its foot, and so enters the royal harbor. As the ship draws to the quay-side, ropes are thrown and the vessel is moored. The dark-veiled sister bids you take the Grail from the lamp on the prow. You do so, carrying it carefully. With her and the lynx, you mount the steps up the quay, where a party of linen-clad priests and armored guards await. The dark one takes her place in a sedan-chair, eight men carrying the poles at shoulder height. You are escorted into a curtained litter to follow. At first, it is strange. Never before have you handled the Grail directly. Its chased bowl tingles against your palms and fingers and the golden radiance shines straight through your hands, like x-rays, and suffuses your body and aura. But you soon adjust to the heightened vibration and turn your attention to look through the gauzy curtains of the litter at the city.

The procession has passed by the Moon Gate and the Cathedral of St. Mark, and is now passing through the Brucheum, the royal quarter. You see the dome and marble pillars of the Great Synagogue. The procession turns right to pass by the Great Library set in the complex of the Museion. Along the wide avenue, flanked by stalls selling things from all over the known world, the bustling shoppers part and give obeisance to the dark-veiled figure carried in the sedan chair ahead of your litter. You pass the monument that is the physical and ideological center of the city, the Soma, the temple-tomb of Alexander the Great. The morning sun’s rays glitter on the laurel wreath of gold that adorns the building’s dome. Above the palm trees, in the distance, toward the Sun Gate leading to Lake Mareotis and the Isle of the Therapeutoi, you espy the Great Serapeum that dominates the city from atop its artificial hill. This, the Temple of the Shepherd of the Stars, is approached by a vast flight of marble steps, one step for each day of the year.

The procession turns once more and, after a little while, your litter is put down, the curtain drawn back, and you are assisted to disembark still bearing the precious vessel. Following the dark sister on foot, and escorted by the priests, you presently come to a pair of tall doors, sheathed in lead. Upon the lintel is inscribed the Hebrew letter *Tav*, the letter which caused the Angel of Death to pass over. The attendant priests bow before the doors and depart. Then the lynx reaches up with its forepaws and places them against the doors. They open and, carrying the glowing cup, you follow the veiled priestess into the shadows beyond. You have entered a large, dark chamber, its only illumination

being the Grail and a faint radiance coming from a curtained alcove straight ahead. The dark one motions you to stand between her and the lynx in the center of the chamber.

Into the silence comes the reverberating sound of a great gong being struck three times. Slowly, the curtain before the alcove parts, the light from beyond increasing as it does so, to stream into the chamber. Within the alcove, a figure of light is seated on a throne. To his left, hovers an angel formed of white light shot with silver sparkles; on his right, floats a white angel suffused with golden motes.

The throne's incumbent is robed in white linen with a mantle of crimson silk falling from his shoulders. He bears a tall staff surmounted by the triple cross of Melchizadek. Upon his head rests the White Crown of Upper Egypt, encircled by three gold diadems. His face is as old as yesterday and as young as tomorrow. The mouth is generous and warm and the eyes are deep and dark; to look into them is to see the starry wisdom mirrored therein.

You see that, around the walls of the chamber, men and woman from all races of humanity are seated, indwelling red, black, yellow, or white bodies for their work. Each one is clad in a black robe and upon each breast shines a gold cross with the Gold Rose of Attainment upon it.

The veiled one beside you bows in reverence to the Master of the place: "I give praise to the Light, in the person of Hermes-Trismegistos; and to the Lords of the Secret of Saturn here assembled, give I honor and greetings also!"

"Greeting, Daughter of Isis and Sister!" comes the response from all present. Then, addressing the Thrice-Great directly, she continues: "Lord Hermes, I present one who has persevered in the apprenticeship of the Art. You have received report from other Watchers of our company, and now, as instructed, I bring him/her that you might commune directly."

With this, she gently propels you forward, toward the alcove. As you approach, the two glittering, white angels swoop forward and lift the Grail from your hands. They return to flank the throne, holding the Cup high above the Thrice-Great One. As you instinctively kneel before the Master, he looks long and deeply into your eyes, before he speaks.

"Here in this city were established the wisdom-teachings of the old and the new, of the East and the West. Herein, the School of a Thousand Years preserved and instructed worthy ones in that Ageless Wisdom, to carry hence its balm among the lands and seek to heal the nations. And here came a Great One to be trained for his ministry. After his sacring as the Priest-King, as the "Anointed One" for his time, he built by a mighty

magic the High Temple of the Sangreal in the subtle levels over the terrestrial city of Alexandria. This, some legends name Sarras, but it has other names too. For the Grail is necessary if the Phoenix is to live again. Once done, he returned to the land of his birth; and there, dying—as others before and since—as a “Willing Sacrifice,” he then showed in his rising from the dead, that the grave had lost its power and death its victory.

“Because thou hast persevered in the Sacred Art of service to the Divine, we grant thee—under the veil of earthly things—a foretaste of that which is ordained for all.”

The Master bids you return to the center of the Temple of the Magi. The hidden gong sounds once more, but this time, its reverberations do not fade away; if anything, they increase. As you watch, the seated company begins to glow, as if lit from within. Their robes turn to gold-cloth and their forms become brighter and brighter yet. Soon they are pure incandescence and, from their foreheads, beams of light, the “horn” of the unicorn, arc up to some location high above the chamber’s roof. Now the bodies of the Magi shift into purest energy, the outlines becoming hazy, like morning mist before the ascendant sun. The sound of the gong scales up to a note of unimaginable purity. Then all, save Hermes, are gone.

“Whither go they?” you wonder.

“There,” answers Alchemy’s Archmage. And following his pointing finger, you see, through the roof of this chamber, high above in the azure sky, a celestial temple set amid the clouds. It seems built of jewels that scintillate with an unearthly splendor, which encompasses the entire edifice with a rainbow aura. It is surmounted by a great sapphire dome, as with a diadem of light, and, crowning the cupola, shines a brilliant red jewel whose rays penetrate all the dimensions, so guiding homeward the servants of the Grail.

“Come, my young charge,” speaks Hermes again, “Let us to the worship.” From beneath the ground comes a roaring sound, like captive thunder, drawing ever closer. And there emerges from the floor a great dragon! Opalescent scales like pearls, gleam along the seventy-foot length of its body. The huge wings are folded against the restricting walls. A great eye, the color of molten gold in a crucible, gazes at you from the enormous horned head that is too large to regard you with both eyes at once. And between the ivory-toothed jaws, in the maw of its throat, the white radiance of banked Kundalini fire shows. At a word

from the Thrice-Great, the dragon submissively lowers its great head to the ground and the Master Alchemist steps upon it, walking over to sit on the dragon's neck, above the spinal scales. "The bird of Hermes," you think in awe. Then, shaking yourself, you go to sit, as beckoned, behind the Master of the Work of the Sun.

The dragon rears up, and spreads its vast pinions. The Earth falls away as you are borne up into the sky, ascending into heaven upon the living synthesis of the elements!

In moments, the dragon-steed approaches the celestial temple. It is vast, stupendous, this the High Temple of the Holy Grail. Seventy-two octagonal chapels surround the domed adytum—one chapel for each of the Names of God. It is surmounted by towers of gold and precious stones. Atop each tower, resting upon a crystal cross, glitters an image of a flying eagle. As the dragon approaches the temple, its tall electrum doors swing open and the winged serpent comes to land upon the onyx floor of the portico. The Lord Hermes takes you by the hand and leads you into the High Temple. It is immense. The windows are fashioned from thinly sliced precious stones: amethyst, beryl, and agate. Each jewel-like stone of the sanctuary is an angelic being; and seven titanic archangels, their arms upraised as living pillars, uphold the great dome. The sapphire dome is fashioned of the interwoven wings of the Four Holy Creatures—lion, man, eagle, and bull—whose faces appear amidst the translucent feathers. Upon the brow of each of these Four gleams a letter written in black fire: *Yod, Heh, Vau, and Heh*. And from each living letter a radiance is projected, to merge with the other three, at the middle of the dome and thence to fall below as a stream of fiery dew into the incandescent Great Grail set upon the diamond altar.

