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Mental and Spiritual Alchemy

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Mental and Spiritual Alchemy

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The Science which we know as Alchemy dates back to the most remote antiquity. In fact, it was one of the first arts to be evolved by the early Egyptian priestcraft. The priests maintained that this science was given to men during the reign of the God-Kings previous to the reign of the first mortal Pharaoh of the then quadruple Egyptian empire. The forty-two books of the gods delivered by the immortal Hermes were carried in processions through the streets. A special group of priests were entrusted with the alchemical and Hermetic volumes, which they protected with their lives, revealing the contents of the volumes only to a limited number of specially prepared candidates and initiates.

It is not improbable that the Egyptian wisdom came from the Brahmins of India, for the sacred Vedas of India are divided into various groups in a manner similar to the sacred books of Hermes. Even the early Christians had a great respect for the wisdom of Hermes, one of them going so far as to state that Hermes knew nearly all of the secrets of Christian theology. In that famous Hermetic fragment, "The Virgin of the World", Isis, describing to her son, Horus, the mysteries of the spiritual universe and the wonders of the first creation, makes the following statement concerning the thrice-great Hermes:

"Now, my wondrous child Horus, all this would not happen among mortals, for as yet they did not exist; but it took place in the universal Soul in sympathy with the mysteries of heaven. This was Hermes, the kosmic thought. He beheld the universe of things, and having seen, he understood, and having understood, he had the power to manifest and to reveal. That which he thought, he wrote; that which he wrote, he in great part concealed, wisely silent and speaking by terms, so that while the world should last, these things might be sought. And thus, having enjoined upon the gods, his brethren, that they should follow in his train, he ascended to the stars."

There is no doubt that the ancient Egyptian civilization had a magnificent comprehension of the mysteries of life. Their culture was of a highly philosophic nature. They encouraged learning and thus developed a host of philosophers who, delving into the mysteries of Nature, unveiled the universal Isis. The priests of Chaldea and Phoenicia are supposed to have discovered an herb, by drinking the juice of which they were able to rejuvenate their bodies and perpetuate themselves for a thousand years. There is no doubt that Hermes understood how to make precious stones, for his famous emerald was a man-made gem. This stone was seen among the crown jewels of the

Egyptian Pharaohs by early Greek travelers. Hermes was also able to change metals so that he could make gold into silver or silver into gold.

An old and rare volume, the "Turba Philosophorum", reputed to be the earliest tract in existence concerning the mysteries of alchemy, demonstrates the fact that the Egyptian, Arabian and Syrian mystics were thoroughly acquainted with the processes of transmutation and metallic regeneration. The sacred process inscribed upon the leaves of Hermes' sacred tree in fourteenfold, as follows: The steps are: solution, filtration, evaporation, distillation, separation, rectification, calcination, commixation, putrefaction, inhibition, fermentation, fixation, multiplication, and projection. While these terms presumably refer to chemical processes to be carried on in a laboratory with specially prepared utensils, the true alchemy of the ancients was a spiritual process within the nature of man. Each individual was both an experimental chemist and the elements experimented with. Man's spirit was symbolized by an alchemist, who, hidden away in the darkness of his ignorance, was seeking to work out the mysterious process by which he could transmute base metals into gold. The base metals represented his own lower nature with his animal propensities, while the gold was symbolic of a spiritual nature. The process of changing the base metal into gold was a secret process of human regeneration. Few there were who discovered the true secret of alchemy and realized that the fine gold and precious stones which they were supposed to make were characteristics and traits which they were to evolve within themselves. Man's own body was the alchemical laboratory. His organs were the furnace and retorts, and his vital energies were the chemicals with which he was to work.

The secret of human regeneration is still concealed within the ancient tracts and time-worn volumes. Today, as yesterday, the world is looking for the elixir of life, but it laughs at the ancient alchemists and ridicules their knowledge, failing to realize that the spring of eternal life which Ponce de Leon sought in Florida, springs up within the nature and constitution of every human creature.

The process of controlling the spiritual powers and physical forces of the human body was taught by the ancient philosophers under a series of mystic symbols and allegories. The disciple was told to ponder deeply upon the mysteries, and if his heart was pure and his mind properly developed, the true light would dawn upon him and a voice within himself would explain the emblematic figures which concealed the sacred truths.

