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THE OPERATIONS OF ALCHEMY

Alchemy for me is not about turning base metals into gold to achieve fortune and fame. The science of alchemy that I practice helps me to become a better human being with an enlightened consciousness and a higher frequency attuned to the natural world around me. I find it to be absolutely essential to understand the workings of the microcosm of the universe that is represented in the laboratory experiments of the alchemist. Once this realization is understood on the microcosmic level of the alchemist's test tube, it can be more readily applied to the macrocosm around you in your everyday life. The Philosopher's Stone I seek is inside me and the alchemy study program has helped me to understand the seven operations needed to reach the next octave of universal frequency.

The first operation of Calcination introduced me to the process of burning away the illusions in life that are feeding the ego. To be able to take a step back from the ego and call it out is a very powerful and scary process. The alchemist must detach from their personality and analyze it, face the illusions that make up who you think you are, burn away the habitual responses, prejudices, and distractions that protect your ego from the cold hard reality that is the world. Like a phoenix rising from the flames, the purified true self is released from the fires of calcination. Calcination is a powerfully humbling experience that should not be taken lightly. Introspection and self-evaluation can sometimes be painful but it is a vital step in the process of breaking free from the manipulation and illusion of the ego.

The second operation of Dissolution helps the alchemist to free the emotions that are suppressed by the ego. Dissolution is associated with the element of water because of the way the emotions flow like the advancing and retreating tides of the ocean. In the alchemist's lab dissolution releases the hidden essences that are contained in the ashes of calcination and brings them to the top. Dissolution is a process that purifies the feelings and emotions. It allows the alchemist to reach the deeper energies that are usually pushed down by the chaotic turbulent energy of the ego. Dissolution requires letting go of repressed thoughts that may be painful or unpleasant, letting thoughts flow freely and watching them pass without judgment like bubbles rising on the water's surface. The result of this process is the release of pent up pathogenic energy that was previously used to hold up a false personality created by the ego.

The third operation is Separation. Separation helps to further separate the essences of the true self that are suspended in the mind from the first two purification processes. Separation is associated with the element of Air. Air is looked upon as the life force or Qi that gives life to the essences of the personality that are the real you, free of ego complexes and restraints of socialized mental programming. In the lab the process of separation takes the murky substance that contains the essences that were released by calcination and dissolution and separates them by further use of heating, layering and filtering the solution. The process of separation helps to isolate the pure essences for further refinement.

That brings us to the fourth operation of Conjunction. The first three steps helped to purify, refine, and separate the essences of the true self. They were represented by the elements of fire, water, and air. Conjunction is represented by the element of Earth. The purpose of conjunction is to recombine the purified essences of the first three steps into a new form of solid matter of a higher

universal frequency or consciousness. Conjunction is looked at as a turning point in which the spirit and soul unite. This unity of spirit and soul (fire and water) react to release a whole new personality that was created from the previous three steps. In alchemy the completion of this process creates the “lessor stone,” but this is an incomplete process because in alchemy for something to be real it must take place on all levels of reality. The work must be continued in the above to complete the cycle of “As above so below.”

The fifth operation is that of Fermentation. Fermentation is the process of death and rebirth, it is the process that helps the alchemist to reach the “Above.” Fermentation in a spiritual sense is a two stage process that begins with putrefaction, just like natural fermentation in the biological world. Like grapes that are used in wine making, the grape is crushed and left to decompose which releases the alcohol or “Spirit” of the grapes. During the decomposing process new life is created in the form of bacteria that grow to digest the rotting matter. To the alchemist this is the decomposition of the soul and everything they thought was their identity. This stage is necessary to reach an enlightened state by which we realize the illusions of our physical existence. As the spirit is released from the process of fermentation, the consciousness is again refined to a higher level. This higher consciousness that is reached through the process of fermentation works to reanimate and reenergize the blackened decomposed soul. Once the fermentation process is complete the alchemist reaches a state of higher consciousness in which their creative abilities and personal awareness known to the alchemists as the “Secret Fire” is released providing a feeling of being much more alive and hopeful with a sense of something much greater in the world.

The sixth operation is that of Distillation. The fermentation process may be overwhelming and cause the alchemist to lose his sense of balance on the material world. The fermentation experience must be distilled in order to gain true insight of the transmutation taking place. In the alchemists laboratory the process of distillation is the repeated boiling and condensing of the fermented solution. The repeated evaporation and condensing of the fermented solution increases its purity and produces a more concentrated form. The Emerald Tablet says of this process, “It rises from earth to heaven then descends again to earth.” Alchemists relate this process as working with Mercury who is the Roman messenger of the gods who possesses the ability to exist on both heaven and earth. Distillation releases the essence or spirit of the substance such as the alcohol of distilled fermented grapes. In alchemy we view this process as the repeated separation and recombination of the various aspects of the personality. Distillation is necessary to ensure that no impurities or imperfections are left over from the ego or submerged id. In a spiritual sense distillation is the purification of the unborn self, all that we are and can be.

The seventh and final operation is Coagulation. A coagulate has no solid form, it is a state between solid and liquid. The coagulated substance is alive but has no solid physical form and can easily move between being a solid or liquid, this substance is known as the “Greater Stone.” In the universe this substance is known as pure light and in the mineral realm it is recognized as pure gold. By bringing together the above and below we create what is known as the Hermes Field. The Hermes Field exists at the junction of the Above and Below. It is this final product that has transcended all previous incarnations to its purist refined state, this is Coagulation. This pure refined state of being can be described as a coming of age or second puberty in our bodies. Alchemists believed that if you couldn't reach the state of Coagulation in this lifetime that you would be reabsorbed or reincarnated into the universe over and over until you finally got it right.

It may take a lifetime to achieve all of the operations that lead me to the Greater Stone, but it feels like a more attainable and realistic goal because of my involvement with the Alchemy Guild. My fellow alchemists help me to stay on the path, to avoid the pitfalls that may present themselves along the way, and to continue with the great work until I reach my goal. Alchemy will not only help me to improve myself mentally and spiritually, but it will also help me to help others. I am working towards my Masters degree in Chinese Medicine and my Doctorate in Bioenergetic and Natural Medicine. What I have learned in my studies of Alchemy will definitely make me a better Herbalist and Doctor. The use of spagyrics and alchemical meditations will help me to fine tune the energy within myself that is needed to heal those that conventional medicine has failed. I look forward to growing and helping to grow my local guild, teaching, learning, and sharing the knowledge that has been held sacred for so many thousands of years. Thank you to the International Guild and all of the past Master Alchemists for preserving the invaluable teachings of Thoth and the Emerald Tablets.