

The First Matter 2

In the preceding lesson you will find the statement: “She is one and three, but at the same time she is four and five.” In this one sentence are several clues to the arcana of Hermetic science.

The First Matter is in itself a perfect unity. Hence the Emerald Tablet says: “All things are from one, by the mediation of one,... all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.” And Kelly declares, “It is a commonly diffused subject.” Similarly, Anastratus (quoted in Lesson 2) says that the matter is one, and contains within itself all that is needed. The same declaration, with some variations of wording, is to be found in the writings of Rosinus, Ripley, and Eliphas Levi.

The First Matter is also three, because it contains within itself the three principles, sulphur, mercury, and salt. These are not three things of which the first matter is *composed*. It is not a composition, but a perfectly homogeneous unity. Rather are the three principles to be understood as being three aspects of the nature of the First Matter, inseparable from it and from each other.

Again, the First Matter is said to be four because it is manifested in the form of the four elements, fire, water, air, and earth. These, as the Book of Tokens tells us, are really subtle or invisible entities, and should not be understood to signify anything which is limited to the physical plane. From the Yoga philosophy we learn that fire is the subtle principle of sight; that water is the subtle principle of taste; that air is the subtle principle of touch; and that earth is the subtle principle of smell. Each principle has also a characteristic property. The property of fire is expansion; that of water is contraction; that of air is locomotion; and that of earth is cohesion. Each principle has also a characteristic taste-quality. Fire is hot; water is astringent, or bitter; air is acid or sour and sharp; earth is sweet. These last should be compared with what Jacob Boehme has to say about a twofold fire, and about bitterness and sharpness. Boehme knew nothing of Yoga philosophy as such, but he had had the same kind of experience which

results from Yoga practice, and the same kind of insight. It is very significant, therefore, that he used alchemical language in all his attempts to explain what he had experienced.

The subtle principles of the Yoga philosophy are sometimes called *ethers*, as in Rama Prasad's book, *Nature's Finer Forces*, where we read that *tejas* (fire) is the luminiferous ether; that *apas* (water) is the gustiferous ether; that *vayu* (air) is the tangiferous ether; and that *prithivi* (earth) is the odoriferous ether.

We do not like this confusing use of the word "ether." In the esoteric teaching, there are said to be subdivisions of the ether, and these are sometimes loosely designated as the first, second, third, and fourth ethers; but the term properly belongs only to what H. P. B. rightly calls the grossest manifestation of Akasha, and Akasha, as shown in Lesson 1, is identical with the alchemical quintessence.

The Hindu name for 'principle' is *Tatva*, sometimes spelled *Tattwa*. Its literal meaning is "reality." This meaning carries a genuine significance. It indicates that the *Tatvas* are not merely hypothetical entities. They have actual being. They are not just human notions or names. They are the real forces which give us our consciousness of sight, and taste, and touch, and smell. From these, and from the fifth principle, out of which they all proceed or are derived, we formulate our whole consciousness of the world around us. We perceive nothing whatever directly. All that we are aware of is the combination of sensations. Not that what we perceive in the world around us is not real. But the reality is not the same as our sensory perceptions. Our world is a synthesis of sensations. The real world cannot be known directly by sensation.

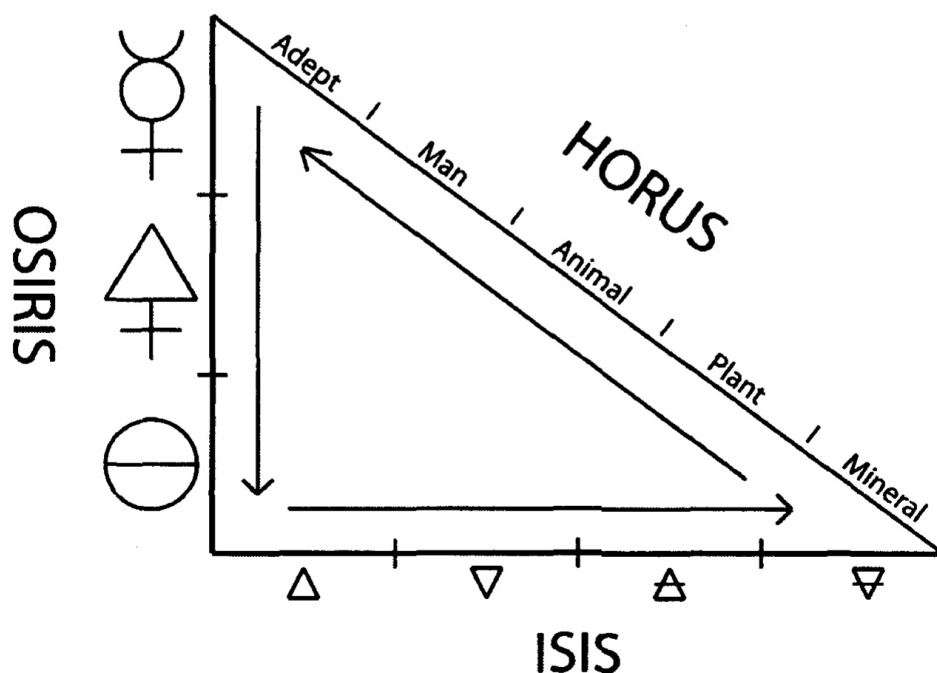
The First Matter is five, because it also includes another principle besides the four whose activities produce in us the ordinary experience of a physical world. In alchemical writings this principle is called the quintessence, and is usually said to be "extracted" from the four elements in the course of the Great Work. This is said because we derive our awareness of the fifth principle from our experience of the operation of the other four. The quintessence, however, is not in itself an extraction from the four other principles. It is not derived from them. They are derived from it.