In the Middle Ages there were two types of minds studying alchemy. The first, and smaller group was composed of earnest and sincere seekers after divine light. These had no desire to make diamonds or rubies, nor to transmute physical metals. Their quest was for spiritual things. Their great desire was to

transmute their own ignorance into a wisdom with which they could serve intelligently the needs of their fellow creatures.

The second and much larger group was composed of those who pursued the quest of alchemy for power and personal gain. They liked to have others believe that they were great philosophers, hence they wore long gowns and went about reciting unintelligible gibberish and seeking to appear learned and impressive. There is no doubt that in some cases they achieved the end of actually transmuting metallic silver, lead, and sulphur into gold by means of a mysterious powder which was called "red lion". This latter group did not realize that the "red lion" of true spiritual alchemy was the human will-power, by means of which all base things are transmuted through courage and perseverance.

From both of these groups of alchemists and pseudo-alchemists there issued voluminous writings, some to the point and others away from it. In some cases those who wrote knew their subject and in other cases they had no glimmering of it. The pseudo-alchemists were the most prolific in their literary endeavors. Their works are weighty, involved, and to a superficial reader, intensely erudite; but after spending much time in their study and consideration it dawns upon the student that the authors merely used a ponderous vocabulary to conceal their own ignorance.

The truly great alchemical books are few in number and in most cases are small volumes. Many of them are anonymous and most of the remainder were published under fictitious names. Probably one of the greatest of all true alchemical writers was Eugenius Philalethes, whose rare volumes are at high premium during this age. One little tract of ninety pages is worth from \$25 to \$50.

Probably the greatest of all alchemical schools was that of the Rosicrucians. All of their principles were concealed under alchemical terminology. The most famous of their manifestos, "The Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosencreutz", is an alchemical allegory, concealing certain processes of regeneration which the disciples of the order were expected to apply to their own natures.

The alchemical secrets were preserved with great care for many generations. Prior to its partial destruction and later restoration, the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris had the entire formula of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of eternal life carved around its doorways. Many other churches both in France and England were inscribed with a similar series of hieroglyphics. The alchemist Nicholar Flammel caused a series of mysterious hieroglyphic figures to be painted upon an arch in St. Innocent's churchyard in Paris. These also concealed alchemical formulae, especially that of the philosopher's stone.

The symbols of alchemy are chiefly of Egyptian origin, though to a certain degree they have been modified and in some cases amplified by later concepts and reconstructed doctrines. While the alchemical truths have been concealed within endless involvements, the doctrines of alchemy are comparatively simple. In fact, they are so simple that the average person overlooks them because of an innate belief that he should view them in a complicated manner. Many things in life are so simple that we overlook them. Great truths are always simple; involvements are proof of an absence of information or else a premeditated plan of concealment. Nearly all of the great alchemical truths are concealed in diagrammatic symbols, in which the planetary hieroglyphics and mysterious mythological creatures are jumbled together in apparently hopeless confusion.

In the museums of Europe are numerous scrolls covered with magical figures and old parchment tomes illuminated with many-colored patterns. By means of these the great truths of alchemy are preserved and at the same time concealed from those of profane mind who would abuse power if they could possess it. Many people who are harmless in their ignorance would become the enemies of the human race if they could secure control over natural resources, for unless man builds a sense of responsibility and a realization of the principles of right and wrong, he cannot be entrusted with authority, nor can he stand a little dignity without abusing it. It was for this reason that in the ancient mystery schools, candidates were put through years of probationship before the wisdom of the temple was entrusted to them.

Let us now consider the fundamental principles of alchemy according to the tracts and documents of the Rosicrucian and illuminati schools.

Alchemy was devoted to the attainment of one or more of three particular ends. The first was the discovery of a mysterious substance to be used for the tincturing of base metals. By means of this substance base metals could be transmuted into precious metals. To the ancients, gold was the most precious of metals. Therefore, the highest art was the manufacture of gold.

The second end to be attained by alchemy was the discovery of the elixir of life, a peculiar and mysterious liquid, a few drops of which would transform the body and perpetuate it in eternal youth. Those who discovered this precious elixir - the Balm of Gilead promised in the Scriptures - were no longer dependent upon ordinary foods. They were believed to live without depending upon the process of assimilation as we understand it, and by taking a few drops of this quintessence every year or so were capable of perpetuating themselves indefinitely.