Encircling this adamantine altar are members of that illustrious company known by many names in many traditions: the Communion of Saints, the Vajra-Sangha, the Spiritual Israel, and the Great White Lodge. Each one is an immortal Sage who has achieved the deathless solar body, the rainbow body of clear light: Enoch is here, and Guru Padmasambhava, and Elijah; Lao-Tse, Jetsun-Milarepa, and the Senior Zadith; Ahijah of Shiloh, Yeshe-Tsogyal, Chüng Li Ch'uan, and Serah; Garab-Dorje, Jesus of Nazareth, and John the Beloved; Han Hsiang-Tzū, Arya-Nagarjuna, the Comte de Saint Germain, and Paul Foster Case; Methuselah, Rabbi Abraham Eleazar and Rechungpa; Nicholas and Perenelle Flammel, Ho Hsien-Ku, Jyanqub-Dorje; and many other "hidden ones."

As you draw closer, the Grail you carry begins to “sing” and strain within your grasp. Suddenly, it leaps from your hands straight into the light of the Great Grail, radiant upon the altar. You feel bereft, as if your most valued treasure has been lost.

“Where your treasure is there will your heart be also,” comes a mind-wave. As you look about the circle of those who have attained, you see that, from within the heart center of each one present, the Grail shines out. “There is but one Cup, yet innumerable manifestations; but one life yet innumerable lives. Here the symbol is united to its reality.”

Now you are plunged into sorrow, because the Grail glows not within you. In response to your “brokenness,” expressing aspiration, the Cup emits an intense beam of light that enters your Sun center. And, like a hooked fish, you are drawn inexorably toward the altar. Horrified yet fascinated, you are drawn ever closer, through the ring of Sages, to the vessel that receives Grace from Above. Now you are within the sphere of rainbow light surrounding the Great Grail and you can see the Cup clearly. The foot of the chalice is set with twelve gems, and the bowl is chased with golden figures delicately executed in fine detail. Closer still, you can see the gold figures on the bowl clearly now. They are images of deities, depicting every god ever worshipped, every “mask” of the Eternal through which humanity has sought to commune with the Inexpressible. And about the Grail’s rim, letters of fire form and change, telling the will of God.

An effulgence overflows the chalice, permeating all with its radiance; you are gently lifted up, and then set down as the glory recedes. You lie, as a naked baby, on the bottom of the smooth, golden bowl of the Great Grail. Descending upon you is the Light from Above. Through the Light, your vision sees further, into the vast, dark expanse of space. The scene seems to recede. Now you see galaxy upon galaxy, moving away from you, until you see, in childlike wonder, the whole of the multiverse, the entire cosmos. This too recedes, becoming a black circle surrounded by white light, that draws back, to become the All-Seeing Eye! The gaze of the Divine rests upon you. *For in you, now, God beholds God.*

A tear flows out from the effulgence of the Eye. It falls through space, a gleam with starlight, to fall upon you within the Grail. You are bathed in the water of the Sages, pervaded by the *aqua vitae*, the Water of Life. You rest, closing your eyes, floating as the unborn in the womb of the Primordial Cause of Causes.

[Pause]

A gentle feeling of something being put into your hands causes you to open your eyes. Once more you are kneeling before Hermes-Trismegistos, inside the Temple of Saturn, in Alexandria. Hermes is placing the castle's Grail into your hands. Then, from his body, he produces a green stone. It glows like an emerald. He places it inside the Cup and covers the vessel with a veil of red silk, patterned with roses. "In thy Inner Kingdom," speaks the Thrice-Great, "Which is also thy 'laboratory' for the Great Work, the regent shall be thy link with me. By him will I instruct thee." You give thanks, and through him you offer thanks to the One whose gift is the Art.

You are assisted to rise by the Dark Priestess of Isis and, with her and the lynx, you leave the sanctuary through the lead doors. The priests wait to escort you to the curtained litter. Entering, you sit and cradle the veiled Grail as you are carried back to the smaller of the two harbors of Alexandria.

At the quayside, you leave the litter and bid farewell to the priests. One of them places a small roll of papyrus in your zodiac belt. He tells you it is a passport to this city; you may come and go as you will. Thanking him, you descend the steps cut in the side of the quay and again enter the fabled Ship of Solomon, where the Red and White Queens await you and their Dark Sister. While the mooring ropes are being cast off, you go to the lantern at the prow and, unwrapping the Grail, you place it inside where it shines brightly in the evening light.

The sail of the three Savior-gods is unfurled and the ship sails like a swan out of the royal harbor, past the great Pharos lighthouse, and into the Mediterranean Sea, bearing west, toward the Pillars of Hercules. You look back. From the top of Pharos, the newly kindled beacon light flashes out, promising a safe harbor to all who would "know in order to serve."

Suddenly tired, you make your way to the purple-draped bed and stretch out upon it. The Grail gleams, the stars shine overhead, the scarlet priestess sings the ancient songs, and you fall asleep. You dream a dream—a vision within a vision. Remember.

[The practice may halted here. To do so, focus on the royal orb and you will find yourself standing before it, held in the Regent's hands within the Turret Room of the tower. Pass to the Chamber of Indwelling and, from there, to your physical body. Absorb the castle golem into latency. When you wish to continue this practice, project the castle, then project your consciousness into it. Enter the Turret Room to stand before the

Regent. "See" in the crystal orb within his hands the scene in the practice where you left it. See yourself in that scene, then mentally step into it and continue.]

### **Stage 3: The Return**

You awaken in the dawn's growing light. The sweet sound of the priestesses singing the Hymn to the Rising Sun comes to you from the stern of the ship. You watch them as the sea breeze billows the folds of their mantles and gossamer veils, while their uplifted hands move gracefully in the mudras of hailing, of welcome and of embrace. The worship done, the Sisters silently glide to their usual places. The weaver remains in the stern, the Warrior guards amidships, and the Wise One goes afore, to sit in the prow by the Grail lantern.

You rise and stretch, breathing in the salty air. You will soon be back in Logres. Your thoughts turn with affection to all those there whom you have come to know and love. There will be much from this pilgrimage to share with the Companions around Merlin's Table, much of hidden import yet to be understood.

You walk to the stern, where the white-clad queen sits by the empty loom. "Thy robe is ready and so art thou to wear it." She indicates the folded cloth upon her lap. You divest yourself of your mantle, belt, tunic, and the white robe, folding them on the cedar deck and finally placing the dragon circllet upon the pile. The priestess holds up the new white robe, woven from finest linen drawn from the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life. New vesture, new vehicle? You know that, on the inner planes, robes and regalia signify interior states. Then you see that there is a small device embroidered in colored threads upon the breast of the robe. The device is of a white dove bearing in its beak a wheaten wafer—the heavenly manna, the bread of angels—descending to a golden chalice, all superimposed upon a golden glory of twenty-two rays.

The voice of the Dark One explains: "Behold, the seal of *Ruach Ha-Qodesh*, the Holy Spirit which engulfed thee in the Great Grail. I, Morgan of the Fey, say unto thee, 'Wear this for a perpetual remembrance.'" You turn to face her. Her dark veil is lifted back, revealing her long, raven hair. She looks at you with emerald, elfin eyes. Then she smiles—it's like moonbeams hallowing a sacred circle—and, laying her black-swan fan upon your breast, she says, "Persevere in the Art, and I promise thee that in Yetzirah, a 'Lover for the Work' shall come to labor with thee." Not quite understanding, you bow your head in gratitude. When you raise your head, her dark veil is lowered once more. Then, taking the

new white vesture from her sister, the Dark One places it over your head and helps you put your arms through the sleeves. The white sister then places the blue, silken tunic over you. But the “seal of the Holy Spirit” still shines through, looking as if it were actually upon the tunic instead. “No matter what inner vesture adorns thee,” she comments, “this seal shall always be visible to those of the Inner Worlds. It is a shield for thy heart, until another and greater Sign shall replace it.”