The Hindu term is Akasha. Akasha is said to have neither touch, taste, color, nor odor. Its fundamental quality is that of space. But here we encounter a difficulty. There is a difference between absolute space, or Akasha, and relative space, such as we ordinarily conceive. The relative space, as Einstein has indicated, is curved and finite. It may not be very exact to say that Akasha, or absolute space, contains relative space, but this is as near as we can come to the truth of the matter, considering the limitations of human speech.

Akasha, moreover, is the subtle principle of sound. It is not the ordinary sound which is carried in waves through the air. It is the original power of vibration. It is the undifferentiated Life-power, the source of all other manifestations of every kind. For this unmanifest reality we can frame no adequate definition. To us it seems to be no-thing, or we find ourselves thinking of it as being perfectly empty space. This is why the sages of India declare that space is the fundamental quality of Akasha. Because space is omnipresent, they also teach that Akasha is all-pervading.

Rama Prasad says: “The Akasha is the most important of all the Tattvas. It must, as a matter of course, precede and follow every change of state on every plane of life. Without this there can be no manifestation or cessation of forms. It is out of Akasha that every form comes and it is in Akasha that every form lives. The Akasha is full of forms in their potential state. It intervenes between every two of the five Tattvas.” Here, by the way, is a hint for Tarot students as to the place of the Fool in the whole series. In the pack of cards, the Fool, comes before the number 1. The power he represents, however, is that which precedes every number, and follows every one. Between every number there is the zero, so that what is understood in the series, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. is really 0, 1, (0), 2, (0), 3, (0), 4, (0), etc. It is also noteworthy that the zero-sign, an oval, is also the Hindu symbol for Akasha.

Many symbols refer to the idea that the First Matter is “one, which is also three, four, and five.” Among them is the Great Pyramid, ONE structure, representing the number THREE by its triangular faces, the number FOUR by its square base, and the number FIVE by its apex and four corners.



The apron worn by Free Masons (which, when properly proportioned, contains the fundamental Pyramid measures) is also a UNITY, representing the number THREE by its triangular flap, the number FOUR by the square shape of the apron itself, and the number FIVE by the five corners of the apron and flap combined. Yet another familiar symbol of the First Matter is the celebrated Pythagorean triangle, sacred to Osiris, Isis, and Horus, having these proportions.

In this triangle the figure itself is the ONE representing the all-pervading First Matter. The descending vertical line of Osiris, the Father, is attributed to the THREE principles, mercury (☿), sulphur (♄), and salt (☾). The horizontal line, attributed to Isis, the Mother, has FOUR units, representing the four elements, fire Δ , water ∇ , air Δ , and earth ∇ . The second line, containing FIVE units, and representing Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, shows the five stages in the development of the Life-power's manifestation. The first stage is that of the mineral. Then comes the plant. After the plant is the animal. Above the animal is the natural man. Above the natural man is the man who has made himself the subject of the Great Work, the man who is adept, master, and magus, the man who completes

the Great Work by becoming one with the Father, even as the line of Horus in this triangle completes itself by arriving at the point whence the line of Osiris descends.

You will remember that in the preceding lesson we discussed the esoteric meaning of the word ABN, *Ehben*, and found that it combines the words AB, Ab, Father, and BN, Ben, Son. We also noticed that the value of the word is 53, and that this is likewise the value of ChMH, Khammaw, poetical Hebrew for “Sun.” We have just seen that the descending line of the Pythagorean triangle is ascribed to Osiris, and the ascending hypotenuse to Horus. Osiris is the Father, and Horus is the Sun. Thus Osiris is AB, and Horus is BN. Both, too, are solar deities. Hence it is interesting to find that the angle formed by the junction of the hypotenuse, or line of the Son, with the vertical line, or line of the Father, is an angle of 53 degrees. This, of course, makes the other angle of the triangle, at the point where the hypotenuse springs upward from the base, or from Isis the Mother, an angle of 37 degrees.