The third quest of the alchemists was the power of manufacturing diamonds and other precious stones. In order to attain this, it was necessary to use a furnace and create a tremendous heat. Certain substances when placed in this furnace could be transformed into precious stones. A process of forming synthetic diamonds and rubies is known at this time, but those produced by the alchemists were regarded as being equal in value and perfection to the natural product. Certain of the secret orders have as their symbol a diamond with a drop of blood in it. How this stone was made is still a mystery, for it is a diamond by every known test.

These three achievements were considered to be the ultimate in alchemy. Few attained them all. In fact, only a limited number ever secured complete results in any one of the processes. The alchemist never solved his problem unless his striving brought him recognition from one of a small group who actually possessed these secrets.

It appears that the Arabians were specially proficient in the alchemical arts, for many of the greatest alchemists secured their secrets either by visiting Arabia or from some philosopher who had been there. Among the Jewish Quabbalists, there were also a number who were highly proficient in the alchemical art.

The medieval alchemists declared that the Holy Scriptures were books devoted to spiritual chemistry and they chose symbols from Holy Writ to conceal nearly all of their secrets. They maintained that King Solomon possessed what was called the great arcanum, of the complete knowledge of alchemical philosophy, and that he concealed the entire mystery in his Canticles (The Song of Solomon). An example of this method of using Biblical terms to conceal chemical formulae is the story of the Garden Eden. The alchemists taught that the Garden of Eden was nothing more than the chemical earth in its primitive state, containing the germs of potentiality. Therefore, if you pick up a handful of natural earth you have the Garden of Eden in your hand. This may be a trifle disappointing to that great group of Bibliologists who have sought to locate it geographically in almost every nation, continent, and island of the earth.

The three aspirations of the alchemist - the transmutation of metals, the discovery of the universal medicine, and the making of the diamond - are symbolic terms beneath which they concealed the three steps of alchemical philosophy. The lowest of the three was the transmutation of metals and the highest the making of a diamond. Between those two was the formulation of the universal elixir. The transmutation referred to the reforming of the physical body. The making of the universal medicine was symbolic of soul growth, while

the hardening of the diamond in the fire signified the attainment of spiritual perfection.

The alchemists divided the nature of man into three essential parts: spirit, soul, and body. These they declared to be, in reality, only three manifestations of one principle. In the same way they divided the elements of the philosopher's stone into three parts - salt, mercury, and sulphur; and these in turn they declared to be only three parts of one divine element - spiritual sulphur. Man's physical body they symbolized by salt and the element of earth, because crystallization is a power which acts over both of these natures equally. Man's intellectual and soul nature they symbolized by mercury. Mercury has two natures: divine mercury and human mercury. In the same way, man's mind has two spheres of activity. His spiritual mind is creative, idealistic and synthetic. His material and earthy mind is destructive, animalistic, and analytic. These are opposites one to the other. In every case the lower must be transmuted into the higher if spirituality is to result.

Man's highest divine principle - his spirit - was symbolized by sulphur, because sulphur is closely allied to fire, whereas mercury more nearly resembles water. In fact, the philosophers called mercury "the living water", here again using Biblical terminology. Whoever can adjust his life so that his physical nature, his intellectual nature, and his spiritual nature cooperate one with the other, resulting in a harmonious, unified personality, has achieved proficiency in the ancient science of alchemy, for alchemy is the chemistry of human life and the chemistry of body, faculty, and function as these react upon each other.

Philosophy is a masculine element; intuition is feminine. With intuition, the alchemist cannot attain his ends. Therefore he must woo intuition. In alchemy, intuition is symbolized by the moon, while philosophy and reason are symbolized by the sun. Hence one of the first steps in alchemy is the marriage of the sun and moon, or the union of logical and intuitional intellects. These are most often symbolized by an androgynous figure, one side of the figure masculine and the other feminine; often with two heads, male and female. The male head is surrounded with the solar nimbus, while the female head is surrounded with the lunar halo. Intuition and reason are also called silver and gold.

The reason why alchemy is symbolized by an androgynous figure is the same which inspired the Hindus to form their deity with a partly masculine and partly feminine body. This indicates that fine blending of qualities necessary to the attainment of wisdom. Wisdom is unattainable save to that creature who has blended all opposites within itself. Christians are too prone to refer to God as masculine by always speaking of God with the pronouns "Him" or "He". The Hindus, on the other hand, at least certain castes of them, emphasize the

Mother-God, using the pronouns "She" and "Her". Some refer to God as The Father because He is the cause of life; others refer to God as The Mother because She gives birth to all things out of Herself.