The scarlet-robed sister girds the silver belt of the zodiac about your waist, then reverently ties the scabbard strings of Excalibur to the belt. Assisted by her white-robed sister, she places the royal mantle of indigo about your shoulders once more. Morgan, the Dark One, approaches, bearing the dragon circlet. Holding the diadem over you—her sisters reaching up to grasp it as well—the three sisters place it upon your head, saying as one: “Receive back from our hands, this symbol of thy sovereignty. By the Spindle, the Sword, and our Spell-upon-the-Sea, we weave a veil of protection about thee to guard thee from arrows of malice; so declare the Elders of the hidden Sisterhoods of Ruta. And as We have spoken, so shall it be!”

You feel the weight of the royal circlet as it comes to rest upon your head once more—the pressure of the dragon’s head against your forehead. The white-robed Weaver places the folds of her veil over you; then the scarlet sister of the Sword places her crimson veil over the white and, finally, the Senior encompasses all within her dark veil, and—the Akashic shield is set!

As the dark veil is removed, you hear a rich contralto chanting, “IAO.” Then, as the scarlet veil falls away, a pure soprano voice sings, “IAO,” and finally, the white veil wisps away with the whispered word, “IAO.” Then the three in unison: “Behold thy kingdom!” You turn to the prow to see, rising above the waves, the green hills of Logres, and in the distance, set among their emerald slopes, a white Sun shines above a walled tower.

Soon the Ship of Solomon enters the river mouth and sails upriver in the morning light. Eagerly, your eyes devour every detail of your realm. A feature here, a boulder there; a grove of trees, a habitation, a circle of standing stones. The great forest appears to the starboard as the vessel turns the bend of the final hill. And there, ahead, lies Camelot and the Castle of the Table Round!

At the jetty by the stone bridge, the Great Companions await you. And beyond them, a crowd of your subjects, all in festive dress, wearing garlands of flowers and carrying green boughs. The ship is moored, the gangplank lowered. Going to the lantern on the prow, you take the Grail

from inside the lamp and cover it with crimson silk cloth woven with a pattern of roses. The wrapped Grail shines in your hands like a great ruby.

You disembark, to be greeted, first by the Regent and then the other Companions. You turn to invite the three Sister-Queens to lodge and feast with you. But the gangplank to the boat is already withdrawn. With the speed of a galloping horse, a mist suddenly rolls upriver and enfolds the Ship of Solomon. There is a sound of singing and of laughter. A warm breeze sweeps down from the hills, dispersing the mist to reveal the empty river sparkling in the morning light.

One of your companions sends a message by "silent voice": "They are returned to the Lady of the Lake and the mystic Isle of Avalon." "Will I see them again?" you send. There is no reply . . . but you think you will.

A procession forms; pages come forward to carry a canopy above you on tall poles. Preceded by the spirit guardian of the chapel, with the Regent on your right hand and the Companions as an escort, you turn to face the way up to the castle. But the procession doesn't ascend the castle mound. It winds its way to the left, on the path into Camelot Town. Entering the town to cheers of the people, the procession goes to the local church and then enters its quiet sanctuary, where a single boy's voice sings: "*Vivat Rex (or Regina) in aeternum.*"<sup>3</sup> Before the high altar is set a chair of state and, beside it, Menes awaits, robed in hooded gray. Going up the altar steps, you take your place in the chair, flanked on either side by Menes and the Regent, while your standard-bearer stands by on the far left.

The little church is filled with a silent throng. The hymn finishes. You rise; Menes unveils the Grail, and you lift it on high. There is a sigh of awe and longing from those assembled as they look upon the golden glory of the Cup for the first time. As if in response, the Grail's halo expands, darting out rays of light that carry grace to those assembled.

You resume your seat. The assembled people form a line, as, one by one, they come forward to kneel, while you momentarily place the Holy Grail upon their heads in blessing. Men, women, children, animals, birds, mythic creatures, even the dryads from the forests, the faerie folk, and the devas of the inner landscape. Each in turn comes to bow before the Cup and receive its benison.

As the line nears its end, whispers break out at the back of the church and there is the sound of metal dragging on stone. Into the

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<sup>3</sup> "May the King (Queen) live forever."

church, under guard, are led the manacled prisoners from the castle's deep dungeons! Hesitantly, almost reluctantly, the prisoners come forward to join the line before you. You are confused, suddenly angry . . . or is it fearful? You look to the Regent for counsel; he raises an eyebrow. Then to Menes, who gently smiles. You look back at the approaching line of prisoners. Your glance locks on the eyes of one particular prisoner. Consciously, you don't even know him, and yet, in that moment of truth, you read in his eyes that he expects to be rejected, rebuffed, denied redemption, again. Worse, he is resigned to it.

You address him, "Come hither . . . brother."

Not quite believing his ears, but with a nod of encouragement from Menes, he shuffles forward under the weight of his old, heavy chains, and drags his feet up the altar steps. For a moment, he stands before you. Anger flickers in his eyes as an ancient hatred flares, a pain unresolved, unaccepted. His dark energies crackle around you, seeking entrance, probing for resonances within you that they can use for their fell purpose. But you hold the prisoner in the unconditional love of Tiphareth, of which *you* are the living symbol for all in this land. He wavers, new thoughts budding in his mind, and . . . he kneels. You elevate the Grail. His eyes follow it with a new, childlike wonder. You bring it down to rest gently upon his head. It embraces him within its light. The radiance soothes away the lines of pain, of resentment and anger, from his face, like a mother wipes away tears from a crying child's cheek. Hope is born in his eyes. There is the sound of falling chains. Disbelievingly, for his "hope" is only seconds old, he looks down at the manacles lying, broken asunder, upon the ground. As he watches, they dissolve into nothingness. He looks up at you and, for the first time in—how long?—years, decades, lifetimes, he simply smiles. You lean forward and give him the "kiss of peace."

Menes steps to raise the freed man to his feet and takes him to one side, as another chained prisoner steps forward to be blessed by the saving Cup. And so, one after another, each prisoner is liberated by the Grail. They will be taken and trained by Menes, to serve as faithful pages and messengers in the kingdom.

The benediction over, the procession forms as before, leaving the church and the town. It turns left up the Mound of Power, over the moat, and so into the castle courtyard at last.

[The Practice may halted here. To do so, focus on the royal orb and you will find yourself standing before it, held in the Regent's hands within

the Turret Room of the tower. Pass to the Chamber of Indwelling and, from there, to your physical body. Absorb the castle golem into latency. When you wish to continue this practice, project the castle, and then project your consciousness into it. Enter the Turret Room to stand before the Regent. "See" in the crystal orb within his hands, the scene in the practice where you left it. See yourself in that scene, then mentally step into it and continue.]

#### ***Stage 4: The Ascension***

You are in the procession, your hands cupped about the radiant Grail. The Companions escort you across the courtyard of the castle, and up to the doorway to the keep. You look up at the coat-of-arms carved over the door: the dragon shield surmounted by the crown and flanked by the stag and the unicorn. The motto resonates deeply within you: "Death shall have no dominion." You enter into the Tower of the Art.

One more task is left. Alone, you descend to the Hall of the Bride, the chamber of Malkuth, and momentarily place the Grail upon the altar there, while the titanic force of this chamber plays through it. Then, taking it up again, you go to stand before the representation of The World set between the two doors of the spiral stairways.

Now, exteriorize two figures, a silver-robed woman and a gold-robed man. They are a princess and a prince, your royal offspring. The Princess goes to stand before the entrance to the lunar spiral stairway and the Prince before that of the solar passage. At your command, they both climb the stairways that weave about the central column. While you, bearing the Grail, wrapped in the royal mantle of Akasha and crowned with the dragon, step through The World window directly into the central column of Shushumna itself.