The angular relation of the hypotenuse to the base is always that of 37 degrees, and the angular relation of the same line to the line of Osiris is always 53 degrees, at any given point on the hypotenuse. The relation of the evolving forms of the Life-power to Mother Nature is always the same. The same laws and forces are at work in the stone as in the adept or master. Only the degree of expression is higher in the master than in the mineral. In the stone the direction or impulse of those laws and forces is also the same as it is in the master. All the forces of nature move together toward the perfect union of the Son with the Father, and toward the perfect union, also, of the powers of the Father and the Mother in the manifestation of the Son.

But we must not give too much space to this triangle. It deserves, and will have, a special essay, for all its wonders cannot be compressed into a few paragraphs, or even a few pages. The main point, however, should be clear. The Pythagorean triangle is a summary of the fundamentals of alchemy, showing the descent of Spirit into Nature as the cause of the ascent of consciousness through five great stages, back to perfect identification with the Primal Source.

It may be well, however, to say that we are by no means advancing the opinion that the ancient Egyptians had alchemy in mind when they adopted the Pythagorean triangle as a symbol of their Holy Family. All that we affirm is that there is evidence that this triangle has been used by alchemists to summarize their doctrine, because its mathematical properties are such that it lends itself easily to that purpose.

There are occasional references to this triangle in alchemical books. Again, several esoteric societies have made the alchemical meanings which we have briefly summarized an important part of the occult instruction imparted to their members.

There is abundant evidence that the Pythagorean triangle is a key to much in Rosicrucian symbolism. It is itself a prominent Masonic symbol, and is also clearly related to the most important of Masonic emblems, the white lambskin apron. Besides this, one finds references to it in many ancient rituals of organized Western occultism, always in connection with Hermetic doctrines.

The main point, however, is that its lines and angles do really constitute a remarkable summary of the main points of Hermetic science. We have received our knowledge concerning this fact through the channel of oral tradition, but the fact would still remain if the writers of these pages had been the first to notice it.

When Anastratus, in *The Crowd*, says of the First Matter, "Its birth is in the sand," he is referring to the mineral stage of development represented in the Pythagorean triangle. But to those who remember that one must apply Qabalistic principles to the interpretation of alchemical writings his words convey still more. In Hebrew 'sand' is ChVL, khool, derived from a verbal root meaning "to turn, to twist, to dance." Its significance in relation to sand is easily understood when one thinks how sand whirls and dances as wind passes over it. The same noun also means: 1) a circle, reminding us of the esoteric idea that the circle is the fundamental form of manifestation; 2) a bird, traditionally the phoenix, which is a familiar alchemical term, signifying the fire in the quintessence, and also the physical substance, stone. ChVL, moreover, is the root of the Hebrew proper name Havilah, the land, according to Genesis, "where there is gold."

The numeral value of ChVL, again, is 44, and this is the value of the word DM, Dam, “blood,” and of the name of the eleventh zodiacal sign, DLI, dolee, ‘Aquarius.’ Thus we have a clear indication that the first manifestation of the Matter is in the mineral kingdom, that it is also to be found in blood, and that it has some connection with the esoteric meanings of the zodiacal sign Aquarius. As man uses it, the First Matter is actually a mineral substance, circulating in the blood-stream, and directly connected with the functions of the heart, which is influenced, astrologers tell us, by the sign Aquarius, through reflex action. It might be still more accurate to say that the First Matter is present as a mineral in the blood, in the form of the 12 tissue-salts (and then it would be apparent that the 12 divisions of the Pythagorean triangle might also refer to these 12 salts).

Like the phoenix, the First Matter is incombustible, because its inner nature is the very essence of fire, and this cannot be injured by fire. It is a whirling, circulating essence, that dances through our veins, moves more slowly through the lymphatic vessels, and gyrates rapidly through the entire nervous system. But the main point to bear in mind is that it actually is ready for our use in its mineral forms.

Let us now take up in detail the statements of the Rosicrucian alchemical text quoted in the preceding lesson. The first sentence of this quotation is an allusion to Genesis 27:28: “Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.”