Alchemy teaches that the spirit of man is androgynous. It would not be proper to say that it is neither of the two; rather it should be considered as being both of them in one. The law of polarity makes it necessary for man to function in one or other of the two at the present time, but eventually, occultism tells us man will have two spinal columns and his consciousness shall be, like the two-headed God of the alchemists, a perfect blending of the masculine qualities of courage, determination, and philosophic intellect with the feminine qualities of sympathy, endurance, and intuitional foresight. All nature cooperates toward the abolition of extremes and the glorification of equipoised bodies and temperaments. All extremes are equally dangerous. There is no virtue which, when overworked, cannot be made a vice. A man was once asked what his religion was and he replied: "I am a moderationist."

Our next step is to consider the three ingredients of the philosopher's stone - the body, the spirit, and the mind - as separate units.

The body of man has been defined as a tail-end appendage of consciousness. To most people, the physical form is the most apparent and least important of all man's chain of vehicles. One of the ancient philosophies taught that God made the physical world as a mirror that He might look into it and reflect upon His own appearance. Man's physical body is a mirror in which his real and invisible self is reflected. The physical form is merely clay animated by the thing which dwells within it. Moved and propelled by invisible energy, sustained by invisible forces, and directed in its activity by an invisible power which man calls "thought".

Thought controls the form by means of its medium, the nervous system, and the nervous system in return communicates to thought the results of the body's relationship to external co-existing things. This body is the salt of alchemy. It is the base metal which must be transmuted. The process of transmuting the body is called regeneration, or refinement. The bodies of all things are not equally responsive nor are all parts of the physical body of man of one state of refinement. The entire vehicle must be rounded up and its weak points strengthened. After this has been attained, a slow etherealizing of the substances which compose the body begins. Gradually the dense physical atoms are sloughed off and their places are taken by finer particles moving at higher rates of vibration. The result is that the vehicle becomes ever less dense until finally in the distant future beyond our appreciation at this moment the physical body of man will gradually change until it reaches

the consistency of nebulous gas. Finally these particles will be sloughed off and man's physical form will then be of the consistency of ether.

The physical life chain of seven root races (of which we are in the fifth) is the only chain of activity through which man will pass in the physical organism. When the next great life period begins, man will function in a vehicle composed entirely of ether. During the ages of that period he will gradually refine the ether, breaking up its particles and raising their rates of vibration until gradually he will lift himself and his lowest organism into the vibratory rates of what we call the astral world. Thus he will continue until at the end of the universal scheme he will have raised the vibratory rates of his body atoms until every one of them has become a spiritual essence. These will then form a spiritual gold and the alchemy of transmutation will be complete. This, however, is still far in the future and all that alchemy expects of man today is that he shall devote a reasonable amount of his time and energy to the refinement of the lower vehicles, seeking to increase their efficiency and building ever closer nerve relationship with the parts and members of his lower organism.

Normal function physically can result only from a normal adjustment of the bodies to their environments. Nature is producing ever finer and higher environments, thus compelling men to eternally readjust himself. These adjustments man calls growth. He grows to escape the unpleasantness and discomfort of maladjustment. In this way each creature is built by the environment which is evolving about him. No child in school wishes to be the most ignorant in his class. In many cases he learns his lessons not because he desires to know but because he does not want his friends to recognize his ignorance. It is much the same in life. Many people learn how to live not because they really want to know, but because they do not wish other people to recognize the fact that they do not know. In the last analysis one end is gained and that end is growth. Nature insists on growth.

Notwithstanding all our efforts in the opposite direction, we cannot help growing, nor can we help being alchemists in one way or another. Some people grow by a roundabout process. Whether actions be constructive or destructive, they result in growth. If the action be constructive, the growth is direct; if the action be destructive, the growth is indirect, but the lamentable reactions of destructive action are warnings which mankind cannot fail to heed. Therefore indirect growth comes through suffering.