You are in the shaft of Dragon's Fire, permeated by its white incandescence and scintillating glints of scarlet, blue, and gold. The fire penetrates every atom, burning away all that is not divine. Recognize the fire as the hidden glory of your essence and *become one with it*. Your exalted consciousness is suffused with omnipotence and effortlessly rises up the shaft. As you ascend upon wings of flame, you are simultaneously aware of the dual winding ascent of the Princess of Silver and the Prince of Gold. Within moments, you stand atop the Battlements, upon the Window of the Shem. Your "offspring" have joined you, the Princess at your left and the Prince at your right.

The form of the Princess of Silver becomes insubstantial, an oval of silver light that superimposes upon, merges with and integrates itself

into your heart center. Then, the form of the Prince of Gold likewise transmutes into gold energy and also becomes united in the heart-girt-with-a-serpent. Now, as three-in-one, you drain the contents of the Grail, drinking it as a “loving cup.”

Complete now, within the three integrated aspects of consciousness—salt, sulphur, and mercury—you raise the empty Grail up to the White Sun for continued sustenance.

And the Height of Heaven responds. A bolt of lightning, that dazzles the eyes and numbs the mind, flashes from the White Sun down through the Grail and into the tower. When the visual after-images have cleared, you see that all the stones of the tower are now formed of flawless crystal, and, upon the battlements, at the cardinal points of the roof, stand four statues of thrice-refined gold: in the south, the Winged Lion, symbol of the Lords of Flame; to the west, the Eagle, representing the Lords of Mind; in the north, the mighty Winged Bull of the Lords of Form; and in the east, a Winged Sacred Human, totem of the Lords of Humanity-to-be.

Light from the White Sun pours down upon the crystal tower, which, like a prism, transmits it outward to the land of Logres. As you watch, the mists of enchantment that have always clung to the kingdom are burnt away. The trees put forth blossom; the rivers, lakes, and streams sparkle; the fields prosper and all the inhabitants of your kingdom are blessed with peace.

The trapdoor bearing the *Prithivi-Prithivi* seal opens and the ladder of seven golden rungs lowers to the floor of the Turret Room. You go down. There, the Regent, attended by two new pages (who look familiar but profoundly changed) and two Companions of the Table’s Fellowship, awaits you, orb in hand. Face to face, you exchange the Grail for the orb. Then you commit the orb, Excalibur, and the key of the paths to the two Companions, bidding them place them upon the altar of the Chapel of the Rose-Croix, until you come again. Escorted by the pages, the Companions depart, leaving you alone with the Regent.

He indicates the book upon the lectern. There is a new name written on a new page—“HERMES,” it reads.

“Welcome home, majesty,” says the Regent. “If it please your grace, depress the sapphire button of Heaven in the Tablet of Knowledge.”

You look at the tablet of black stone. The Sephiroth of the Tree of Life incised in silver upon it, gleam in the King Scale, the color codex of Atziluth. The diamond button on the right is still depressed. Putting forth a finger you press down the blue sapphire button next to it. A great voice speaks a single word that resounds throughout the tower: “Seg !”

The Sephiroth of the Tree change into the Queen Scale of Briah and, simultaneously, you “see” that the field of the phoenix shield that hangs over the door to the chapel, is changed from white to azure. And within the chapel, the royal orb, cushioned upon the altar, is now formed of precious blue sapphire.

Inquiringly, you look to the Regent. Then it happens—probably the most shocking incident of your entire, long journey—the *Regent winks at you!* Then he bows and bears the Grail back to the Table Round, leaving you to pass across the landing and into the Chamber of Indwelling.

There you divest, but retain the white robe that is embroidered with the seal of the Holy Spirit. As you place the diadem upon its cushion, you see that there are now a pair of dragon’s wings rising from either side of the gold circlet, wings reminiscent of the wings on the headdress of Mercury. Clapsed within the dragon’s jaws shines a golden pearl. Return to physicality and absorb the golem into latency. Close down firmly and write up your record.

## AFTERMATH

Use some sessions after the foregoing practice to sit with the Great Companions at the Table to integrate the experience. When questions arise for you, place the lit lamp before your siege, upon the Sun sign, and seek the Companions’ comments and intimations for further insights, using them as the basis for meditation. The full fruitage of this practice will be the development of the ability to enter into Samadhi at will.

## THE CONTEMPLATION

He that hath knowledge of the Microcosm cannot long be ignorant of the Macrocosm. This is that which the Egyptian industrious searchers of Nature so often said, and loudly proclaimed . . . that every one should know himself.

This speech their dull disciples (the Greeks) took in a moral sense, and in ignorance affixed it to their Temples. But I admonish thee, whosoever thou art, that desirest to dive into the inmost parts of Nature, if that which thou seekest thou find not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee. If thou knowest not the excellency of thine own house, why dost thou seek and search after the excellency of other things? The universal Orb of the world contains not so many great mysteries and excellen-

cies as a little Man, formed by God in His own image. And he who desirest the primacy among the students of Nature will nowhere find a greater or better field of study than himself.

Therefore will I follow the example of the Wise, and speak from my whole heart, and from certain true experience proved by me, and in the words of the Egyptians, and with a loud voice, do now proclaim: "O Man, know thy Self, in Thee is hidden the Treasure of all treasures."

"The Salt of Nature Regenerated"

—Alipili<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Alipili, "The Salt of Nature Regenerated" in Herbert Silberer, *Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and the Occult Arts* (New York: Dover, 1971).





# THE SOROR MYSTICA

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*I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells.  
For when you are at that center within you and I within mine,  
we shall be as One.*

Crazy Horse,  
—Lakota leader and Holy Man<sup>1</sup>

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## THE TEACHING

True progress, from the esoteric viewpoint, consists of the alignment of the lower, personal consciousness with the higher, spiritual consciousness, to create an efficient tool whereby the will of the Eternal may be fulfilled in Earth, even as it is in the heavens above. This, of course, is the true reason for the knowledge and training imparted by the rulers of the Mysteries—the Lords of Compassion—and is the only truly acceptable reason for any esoteric work. This is the true line of advancement, the Path that leads to the fulfillment of the Great Work, for “in His will is our perfect peace.” All other lines of “progress,” all other lines of interest, are but *partial* aspects of this Path of Return, which is open to all humanity.

The alchemical term, “the manual work of the Art,” is deceptive. “Manual” means “work of the hand.” In Hebrew, “hand” is the meaning of the letter *Yod*—but *Yod* also means “phallus.” The reproductive organs are assigned to the ninth Sephira, Yesod, whose name is the same as that of *Yod-Sod*, “the Secret of Yod.” This secret is none other than the Western form of Kundalini Yoga taught in this book. The secret is the work of *Yod*, capturing the *Yod-force* and raising the primordial Fire.

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<sup>1</sup> From a footnote to an interview with David Swallow appearing in *Sacred Hoop*, Winter 1998/99, 23.

The Hebrew letter assigned to tarot Key VI, The Lovers, is *Zain*, ז, meaning "sword." A sword is forged in fire. It is, in a fashion, the magic sword, Excalibur. It represents the "product" of the Art—that which was tempered and heated in the forge of the Athanor, the keen blade of the Spirit, encased in the sheath of a material body. It is the sword of spiritual royalty, whose presence heals the land and gifts the inner kingdom's subjects with profound peace. The sword's blade is the Shushumna current; its hilt represents the supernal Sephiroth, the quillons of the hand-guard being Binah and Chokmah and the jewel-pommel itself is Kether, the thousand-petalled lotus containing the Stone of the Philosophers. "Om Mani Padme Hum," Om, the Jewel in the Lotus, Hum.

The alchemical mage, Paracelsus, had a magic sword. People believed that its pommel-jewel was actually the Philosophers' Stone—since it had the word Azoth upon it. After Paracelsus' apparent death, his tomb was opened to acquire his enchanted sword. But the tomb was empty of both sword and of any physical remains of the alchemist.