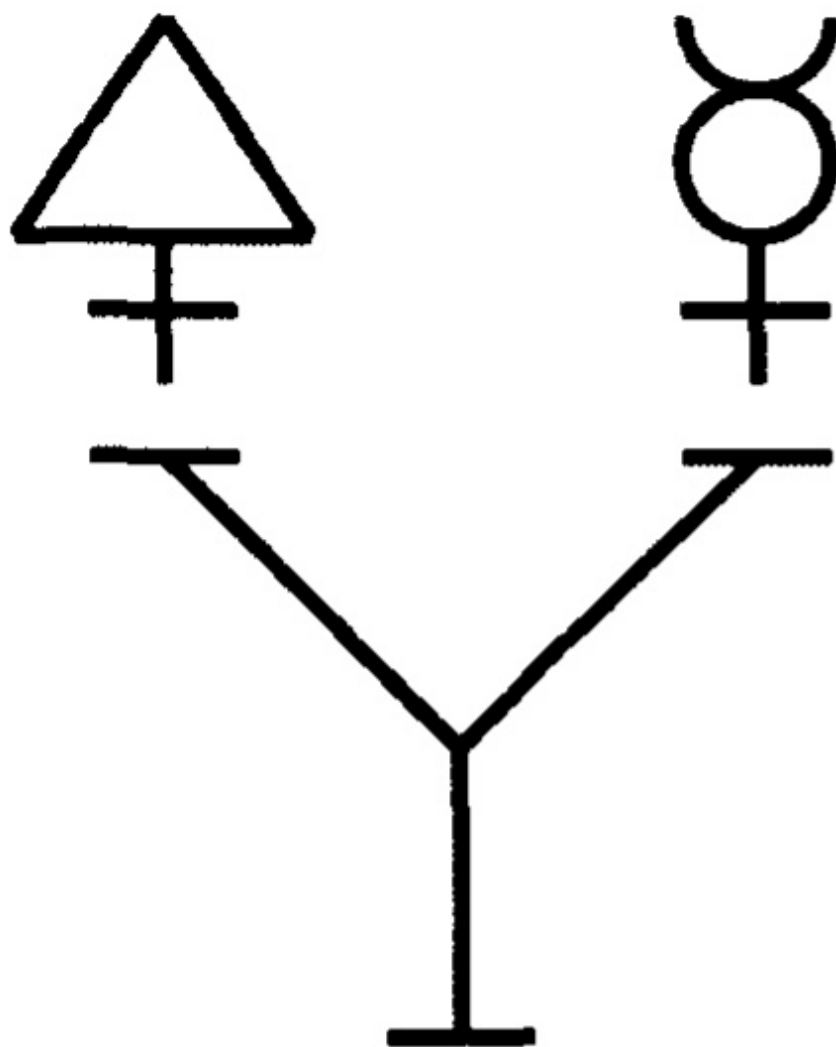
DEW OF HEAVEN. In Hebrew this is TL HShMM, Tal Ha-Shamaim, and its number is 434. This is the number of DLTh, Daleth, the Door, the Hebrew letter which is the sign of the Luminous Intelligence and of the planet Venus, associated with the center at the well of the throat. In this connection remember that more than one alchemist speaks of the First Matter as *Venus*.

The heavenly dew is light. It is identical with electricity. It is granular in structure, so that it actually falls like dew upon the earth, and the weight of its fall may be measured. In the 16th, 18th, and 19th Tarot Keys this dew is shown falling in drops shaped like the letter YOD, or “Y”, and in some of the older exoteric versions of the cards, these drops are blood-red, reminding us that there is a correspondence between ChVL, Sand, and DM, Dam, Blood.

THE OILINESS OF THE EARTH. In Hebrew this is ShMNI HARTz, *Shemeni Ha-Aretz*. Its number is 696. The digits of this add to 21, and 696 is itself the multiplication of the sum of the numbers from 1 to 21 (231) by 3. Qabalistically, therefore, 696 represents the threefold multiplication of the extension of the idea contained in the word AHIH, *Eheyeh*, Existence, the Divine Name attributed to the first aspect of the Life-power, the Primal Will. In other words, for any Qabalist, the number 696 would represent the fullest possible development of actual existence.

The word “oil” in Hebrew is ShMN. Its numeration is 390, also the number of ZKR VNQBH, ‘male and female,’ of ShMIM, ‘heaven,’ and of SPRIM, *Sepharim*, ‘letters.’ The oil (ShMN) is identical with the power of the heavens (ShMIM), is manifested on every plane as male and female (ZKR VNQBH), and is expressed by the vibratory and conscious forces represented by the twenty-two letters (SPRIM). In plain language, the oiliness of the earth is human flesh and blood, male and female, incarnating the invisible but real forces of the heavens, and expressing those forces through the twenty-two modes of intelligence represented by the Keys of Tarot.

NEITHER MINERAL NOR METAL. This seems to contradict some of the other alchemical authorities, but the intention is to show that although the First Matter expresses as minerals and metals, it is not restricted to those forms. It is more than metal, more than mineral. Yet we must remember that because it is heavily veiled in the animal and vegetable forms of its manifestation, the discovery of the First Matter is most easily made by means of meditative contemplation of mineral forms, particularly crystals and stones which have been taken from the depths of the earth or from running water.



THE PYTHAGOREAN “Y.” In the original text from which we have quoted, the “Y” is shown as in the margin. The left-hand branch is surmounted by the alchemical symbol for sulphur, and the right-hand branch by the symbol for mercury. Sulphur is a symbol for fire, and mercury, as a fluid metal, represents alchemical water. These are the “two mercurial substances in one root, fire and water.” The “root” is said to be Y because Y is the Roman letter equivalent to Hebrew Yod, and Yod, as the letter which corresponds to the sign Virgo, represents that in us whence the material

used in the Great Work is derived. According to ancient tradition, the letter “Y” was used by Pythagoras as a symbol of human life, with its two roads, the familiar “right-hand” and “left-hand” paths of occult development.