In occultism, the physical body, being the mirror of the spiritual nature, is carefully considered. There is what mystics call "The Measure of a Man". Every proportion of the human body was deeply and thoroughly considered by the ancient philosophers, for they realized that relative perfection or imperfection

was manifested through the symmetry or lack of symmetry in the proportions of the human body. A person's position in evolution can be definitely determined by comparing his height to the spread of his arms. Every housewife knows that in buying stockings they can be measured on the hand with perfect exactitude. A comparison between the length of the second and third phalanges of the thumb, counting from the palm of the hand outward, and the space between the base of the nose and chin also gives figures of great value to the individual who knows how to interpret them. There is a complete language in body measurements. A few artists as the result of studying human anatomy have chanced upon some of those measurements, but even they are not aware of the real meaning of them.

In certain of the mystery schools a chart is made of tiny squares drawn to scale. This chart is so large that a person standing against it is entirely within the area of the tiny squares. The lines of different parts of the body are then measured by means of a peculiar instrument, and the position of the individual in evolution can be gleaned from these measurements by an occult system of geometry. This does not mean that an individual must necessarily be tall or short, stout or thin. It is proportion based upon the relationship of one part of the body to another, and has nothing to do with comparing one individual's size or structure with any other individual. Not only is the consciousness reflected into the entire structure, but it is also reflected into each separate organ and organism of the structure.

Every mystic knows that the blood is the vehicle of consciousness. Hence it is not strange that the blood should be a complete key to the nature and consciousness of the individual. The blood, when crystallizing, forms minute patterns which may be read intelligently by those who understand the subject. No two person's blood crystallizes in the same geometric pattern, but as every ray of force is symbolic of a state of consciousness and everything in the universe consists primarily of a state of consciousness, the wise may discover the consciousness of God reflected in every atom of the Universe. Every grain of sand mirrors the ocean. Every man mirrors the universe and every universe mirrors the absolute. The Magi of Persia carried mirrors in their hands to symbolize creation, which mirrored the nature of the uncreated. Such then is the nature of alchemical salt, which is itself the salt of sulphur, or the crystallization of spirit. Every crystal of salt symbolizes a divine soul.

Every physical form, which is in reality a composite crystal, symbolizes a divine nature which, concealed within the midst of it, awaits the liberation of "art". It is said that life is short and art is long. Art was the name given by the alchemists to the process of breaking up the crystals of life and liberating from them the spiritual germ of reality. In other words, it was the process

whereby the cube block within which man lay buried was made into a pedestal upon which he was elevated by a process called transmutation.

From the reflection let us turn to the thing which is reflected and which the alchemists called sulphur. It has been customary since the beginning of time to use fire as a symbol of the spirit of man, for fire is ever in motion. It is radiant, it is heat-giving, and it communicates itself to things about it. All these things made it an especially fitting symbol for the divine nature which is imprisoned within the salt of the earth. Alchemy taught that sulphur was the base of all chemicals and that all other elements existed within sulphur. By this they desired it to be understood that earth and hell are within heaven; that mind, soul and body are merely expressions of spirit, and that man and the universe exist within the nature and of the nature of God.

The spiritual nature of man was symbolized by the lodestone which communicated its powers to things about itself, and the highest attainment of alchemical art was the making of the philosopher's stone, the manufacturing of a diamond. The diamond is symbolic of the spiritual nature because as the diamond reflects the light of the sun so the spiritual nature reflects the light of Divinity. As the diamond must be cut and faceted, so the spiritual nature of man must be trued with sharp tools before its glory is revealed. As the diamond is found in the depths of the dark earth, even in the heart of coal, so the spiritual nature is found in the darkness of ignorance and degeneracy. As the philosopher's stone must be fired in a great heat, so the spiritual nature of man must pass through the flames of suffering before the individual can be truly great. The great work of the world is done by men and women with broken hearts, for it is not until after his heart is broken that man will think, and it is not until man will think that he will be great. After a great sorrow the heart is softened. Man is more willing to forgive and to excuse. He is more considerate. His own pain makes him more merciful, for he knows what it is to meet reverse and unkindness.

Sorrow always does one of two things: it either deepens the nature or else it rots the nature. Every great mind of the world has been either made or broken by some great sorrow. Oftentimes they are secret sorrows which the world never knows about, but when you see a man or a woman who is great in the highest and truest sense of the word, that greatness is a monument to sorrow.

So the fire of alchemy in the great laboratory of life makes the stone of the wise man. Life is a great laboratory, and things coming together and parting again are like chemicals seething in retorts under the blue-violet flame of the Bunsen burner. People meet and part again and chemical experiments may be seen on every street corner and in every home. Two meet and each supplements the other, and a new and better element is the product thereof.