Key VI, The Lovers is a tableau of the Art. The naked man standing at the right of the card (the symbolic south), is Adam. He represents our sulfur, self-conscious awareness, and the physical body. The fiery tree behind—having twelve flames to indicate the zodiac and so Chokmah, sulfur, and the Yod-force—indicates that the physical body is built and maintained by the Radiant Energy. The naked woman in the north of the tarot key (on the viewer's left hand side), is Mother Eve. She represents alchemical salt, the subconsciousness, and the astral body. The tree behind her has five apples upon it, signifying the tattvas, and the coiled serpent is a symbol of Kundalini present in the subtle body. In the east, above the other two figures, the Archangel Raphael—the "healing hand of God"—is a symbol of the Higher Self and the illuminating alchemical Mercury, which is superconsciousness. It is the Mercury that perfects the "operation of the Sun." In the garden of The Magician, Key I, is assigned to the planet Mercury; The Lovers card is assigned to Gemini, which is *ruled* by Mercury; the astral body is represented by the white lilies and the physical body by the red roses.

The solar body that is the fruit of the Great Work is a vehicle in which the powers of *both* the physical and astral bodies are fully manifested. The astral body takes on the materiality of the physical, while the physical body inherits the powers of the astral vehicle. The result is a body, freed from the Wheel of Birth and Death, able to materialize at will—physical enough to be touched, to eat, yet subtle enough to raise the vibrations of its atoms at will and so operate upon any level of the

universe, physical, astral, spiritual, or Divine. This teaching, in Alchemy, is called by the specialized term *Rebis*, or “two-thing.” These two vehicles must be permeated—saturated through and through—with the Mercurial water, which as Artephius said, “penetrates the bodies, and makes one new body of two bodies.” The Mercurial water is *Mezla*, the illuminating elixir, or nectar of life, which is outpoured through the bodies from the Mercury center, the crown chakra of Kether. Archangel Raphael is the “Healing Hand of God,” “hand” referring to Yod and “healing” referring to “wholeness,” to the “unity.” The interpenetration of the astral and physical bodies (the marriage of the White Queen and the Red King) is symbolized in Alchemy by an hermaphrodite, a single body with two heads (the *Rebis*) or by the double-headed Eagle.

With this in mind, the reader will find the following quotation of Artephius “lit from within”:

And in doing so this the body [Assiah] is converted into a spirit [the Yetziratic golem] and the spirit afterwards into a body; and then is made the amity, the peace, the concord, and the union of contraries, to wit, between the body and the spirit, which reciprocally or naturally change their natures, which they receive and communicate one to another through their most minute parts [the chakras and atoms].

In this operation the Body is made a Spirit of a most subtle nature; and again, the Spirit is corporified and changed into the nature of the Body, with the bodies, whereby our STONE consists of a Body, a Soul and a Spirit.

Our . . . lantern then is made to ascend by the degrees of Fire . . . without violence . . . when it ascends on high, it is born in the Air [Briah] or Spirit, and is changed into a spirit; and becomes Life with Life. And by such an operation it is that the Body is made of a subtle nature, and the Spirit is incorporated with the Body, and made one with it.<sup>2</sup>

### **Future Practice**

The practices given in this book have been operational, as explained, upon the level of Atziluth. One of the reasons for this is that, in most people, this level is not well developed. But, because it is the level of

<sup>2</sup> This and quoted material above from Artephius, “The Secret Book of Artephius,” 12<sup>th</sup> century translation by Lapidus, The British Library Collection.

Divine Emanation, any practice that is undertaken at this level will eventually bear fruit and come to harvest. For the Work to be completed, the rousing of the Dragon will also need to occur in the three Worlds Below in Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah. As the arousal is achieved in each World, the corresponding levels of bliss increase. The final practice given (see chapter 16) indicates how to attune the castle golem to the energies of the World of Briah. Briah, being the spiritual world, the level of the Higher Self and the mental sheath, like Atziluth is also relatively “safe” to operate in, as likewise it is embryonic in most individuals. Therefore, the Work can only benefit and accelerate evolution. Practitioners who use common sense (which, in truth, is uncommon) and who are sincere in aspiration and truthful in life will receive from the Great Companions, or from a physically incarnate adept sent by them, the necessary teachings to implement the practice in the Lower Worlds. Then will God send you a Master and the completion of the Great Work will be in sight.

It is in the astral world of Yetzirah that the major potential pitfalls lie, because the astral is well-developed in all incarnate people. This being so, at this level in the Work, there are far more “corrections” that need to be made, more obstructions for the Fiery Power to incinerate and integrate. Ideally, this level should only be undertaken under direct tuition and oversight by an incarnate teacher of the Art. This consideration aside, what is *indispensable* to work the Art in *Yetzirah* is a “Lover for the Work” (Key VI). This requirement has probably led to more misconceptions and false teachings than any other in the entire arcanum of the Mysteries. So we need to clear the decks (*tabula rasa*) and understand clearly what is actually meant. It is only to remedy this host of abuses that this teaching is now imparted.

### ***The Mudra***

Practitioners of Vajrayana call the “Lover for the Work” a *mudra*. Mudra has several meanings. It is probably best known by Westerners as a ritual hand gesture, but it also has meanings such as symbol or seal. The Mahamudra of Ati-Yoga means the “great seal,” the great gesture or symbol, being the paradoxical realization that Samsara, the illusion of separateness, is rooted in Nirvana. Or to put it into Qabalistic terminology, that the Lord and his temple (Creation) are One. But a mudra is also a being, human or otherwise, who assists the yogi, yogini, or alchemist to make the final integrations, to achieve the sacred marriage, the hierogamos. For a true adept needs to be a self-polarized being.

This alchemical practice has been taken out of context because the reasons for it are unknown to nonpractitioners and has given rise to all the nonsense taught under various guises: “working partners,” “soul mates,” and other distortions. Sorcery is fond of aping the Art, and ignorance drags everything down to its own level.

In Vajrayana, there are two classes of mudra: *karma mudras* and *dharma mudras*. A karma mudra is a physical consort, while a dharma mudra is a nonphysical one. In those Tibetan traditions that advocate celibacy (particularly the Gelugpa), gurus advocate the need for a physical karma mudra, for a monk or nun who has followed a celibate lifestyle needs to acquire direct knowledge of physically expressed sexuality in order to gain certain relevant insights. Those Tibetan practitioners who have trained without the observance of celibacy will tend toward a dharma mudra, a subtle consort. In fact, only mediocre practitioners utilize a karma mudra, while a dharma mudra engages with accomplished practitioners. As a realized yogi is reported to have said, “What need have I of an outer consort, who am married to the Inner goddess?” And the Dakini Yeshe-Tsogyal (Mudra of Guru Rimpoché) declared of this sacred union (Tibetan, *yab-yum*), “Our nectars merged as a single elixir . . . self and other dissolving in radiant awareness. . . . Innate bliss arising as the utter openness of the Great Expanse.”<sup>3</sup>

Alchemy calls a female mudra a *Soror Mystica*—a Mystical Sister—and a male mudra a *Frater Mysteriorum*—a Brother to the Mysteries. For male practitioners, this subtle focus is precipitated as an inner figure of the *Soror* (Sanskrit, *Dakini*), who, as Wisdom, personifies non-selfhood (*Nairatmya*), far more to be desired than any outer partner. “She” thus absorbs all the individual’s desires which normally flow outward and refocuses them inward and upward. Sexual union arouses all the physical body’s senses and the subtle body’s inner elements, so activating the solar and lunar energies that flow through the body’s inner mandala, its subtle counterpart. The male *frater* (Sanskrit, *heruka*) performs the corresponding function for female practitioners. In advanced stages of practice, neither man nor woman needs an outer partner, for each has generated his or her own inner partner, gathered in and condensed from their own bodily world-projecting faculties. When dealing with a subtle dharma mudra, the apparent gender of the mudra is irrelevant; it may or