ISCHSCHAMAIM is one way of rendering a compound Hebrew word combining the nouns ASH, Isch, fire, and ShMIM, Schamaim, heaven. Ash ShMIM has a total numeration of 691. This is the value of the noun ThRVPH, *teroofaw*, a remedy, a medicine. Notice that the digits of this word add to 7, thus hinting at the balanced operation of the seven alchemical metals in the Universal Medicine, or Elixir of Life. 7 is also the number of the letter Zayin, and the letter-name ZIN is the number 67, equivalent to BINH, Binah, Understanding.

Now, in BINH are combined the letters of IH, *Jah*, the Father and BN, *Ben*, the Son. BINH is therefore similar in meaning to ABN. What this means is that the adept’s consciousness, in which the fire of heaven (ASH HMIM) is fully manifested, is a perfect union of the personal mind with the universal. This consciousness is correctly termed the Universal Medicine, because it is a mode of knowing which automatically establishes a condition of wholeness throughout the organism. Adepts have perfect bodily health because they are mentally at one with that which is the directive principle of all physical activity.

Y, EXTRACTED FROM THE SUBSTANCE IN WHICH ALL METALS ARE CONTAINED. Y, as we have said, is the letter Yod. In Qabalah it is also the symbol of the Intelligence of Will. It corresponds to the 9th Tarot Key, The Hermit. There you see the dew of heaven falling from a lantern, which contains as a light-source the hexagram, or six-pointed star, formed from the male, upright triangle of fire, interlaced with the female, inverted triangle of water. The substance from which all metals are extracted is light. Y is said to be extracted from it because the most important work of alchemy has to do with the physiological functions in the part of the body ruled by Virgo. Those functions extract the alchemical materials from the chyle, or Virgin’s Milk, but the force extracted is light-force.

A SALT DEW OF HEAVEN, BUT A METALLIC DEW. A slight current of electricity has a saltish, and a metallic, taste. The heavenly dew is metallic because every metal is made from light. The text goes on to say that this

metallic dew contains all colors. That is to say, it is the pure, white brilliance of the Primal Will. White light contains all colors, and colors, as we shall see, mark the stages of the alchemical process.

COAGULATED BY HERMETIC ART. Coagulation is defined as “the change from a liquid to a thickened, curd-like state, not by evaporation, but by a chemical reaction; as, the spontaneous coagulation of freshly drawn blood; the coagulation of milk by rennet, or acid, and the coagulation of egg albumin by heat; also, the reaction itself, consisting in the change of a soluble substance (usually albuminous) into an insoluble form.’ (Webster).

In Hermetic practice, coagulation is the fixation of the volatile astral light in physical forms, as cells in the human body. Thus the power of the dew of heaven is “turned into earth,” where it becomes an integrating force. The “sweet salt” thus produced is the purified body of the adept, which has actually a sweet savor and odor.

This sweet salt is called *manna* because one spelling of the Hebrew word for “manna” is MNA. The number of this word is 91, or 7 x 13, which suggests the sevenfold manifestation of the One Thing, inasmuch as 13 is the number of the word AChD, Achad, UNITY.

Words corresponding to 91 in Hebrew are AMN, Amen, Faithful; IHVH ADNI, Jehovah Adonai, Jehovah Lord; and MAKL, mahakawl, food, fruit. These correspondences draw attention to the relation between food, on the one hand, and the completeness and perfection suggested by the word “Amen” on the other. This relation is summed up in IHVH ABNI, Jehovah Adonai, ‘That which was, and is, and will be, manifested as the LORD, or ruling power.”

Jehovah Adonai is in one sense represented by the Hermit in Tarot, the Key corresponding to the letter Yod. When the alchemist is faithful (AMN) in perfecting the work of equilibrium whereby food (MAKL) is chemically changed in the body area corresponding to the sign Virgo, his body becomes actually the dwelling-place and vehicle of Jehovah Adonai. It is then that the mighty powers of adeptship are manifested through his organism, which has become an unobstructed channel for the “Intelligence of Will” represented by the letter Yod.

ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER IS THE MOON, etc. This is a quotation from the *Emerald Tablet*. The ‘Sun’ is the same as the solar current of Prana described by the Yogis, and the “Moon” is the cool current of the same force which they name “Rayi.” “Sun” and “Moon” also refer to the two centers of the human body named after these two light-sources. The sun center is the cardiac ganglion; the moon center is the pituitary body. In the body of man these two centers specialize the First Matter for its manifestation through personality. The sun center is that which admits the cosmic fire into the house of personality. The action of the moon center does really bring enlightenment into personal consciousness.