Two others meet and there is a seething in the retort. Each destroys the other and ash alone remains. There is a great chemistry in temperaments, in likes and dislikes, and the greatest art of all is the study of the chemistry of human relationships. Endless masses of living things work out their destiny in racks and shelves of glass-stoppered bottles. A great office building with its numberless rooms is not unlike a chemist's closet, for up above each other in endless tiers are the ingredients for countless experiments.

The true alchemist realizes that around him is his textbook and no matter how poor he may be he is never without the chemicals he needs. The pseudo-Alchemist who wrote in one of his books that every student of alchemy should buy ten thousand dollars worth of paraphernalia revealed all his ignorance in a single sentence, for the penniless beggar has a hundred million dollars worth of alchemical supplies within his grasp at all times. It is not man's possessions that make him wise. His wisdom is shown by the use he makes of the things he has. Wisdom is the proper use and the appreciation of that endless supply and opportunity with which man is surrounded from the time when he comes into the world until he leaves it. In the majority of cases however, he does not recognize or appreciate this fact until the hair is white upon his temples.

As a link between the salt of matter and the sulphur of spirit stands the immortal mercury, the mediator and the solvent of alchemy. Mercury is closely allied with the symbol of the elixir of eternal life and the molten sea of Quabbalistic Masonry. Mercury is the power of thought. It is the mind separating man from the beast. How grateful the human creature should be that he has a mind, and yet how careless is he of his thoughts! Man is universally careless of that which he cannot see and careful of that which is visible. As the result of that he hoards up chaff and lets the kernel go.

To think is to live, in the human sense of the word. Not to think is to exist, in the bestial sense of the word. If man could by not thinking merely become an animal, it would not be so bad. But when man becomes an animal he is lower than any beast. The mind is symbolized by the phoenix, the bird which rises again and again triumphant from its own ashes. The plane of mind is a focal point between spirit and matter. Mind is the mysterious androgynous creature partaking of the masculine nature of Divinity and the feminine nature of humanity. In the world of mind, light and darkness meet. Consciousness and unconsciousness meet. Mind is the mercury or quicksilver of the Latins and the Hermes of the Greeks and Egyptians. He is the Lord of the writing tablet, Nebo and Bel.

Man has three distinct mental aspects. He has a creative mind, which is idealistic, and he has a concrete imitative mind, which entirely lacks the element of originality. He also has a rational intelligence, which links these

two together. He has a conscious mind symbolic of his humanity, he has a super-conscious mind symbolic of his Divinity, and a subconscious mind reminiscent of his animal consciousness.

The mind is divided into many parts, each of which is capable of seeing life differently. An intelligent thought can result only from the harmonious adjustment of a great number of mental areas of activity. While phrenology is scoffed at as a pseudo science, certain of its principles, at least, are absolutely true. Man's brain is a composite of more than forty separate brains, each one capable of conveying an impression, but each one unbalanced and insufficient by itself. The report of any one or two of these centers results in serious misconceptions. Narrow-mindedness is nothing more nor less than the fault of not having sufficient number of centers of consciousness trained to the point where they can convey their varying impressions to the center of consciousness.

The mind being the highest of man's bodies, is naturally the one in which the spirit should take up its dwelling. Hence the consciousness controls the body through the mental nature. It thus occupies the middle ground, for the spirit must always be in the center of whatever organism it controls. Man could evolve much more rapidly than he does if he would consider each part of himself as a separate individual and educate each separately.

The child going to school trains only the concrete intellect, or more correctly the subconscious temperament, for as the mental nature is not actually born into the individual until he reaches the age of majority, the mind is not actually capable of going to school until after the twenty-first year. Many an individual who has graduated with honors from every study in his school curriculum and who believes himself to be sufficiently educated for all needs has never actually learned to think. He should pack up his slate and school books and send his mind to school just as consciously as he trudged there himself in the years gone by. The mind does not pick up an education. It must be taught how to reason about the problems of life.

A person may have a great deal of information and not have a mind capable of extracting from that information the truly important points. A trained mind is one that profits from observing every activity of life, and no individual has a well-trained mind who cannot see in everything that happens around him some important lesson that will assist him to solve the problem of his own destiny. Every person should ask himself the question not once but a hundred times a day as he watches the panorama of life played out before him, "What does this mean to me, and how will it assist me to live better and to solve more intelligently the problems which confront me and those who are dependent upon me?" If a person will do this he will realize why the alchemists

called the mind mercury, for he will know how his own intellect accepts into itself the precious thoughts and experiences of other creatures, building with those experiences a deeper understanding in his own nature. It would not be a mistake to call the mental memory nature of man the molten sea, for as this sea contained the quintessence of all life in a transparent, glasslike liquid, so this memory nature contains within itself the life essence of those experiences which we have been through and which are the basis of our soul power.