<sup>3</sup> From *The Supreme Nectar-Elixir Dialogue of the Medicine Buddha*, an unpublished Tibetan text.

may not coincide with the practitioner's personal sexual orientation. However, at this level of operation, practitioners should be experienced enough to know that "gender," with regard to Inner-Plane beings, is merely a metaphor for classifications of energy. If this causes deep psychological unease, then the practitioner is not yet accomplished enough in the Inner Worlds to effectively proceed with this level of practice. Unity is unity. In *The Perfect Discourse*, part of the *Hermetica*, Asclepius—a disciple of Hermes-Trismegistos—asks, "You say then that God possesses both sexes?" To which the Thrice-Great replies, "Yes, Asclepius, and not only God, but all living beings."<sup>4</sup>

Union with these inner partners—the other halves of our true creative selves—produces blissful experience (*Sahaja*) far more intense than any possible physical delight. Very few practitioners indeed are able to gain this region, or succeed in realizing and absorbing its stupendous energies. If they do, they may go on to reach a realm of the ultimate Reality, towering over the summit of the subtle body—the habitation of the Supreme Principle—totally and blissfully united with the supreme Wisdom, Chokmah. The vision attributed to the second Sefhira is "The vision of God, face to face." Those who succeed enter the Void, the thrice-radiant darkness of Ain. For such an advanced Practitioner (an "apprentice Sage" in fact) the visualizations become redundant as the direct union of Bliss and Wisdom occurs. As the relative and the absolute are super-consciously united, Ain, the No-thing, is experienced as the indescribable, ineffable and supreme Bliss.

The whole purpose of the "Lover for the Work" is not to engage in sexual relations, but to enable practitioners to exteriorize the subtle body. There are two methods by which this is done. One way is by focusing the practitioner's emotional and sexual desire, in an act of transference, onto the object of desire (the physical or subtle mudra). The desire being frustrated upon the physical level, if great enough, will cause the physical and inner bodies to separate. The second means is to engage the imagination to such a degree that consciousness separates, almost incidentally and unnoticed (at first), from its physical sheath. This second method has been the *modus operandi* of the practices in this book—hence their detailed visualizations and emotional triggers. Of

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<sup>4</sup> Hermes-Trismegistus, "The Perfect Discourse," in Randy P. Conner, David Hatfield Sparks, and Mariya Sparks, *Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit* (London: Cassell, 1997), p. 177.

the two methods, the second way is superior, since it places the act of separation, and reintegration, firmly under the control of the practitioner. Gareth Knight in his commentaries on *The Circuit of Force*, mentions Dion Fortune as writing of this essential key to the Art: "For the production of Alchemical results such as the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone . . . the *spiritual* help of a woman was needed by the male Alchemist. But woe to the Alchemist who should take this in the dead-letter sense of *physical* union."<sup>5</sup>

Dion Fortune's occult novel, *Moon Magic*, makes the real function of the *soror mystica* abundantly clear. In this novel, the main character, a priestess of Black Isis, is training a man for the Work. It also becomes clear in the novel (since the author makes us privy to the priestess' motivations and thoughts) what the exact relationship is—that it is undertaken for the Great Work alone, not a substitute for emotional or sexual relations. We read therein the precise stages through which the mudra (the servant of Black Isis) puts the apprentice-practitioner and the teachings she imparts to him.

I also taught Malcolm mystical Alchemy, which is the Yoga of the West. I taught him how to pick up the forces from the earth center and draw them up the spine. These form the basis of all that follows. Only those who can do this can do magic. We in the West work with a tree; in the East they work with flowers [lotuses], but it is the same thing.<sup>6</sup>

During the final ceremony in *Moon Magic*, the following occurs:

They had exchanged places now, and she was in the west and he in the east. . . . As he came into the east, the place of the priest, a change came over him; it seemed as if the different levels of his consciousness all came into focus together, and were united, so that the past lived again in his soul and the future came into view; he was the sacerdotal outcast he had been, and the great adept he would be, and the adept was built upon the outcast. . . .

<sup>5</sup> Dion Fortune, *The Circuit of Force*, Gareth Knight, ed. (Loughborough, Leicestershire, UK: Thoth, 1998), p. 231.

<sup>6</sup> Dion Fortune, *Moon Magic* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1978), p. 197.

The room had faded from his sight and he was in the cave of Black Isis. . . .

Then, on the plane of earth, she saw the etheric double of the man project from his physical form and stand before her, face to face; it drew nearer, she felt its silvery coldness, it began to coalesce with her. It was made one with her, absorbed. In the vision which they shared they hung in high space among the stars. It was as if she had mounted up on powerful wings, drawing the man with her like the nuptial flight of bees.<sup>7</sup>

The following quote is from the final page of *Moon Magic*. My reason for drawing upon it is to make quite clear that these techniques are, and have always been, as much a part of the Western Mystery tradition as they are of the Eastern Esoteric tradition:

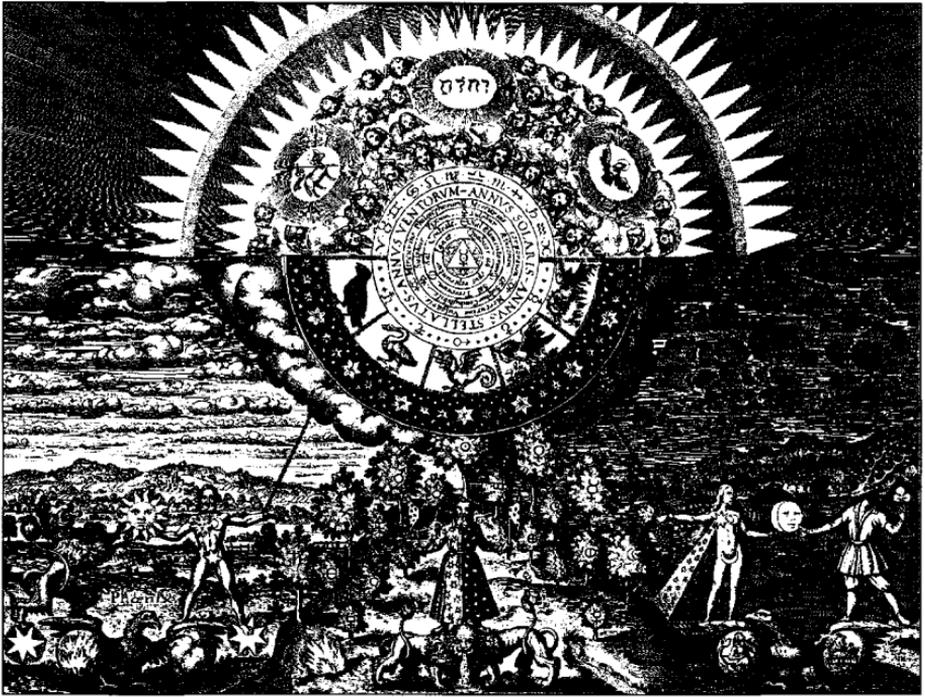
The world of dreams and the wake-world met on that threshold, and he knew now the secret of passing over. For in the great moments of life we cross the threshold in a kind of trance that has been described by those who have known it as a lesser death—when St. Theresa swooned in the Divine Union, when Keats first looked into Chapman's Homer . . . they knew that lesser death and its illuminations. Whoso has never experienced this flux of the soul in some transcendent experience lacks the key to Life.<sup>8</sup>

### ***The Lordly Ones***

To engage in the work of arousing the Dragon at the astral level of Yetzirah requires the assistance of a *soror mystica* or a *frater mysterium*. These mudras or consorts are subtle-plane initiators, and equate to the *dakinis* and *herukas* of Vajrayana. Inner-plane consorts are used by practitioners of advanced ability and outer-plane consorts are utilized by practitioners of mediocre ability. In Hindu Tantra, these consorts are termed Shakti (passive) and Shakta (positive) and are personified by *Mahadeva*, the Great Goddess, and by the third aspect of Trimurti (the Hindu Trinity), *Shiva*, the Lord of Yogis, who equates to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity as the Transformer. Remember that planetary kundalini originates in the laboratory of the Holy Spirit. The outpouring

<sup>7</sup> Dion Fortune, *Moon Magic*, pp. 228-230.