The second paragraph of the Rosicrucian text is very clear. Remember, it refers to the “dew of heaven,” which is light. This we find coagulated into solid forms, and present also in fluidic modes of manifestation. Note particularly what is said in the second sentence of this paragraph, — it falls into the depths of the earth, and its substance is the most subtle and etherial part of the earth.” Few persons, when those words were written, had any idea that certain kinds of light penetrate deep into the earth. Few understood that light itself is the subtle substance out of which all forms are built. Even so recently as 1884, Col. Olcott was severely taken to task by British scientists for asserting that light is the fundamental substance of the physical plane. Today we have the researches of Millikan, whose work has revealed the presence of cosmic rays whose penetrating power requires the employment of thick shields of lead in order to intercept them. Alchemists will not be slow to grasp what is meant by the fact that this particular metal seems to be the one which is required to stop the passage of the cosmic rays.

COLORS OF WHITE, YELLOW, GREEN, RED, AND BLACK. Compare this with Jacob Boehme, who says: “These are the colours wherein all things lie: blue, red, green and yellow. The fifth, white, belongs to God; and yet has also its lustre in Nature. In the fifth essence, a pure unblemished child; as is to be seen in gold and silver, and in a white clear stone that resists fire. For fire is the proof or trial of all the colours, in which none subsists but white, the same being a reflection of God’s Majesty. The black colour belongs not to the mystery of the wonders of creation, but is the veil or the darkness wherein all things lie.”

— *Mysterium Pansophicum*

Color is important in Hermetic science, and is one of the great arcana in all occultism. Until very recently, practically all published color-scales have been full of “blinds,” because knowledge of color is truly magical. The Rosicrucian text we are studying is no exception. The blind it employs is the substitution of black for deep indigo-blue. Boehme’s “blind” consists in the use of “blue”, without indicating the darkness of the shade.

The colors are the same as those given in the Hindu systems, where they are attributed to the Tattvas. Following the color-names of our text, the correspondences are: WHITE, the Apas Tattva, or Water (the commonest name for the First Matter); YELLOW, the Prithivi Tattva, or Earth; GREEN, the Vayu Tattva (really a greenish-blue); RED, the Tejas Tattva, Fire; BLACK, a blind for deep-indigo, the Akasha Tattva, or Quintessence.

Another attribution of colors comes from the color-scale we have learned to associate with the Hebrew letters and Tarot Keys. According to that scale, WHITE is the color of undifferentiated light. Yellow is Mercury, represented by the Magician. Green is the color of Venus, corresponding to the Empress. Red is that of Mars, typified by the Tower. Black (really deep indigo) is the color of Saturn, represented by The World.

These color correlations are very complex, and are really a field of occult study to which years of study might be devoted. For the purpose of this commentary however, and for the practical work to be undertaken in this course of lessons, the two attributions here given will suffice. To avoid confusion, remember that the first, or Tattvic attribution, applies particularly to the five subtle principles of sensation from which we construct our world-picture.

CORPOREAL TO THE EXTERNAL EYE. This is to be taken at face value. The First Matter does appear to human eyes as bodies. No matter what we look at, we are seeing a form of manifestation of the Prima Materia; but the differences in the appearances of these bodies hide from us the fact that they are presentations of a single essential reality.

MINERS IN THE MOUNTAINS. Students of Hermetic science, who are engaged in the alchemical work of interior contemplation. Thus what they see is contrasted to what appears to the external eye. To them the First Matter appears to be thick, watery, and dripping. In other words, interior