The word soul comes from the Greek psyche and its symbol was a beautiful maiden with the wings of a butterfly. The butterfly was accepted as its symbol because the soul passes through three stages. Physical, mental, and spiritual regeneration are gathered together under the heading of soul sciences. The three stages of the butterfly are the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the regenerated winged moth. The caterpillar is the symbol of salt, the butterfly of sulphur, and the chrysalis (or intermediate stage) symbolizes mercury. The unregenerated man is the caterpillar. In order to solve the problem of his life, he enters into meditation, which is the chrysalis stage, during which time the holy men of India retreat to their caves to remain in darkness working out the mystery of their destiny. At last victorious the holy man comes out of his cave regenerated and spiritualized by his meditations. He has made for himself a pair of wings which are called intuition and reason, and with these pinions the newborn butterfly sails upward to the source of light. The allegory is a very fitting one indeed.

The body of man is called a city in the Book of Revelation, and the spirit of man is the ruler of the city. The spirit of man is called the Lamb, for the Lamb is indeed the Son of God, even as the spirit of man is a spark from the Universal Spirit. And the Lamb of God is slain for the sin of the world, for the city of the Lamb is controlled by the powers of evil, or man's lower nature, and the kingdom of man's lower nature is called Babylon and the spirit of evil rules in the city of Babylon. The spirit in order to save its city from the powers of evil sends into the city the spirit of wisdom, that the city may know who its king really is. Wisdom regenerates and transmutes the city, which is the body of man, and through the soul powers which man gains the city becomes adorned as a bride. In the great day of attainment the city is married to the Lamb. By this it is to be understood that man's lower nature is finally united to his higher nature in the great day "be with us". Like the fabled lion of Judah, the spirit of man reaches down its hand into the mortality of its own nature and seeks to raise its own bodies by the strong grip of its paw. The spirit of wisdom speaking to the truth which lies latent in the soul of man, cries out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," but few there are who hear the voice or understand the meaning of its words.

During the long centuries of the Middle Ages the alchemists labored in the depths of their caves and cellars, trying to solve the mystery of human destiny. They gathered a few faithful ones around them, communicating to those who had prepared themselves the beautiful mystery which to the profane could never be understood. The alchemists did not waste their time on gold and silver, but labored for that gold and silver of spiritual truth which was far more precious than the treasures of the earth. In a day when they were denied the privilege of speech and representation in the world, they hid themselves, but labored on, for man will die rather than give up his quest for truth. We should revere their words and regard their symbols well, for they are truer than we know. We should seek to build within or own natures that tree of the soul which, having its roots in our spiritual nature and its branches in our earthy nature, bears upon itself twelve manners of fruits, for this is the number of perfect fruitage. When the soul of man bears twelve manners of fruits, then he is wise. These are the twelve jewels of the breastplate and the twelve fellow craftsmen who are sent forth into the world to search for the murdered builder of the Mason allegory.

Today we have many seekers after truth, but only a few of them are practical. Most of them are seeking, like the pseudo-chemist, for the formulas of precious metals and an elixir of eternal youth. The pseudo-seekers do not realize that when all is said and done Truth is the Balm of Gilead and Love the world's panacea. They do not realize that those who have found wisdom can never grow old, for though they be born and die a thousand times, they are in the light. Wisdom knows no death, while ignorance knows no life. Immortal is the man who has found himself, for he has found within the midst of himself a spark of eternal life which is birthless and deathless. Those who have in their own bodies responsive implements, well-sharpened tools, and normal function are wealthy beyond the comprehension of kings. Thus it is in securing a happy, normal viewpoint of life and seeking to live it closer to the plan of Being each day, the alchemist has all things which any man may truly possess, for he knows the reason of his being and the purpose of his life. He is strong in the realization of ultimate attainment and ultimate unity with that supreme one who is the source and ultimate of all the multitudinous things which exist during the heterogeneity of the day of creation, but which are resolved back into unity again when that day is over.