<sup>8</sup> Dion Fortune, *Moon Magic*, p. 241.



The great circle unites the astral level of Yetzirah with the spiritual realm of Briah. In the center of the circle—the triangle bearing the planetary symbol of Mercury—shines the Philosophers' Stone as the axis of the Wheel of Existence. The five birds in the lower arc relate to the planetary interior metals, the chakras. The raven is lead, Saturn; the swan is tin, Jupiter; the rooster is iron, Mars; the pelican is copper, Venus and the phoenix is the quicksilver of Mercury. The symbols in the wheel's upper arc are those of the Transcendent (represented by the Tetragrammaton), the Messiah (the Lamb), the *Ruach-Hakodesh* (the dove of the Holy Spirit), and the angelic hosts. The forest below is a symbol of the physical condition and each tree bears a symbol of one of the stages in the alchemical process. The solar king and lunar queen are shown as being bound (united) to the Stone, while the stag represents the psyche and the lion the *Nefesh*, the Vital Soul of embodiment. Beneath the wheel, standing upon a double lion, is the alchemical Sage. He holds an axe in each hand to show that he has cut through the illusion of appearances. His star-studded robe is divided into light and dark to indicate that in his person the Sage has wedded the stellar forces of the macrocosm with the microcosmic "interior stars," the chakras of his own body. *Hermetic Museum*, 1678.

of planetary kundalini is channeled through mountains, called of old the "Fountains of Hecate." Mount Kailas (Mt. Meru, in Sanskrit) in Tibet is regarded in oriental metaphysics as the axis of the world. This most holy of mountains, shaped like a skull, is regarded by Hindus as the throne of Shiva and by Tibetan Buddhists as the center of the physical mandala of Demchog, the "Highest Bliss."

The Western equivalent of the dakinis and dakas are the Elves of Light. These beings are not nature spirits—which are purely etheric—but entities that dwell upon the etheric and astral levels of Yetzirah. However, not any elf will do; only the "royal" ones are suitable. When the medieval magical grimoires were written (both celestial and infernal), the spirits were classified according to the social rungs of European society in the Middle Ages. So we read of princes, dukes, lords, etc., as well as of their female equivalents. These ranks or classifications are not arbitrary; they refer to levels of attainment among those beings. For example, the elemental spirits of the four elements—sylphs, salamanders, undines, and gnomes—are ruled by their kings. These four kings (Paralda, Djin, Nixsa, and Ghob) are *not* elemental spirits at all. They are of the celestial choir of the Malakhim, the angels of Tiphareth. This is because, as with the four worlds of the Qabalah, each upper world is the "ruling power" of the lower world. So Briah is passive to Atziluth, but positive to Yetzirah, while Yetzirah is passive to Briah, but positive to Assiah. And Atziluth and Assiah, which at first appear to be of one polarity, are in fact dual. Atziluth, although positive to Briah, is passive to the Unmanifest, to Ain. And even Assiah, although passive to all three upper worlds, is, *in a certain fashion*, positive toward Ain, in the sense that the Radiant Energy flowing through all the worlds passes through the Malkuth of Malkuths to return *back* into the No-thing. In the same way, beings of higher realms are the "rulers" of those entities upon the inferior levels. The elven beings, the hosts of faerie, are comprised predominantly of the subtle elements of fire and air, which belong to the force aspect of the Tree—fire being unconditioned force and air being conditioned force. (Water is unconditioned form and earth is conditioned form.) But the elven "kings" and "queens" are, like the dakas and dakinis of Vajrayana, dwellers in Akasha, *within the Quintessence itself*. This is why they are teachers, initiators, and initiatrixes upon the inner planes.

It is well known in Tibetan initiatic circles that certain very eminent gurus—for example, Garab-Dorje, who implemented Dzogchen on the earth plane and Padmasambhava himself—have instructed the dakinis

and dakas (the dwellers in Akasha) in the Dharma and in the secret aspects of the Tantras. Throughout the centuries, the dakinis (the royal elven folk) have often been the repositories of hidden esoteric teachings (*termas*) and the personal initiators of certain yogis—the Mahasiddha Naropa, for example. As mentioned before, many of the Mahasiddhas attained physical translation into the paradise of the Dakinis (in Qabalah, the “Upper Eden,” where Yetzirah interfaces with Briah, in other words where soul and spirit fuse and unite).

In the Lesser Mysteries of the Western Esoteric schools, this has, on the whole, been forgotten. A contributing factor to this loss was a fear, implanted by the medieval church, regarding the “fair folk.” In the Arthurian mythos, any being who is described as having a two-world heritage—the Archmage Merlin, for example—is being “flagged up” as a bearer of such teaching energy. Obviously, a wise practitioner will exercise great caution before accepting *any* being as a “Lover for the Work”; for the ordinary denizens of Faerie, the Elves, or even the High Elves (the *Lios-Alfar*), have not attained to this level of unfoldment, but *only* the Royal Elves themselves—awesome beings in their own right—are suitable as Mudras for the Great Work. Nevertheless, although great caution needs to be exercised, the Practitioner by now will have enough communication with those who know (the Great Companions, for instance) who will be able to vouch for such a being and to give the necessary signs that indicate that such a union is willed by heaven.

Fiona MacLeod writes of the Tuatha de Danaan, the Sidhe, or High Elves of Ireland in his poem, “The Dirge of the Four Cities,” and about their places of convocation, set at the four corners of the world. The following extract holds much concerning the wisdom held of the royal Rulers of the Lordly Ones:

Four cities there were, Finias, Murias, Gorias, and Falias, the four cities at the four ends of the green diamond that is the earth. . . . In the middle of the green diamond that is the world is the Glen of Precious Stones. It is in the shape of a heart and glows like a ruby, though all stones and gems are there. It is there that the Sidhe go to refresh their deathless life.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Fiona MacLeod, “The Dirge of the Four Cities,” in *Poems and Dramas* (London: Heinemann, 1993), p. 47.

***The Dragon's Treasure***

When a rose in the chest of every man and woman flowers,  
then we shall see as we did in the Beginning.

*Alchemy: The Art of Transformation*

—Jay Ramsay<sup>10</sup>

Part of the fruitage of Kundalini Yoga, which occurs long before the Great Work itself is fully completed, is that the *siddhis* (the so-called magical powers that unfold as the soul develops) are retained after physical death and into subsequent incarnations. There is enough evidence of this among Tibetan tulkus for us not to labor the point. This phenomenon occurs so that Practitioners may, under the right circumstances, quickly assimilate their previous knowledge and skills and so recommence with their progress in the Work. These siddhi manifest during childhood, then close, to a degree, during puberty, when the Serpent Power actively stirs in the physical body, and re-emerge again in adulthood.

The benefits of Alchemical practice are that you can directly see the results of their skillful arousal of the awesome power of the Dragon; for when working with high-frequency energy, changes occur on all levels. It is not a matter for faith, it is a matter of direct experience; you just do the practices and get the results. Among the results practitioners will experience are: the unfoldment of latent siddhis (the awakening of dormant psychic faculties); the sensitizing and enhancement of the emotions; the tremendous increase of the physical body's capacity to experience bliss and that consciousness itself is liberated from the shackles of appearance and so can enter into exalted states of awareness at will.