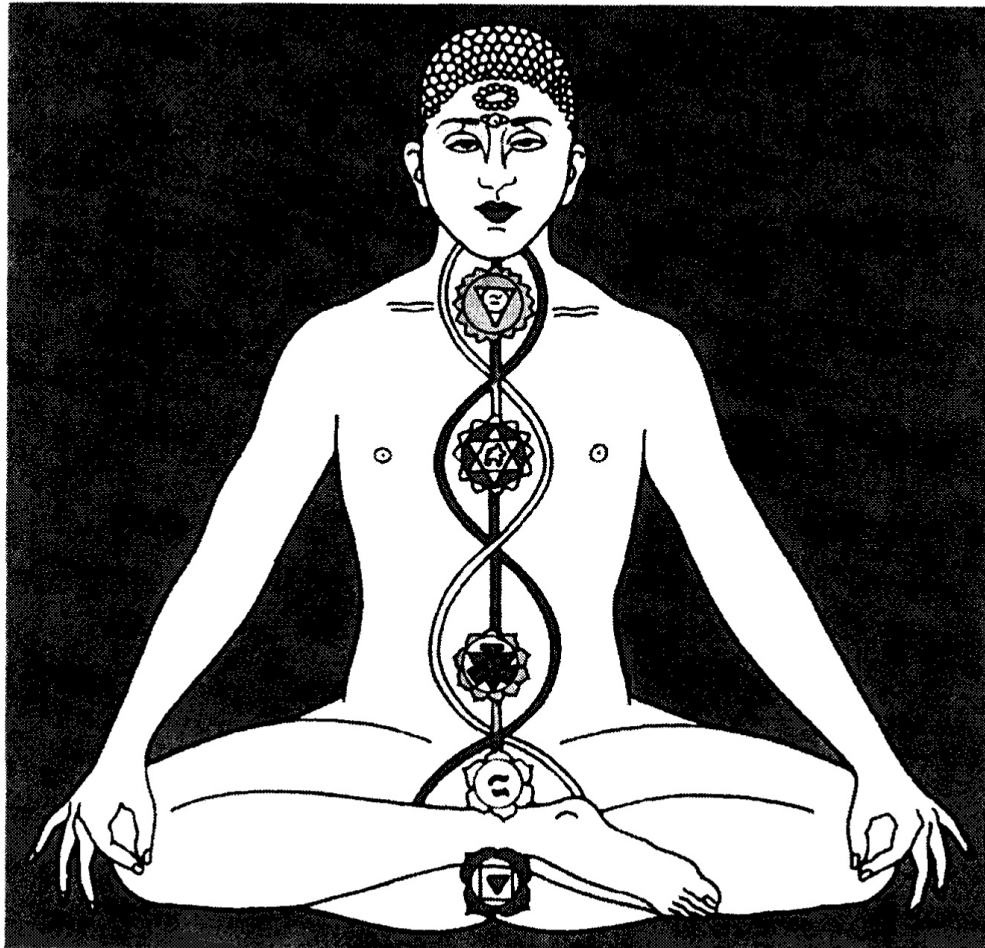
contemplation is not pure abstraction, or formless, at the stage represented by “mining.” The miners are perfecting the activity of the inner sensorium, and they perceive the First Matter phenomenally. Thus we read that it “appears” to them. These interior, subjective appearances are just as real, just as valid, for scientific purposes, as the exterior, objective appearances of the physical plane. To this inner sight and touch the First Matter is a thickish, slow-moving fluid, having a tendency to form itself into globules or drops.

THE BEST DEW. The use of the superlative indicates the highest manifestation of the “dew” or light. It refers to the coagulation of the Matter as an amber-colored prism in the pineal gland. This prism is made by the fusing of the granules of “brain-sand,” and the fusion is effected by a current of energy, or light, passing through that organ. When this prism is produced it is an actual physical stone. It may be ground to powder. It is the Transparent Jewel of the Yogis – the physical instrument which interrupts and enables us to utilize the high-tension vibrations of the astral light.

THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH of the text reiterates what we have found in other alchemical writers. It emphasizes the omnipresence of the First Matter, and goes on to make clear a point which is often overlooked by students of alchemy. The First Matter is known by the whole world. Otherwise it could not be held in contempt and rejected. What remains undiscovered by most people is its wonderful potency. It is like the sparks which fly from a cat’s fur in the dark. Who, a hundred years ago, would have believed that the force thus manifested could change the face of the world, make possible instantaneous communication, give us automobiles and airplanes, enable Lindbergh to fly to Paris and Byrd to cross both poles, and multiply the actions and words of men through the agency of the radio and the talking-picture? In like manner, the First Matter is present in everything, and some of its manifestations have led alchemists to the discovery of its hidden potencies. But the world at large would and does find the alchemical doctrine laughable.

TWO BRANCHES, WHITE AND RED. These are said to spring from the one root, “Y,” because the development of the energy of the First Matter within the human organism is actually rooted, as we have seen, in the assimilative functions of the intestinal tract, governed by the sign Virgo, attributed to Yod.

Plate 1 in Arthur Avalon's book, *The Serpent Power*, (drawn by a Hindu artist), shows a Yogi sitting in meditation. From the Saturn center at the base of the spine, rises the central line termed the Sushumna by the Yogis. On either side are shown the rising currents called Ida and Pingala. They cross each other, and remind us of the serpents on the caduceus of Hermes.



Our crude copy of this plate does scant justice to the original, but serves to bring out the detail just mentioned. In our copy the black ascending spiral represents the red of the original. The two similar but contrasting lines, like the serpents of the caduceus and like the pillars in the Tarot Key of the High Priestess, relate to the positive and negative currents of the life-force in the body, the cool, white, lunar current (Raya, or the alchemical moon), and the hot, red, solar current (Prana, or the alchemical sun).

The references to the rose of Jericho and the lily of the Valley of Jehoshaphat involve a very complicated piece of Qabalism, too intricate, we believe, to be included here. But it may be said that the root of the name Jericho is a Hebrew word that means “moon,” while that of Jehoshaphat has definite correspondences with the sun. Note that the red rose is associated with Jericho, or the moon, and the white lily with Jehoshaphat, or the sun. Here is an intimation that there is an interplay of apparently opposing forces.

Compare the symbolism of this paragraph with that of the lilies and roses in the garden of the Magician in Tarot. The fundamental meaning is the same. Note also that the substance is said to *grow*, thus clearly indicating that it is a living substance.