It is well to be reminded that you have all eternity in which to complete the Great Work. "Make haste slowly." But this does not mean that you have to wait forever. Care and diligence may well result in your completing the Work in this incarnation. Or you may achieve a good enough start that you can carry on the Work, in full consciousness, after you have laid aside your current physical body. In such an instance, you will complete the sacred and royal Art in the Inner Worlds, crowning your labors with the ability to project a physical body into incarnation, without having to pass through the gate of birth.

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<sup>10</sup>Jay Ramsay, *Alchemy: The Art of Transformation* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 163.

When the Great Work is completed, you become a member of that small, but ever-growing, company of the fully illumined Sages. These Enlightened Ones, seeing beyond the Veil of Appearances, know, above all things, that they are One. They are living embodiments of compassion (bodhisattvas), centers for that abiding love, which arises from the realization of the unity of all beings. Having found, and resting in, the Light, the Sages enter at will into that Darkness that is beyond even the Light, the great bliss of the Uncreated. From Infinity, into the No-Thing, the Sage is immersed within the secret place of the Most High. Then the ultimate transfiguration occurs, and one of the many becomes the All.

### THE CONTEMPLATION

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves: "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

—Nelson Mandela<sup>11</sup>

### VALEDICTION

And now, Fellow-Practitioner, I bid you farewell, beseeching upon you the Divine's profound Peace. May He, the Most Holy and Omnipotent Master of our Art, crown all your labors with His perfecting Shalom. Amen.

Your brother in the Work,  
David Goddard

*May it be auspicious.*

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<sup>11</sup>From Mandela's inaugural speech as President of the Republic of South Africa in Johannesburg, May 10, 1994.



APPENDIX I

# COLORS AND KEYS

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## *Colors of the Sephiroth in the Four Worlds*

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*Atziluth—The World of Emanation and the level of inherent Divinity—King Color Scale*

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Kether: Incandescence  
Chokmah: Azure blue  
Binah: Crimson  
Chesed: Violet  
Geburah: Orange

Tiphareth: Rose pink  
Netzah: Amber  
Hod: Violet-purple  
Yesod: Indigo  
Malkuth: Gold-yellow

---

*Briah—The Cosmic World and the level of the Spirit (Higher-Self)—Queen Color Scale*

---

Kether: White brilliance  
Chokmah: Gray  
Binah: Black  
Chesed: Blue  
Geburah: Scarlet

Tiphareth: Gold-yellow  
Netzah: Green  
Hod: Orange  
Yesod: Violet  
Malkuth: Citrine, olive, russet  
and black

---

*Yetzirah—The Astral World and the level of the soul (psyche)—Knight Color Scale*

---

Kether: White brilliance  
Chokmah: Bluish mother-of-pearl  
Binah: Dark brown  
Chesed: Deep purple  
Geburah: Bright scarlet

Tiphareth: Rich salmon  
Netzah: Bright yellow-green  
Hod: Russet-red  
Yesod: Very dark purple  
Malkuth: Citrine, olive, russet  
and black flecked with  
gold dancing motes.

---

*Assiah—The World of Action and the level of the Body—Page Color Scale*

---

Kether: White flecked with gold-dancing-motes

Chokmah: White flecked with blue, red, and gold-dancing-motes

Binah: Gray flecked with blue, red, and gold-dancing-motes

Chesed: Deep azure flecked with gold-dancing-motes

Geburah: Red flecked with gold-dancing-motes

Tiphareth: Golden amber

Netzah: Olive flecked with gold-dancing-motes

Hod: Yellow-brown flecked with white-dancing-motes

Yesod: Citrine flecked with azure-dancing-motes

Malkuth: Black penetrated by rays of gold light

***Esoteric Titles of the Major Tarot Keys and their Path Colors***

- 0 — Aleph: The Spirit of Ether (Akasha); Pale-yellow
- 1 — Beth: The Magus of Power; Yellow
- 2 — Gimel: The Priestess of the Silver Star; Blue
- 3 — Daleth: Daughter of the Mighty Ones; Green
- 4 — Heh: Son of the Morning, Chief among the Mighty; Red
- 5 — Vav: Magus of the Eternal Gods; Red-orange
- 6 — Zain: Children of the Voice Divine, the Oracles of the Mighty Gods;  
Orange
- 7 — Cheth: Child of the Power of the Waters, Lord of the Triumph of Light;  
Orange-yellow
- 8 — Teth: Daughter of the Flaming Sword, Leader of the Lion; Yellow
- 9 — Yod: The Magus of the Voice of Light, The Prophet of the Gods;  
Green with gold motes
- 10 — Kaph: The Lord of the Forces of Life; Violet
- 11 — Lamed: Daughter of the Lord of Truth, The Holder of the Balances;  
Green
- 12 — Mem: The Spirit of the Mighty Waters; Blue
- 13 — Nun: The Child of the Great Transformers, Lord of the Gates of  
Death; Blue-green (turquoise)
- 14 — Samekh: Daughter of the Reconcilers, the Bringer Forth of Life;  
Blue
- 15 — Ayin: Lord of the Gates of Matter, Child of the Forces of Time; Blue-  
violet (indigo)
- 16 — Peh: Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty; Red
- 17 — Tzaddi: Daughter of the Firmament, Dweller between the Waters;  
Violet
- 18 — Qoph: Ruler of Flux and Reflux, Child of the Sons of the Mighty;  
Violet-red
- 19 — Resh: Lord of the Fire of the World; Orange
- 20 — Shin: The Spirit of the Primal Fire; Red
- 21 — Tav: The Great One of the Night of Time; Blue-violet (indigo)



# AN ALCHEMICAL PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

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The following prayer comes from the Christian alchemical tradition and is an invocation of Divine blessing upon the labor. It is addressed to the three Persons of the Trinity. The transcendent Father being the essence of Eternity and the SELF-of-the-Self (*Yechidah*), God the Son (*Adam-Qadmon*) being identity and the indwelling human Soul (*Ruach*), and the Holy Spirit being the Body and its powers (*Nefesh* and *Guph*). For when our own Spirit, Soul, and Body reflect the indivisible union of the Trinity, then the Great Work is complete and we shall enter into the Jubilee of the Great Sabbath.

## **The Oration**

*Oh Holy and Hallowed Trinity, cause me to sink into the abyss of Thy limitless, eternal Fire, for only in that can the mortal nature of man be changed into humble dust, while the new Body of the Salt-Union lies in the Light.*

*Oh melt me and transmute me in this Thy holy Fire, so that on the day at Thy command the Fiery Waters of the Holy Spirit draw me out from the dark dust, giving new birth and making me alive with His breath.*

*May I also be exalted though the humble humility of Thy Son, rising through his assistance out of the dust and ashes and changing into a pure spiritual body of Rainbow colours, like unto the transparent, crystal-like, paradisaical Gold, that my own nature may be redeemed and purified.*

*Diffuse me in the Waters of Life as though I were in the wine-cellar of the eternal Solomon. Here the Fire of Thy love will receive new fuel and will blaze forth so that no streams can extinguish it. Through the aid of this Divine Fire, may I in the end be found worthy to be called into the Illumination of the Righteous.*

*May I then be sealed up with the light of the New World that I may also attain unto the Immortality and Glory where there shall no more be alternation of Light and Darkness.* —Amen

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<sup>1</sup> This oration appears in Jeremy Catto, *Alchemy: The Art of Knowing* (London: Aquarian, 1994), pp. 52-55. The prayer has been translated from the Old German.



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David Goddard is a lineage-holder of the Western Esoteric Tradition. He was trained in the Qabalah, the Hermetic Arts, and the Celtic-Wisdom of Britain by various Elders and groups. David teaches around the world, frequently giving workshops in the United States. He is the founder of The Pharos, an international School of the Soul, and is also the author of *The Sacred Magic of the Angels* (Weiser, 1996). Details of David's teaching schedule and information about The Pharos can be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to:

The Pharos

P.O. Box 9245, London NW10 5WG, England

You can also visit his website at:

[www.davidgoddard.com](http://www.davidgoddard.com).