THE FIFTH PARAGRAPH indicates certain dangers. Even those who know enough to seek the First Matter by looking within sometimes handle it clumsily. They “break” it by wrong forms of practice which cause “short circuits” in its flow. Ignorant workmen torture it by all sorts of silly attempts to force its natural growth too rapidly. The true artist, note well, is the passive, quiet *observer* of its influence, or inflowing. He is patient enough to wait until it is ripe, when he can gather it in its full perfection.

The Coagulated Blood of the Red Lion.

This is the lion of the 8th Tarot Key. Alchemical books mention three lions—the Green Lion, the Red Lion, and the Old Lion. The Green Lion is the animal nature in its unripe, or natural state, before it has been perfected by the processes of Hermetic art. The Red Lion is the animal nature after it has been modified and brought under control. The Green Lion becomes the Red Lion by confection with animated Mercury, say the alchemists, meaning thereby that the alchemical male or sun (the solar energy which is the actual force at work in all human activities on the physical plane) has been mixed with thought-force, called animated Mercury. In other words, the Red Lion represents the forces of the physical organism after they have been combined with what is represented by the Magician in the Tarot.

The blood of the Red Lion is actually human blood, as we are repeatedly informed by the alchemists. It is chemically different from ordinary blood. It is more highly energized, and contains subtle elements not present in

ordinary blood. These elements are introduced at two points: 1) at the point of assimilation, where the substances in the chyle, or Virgin's Milk, are introduced into the bloodstream through the action of the lacteals in the small intestine; 2) in the lungs, where the blood is aerated, and where the subtle elements of the atmosphere are combined with those taken from the Virgin's Milk. Unless the subtle elements derived from food are in the blood-stream as it passes through the lungs, the other subtle elements derived from air cannot be added. For the latter will not combine with the blood unless it contains the substances derived from food.

What are those subtle elements? Various names have been given to them by alchemists, but none of the names are adequate. In time to come, they may be recognized by exoteric chemistry, and they will then be given names which will serve to identify them. Names, however, are not important. The point is that by the processes of Hermetic art we may avail ourselves of the presence of these subtle elements in food and air. Thus we may coagulate the blood of the Red Lion, and this coagulation is the fixation of these subtle elements in the substance of our brains and nervous systems, so that we become new creatures.

GLUTEN OF THE EAGLE. The Eagle, says A. E. Waite, is a name which "has been applied by the philosophers to their Mercury after sublimation, firstly, on account of its volatility, and, secondly, because even as the eagle devours other birds, so does the Mercury of the Sages destroy, consume, and reduce even gold itself to its first matter."

This Eagle is the symbol of the zodiacal sign Scorpio, after reproductive energy represented by that sign, and by the letter Nun in the Hebrew alphabet, has been sublimated, or raised to its highest potency. The Yogis call the "gluten of the eagle" by the name Ojas, which means literally "the illuminating or bright." Of it Swami Vivekananda writes:

"The Yogis claim that of all the energies that the human body comprises the highest is what they call 'Ojas.' Now this Ojas is stored up in the brain, and the more the Ojas is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong will that man be. This is the action of Ojas. One man may speak beautiful languages and beautiful thoughts, but they do not impress people; another man speaks neither beautiful languages nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. This is the power of Ojas coming out. Every movement coming from him will be powerful.

“Now in all mankind there is more or less of this Ojas stored up. And all the forces that are working in the body, in their highest form, become Ojas. You must remember that it is only a question of transformation. The same force which is working outside, as electricity or magnetism, will become changed into inner force; the same forces that are working as muscular energy will be changed into Ojas. The Yogis say that that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, as sexual functions, and so on, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into Ojas, and as this lowest centre is the one which guides all these functions, therefore the Yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He tries to take up all this sexual energy and convert it into Ojas.”

We close this part of our lesson with the words of the Rosicrucian text itself: IF YOU DISCOVER IT, BE SILENT AND KEEP IT SACRED. The natural impulse, when the discovery is made, is to “tell the world,” but experience shows that this is a mistaken impulse. What one knows, after making the discovery, seems so perfectly plain, so crystal clear, that there is always a great temptation to become a missionary. Actually, this knowledge is incommunicable. However clear it may be to those who possess it (and we can testify that no knowledge is clearer, that none has a greater degree of certitude) the fact remains that ordinary human language cannot possibly convey this knowledge from the mind of one having it to the mind of one unprepared to receive it.

We can be assisted by the counsel of others in our attempts to make the discovery. Each of us, notwithstanding, must make the actual discovery alone. Buddha had no companions under the Bo-tree. Jesus and Moses learned their final lessons in solitude, under the stars. This knowledge has its price, and the price is the personal effort of the seeker. Those who know can communicate the fact of their knowledge to each other. They signal to each other from age to age, using, always code of words and symbols. But they never tell the Great Secret because it never can be told. And always they warn their pupils: Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn and rend you.

Already, since this course has been going to our affiliates, we have had evidence that it is accomplishing its object. One writes us that we are doing everything possible to lead others to the vision of what he calls the “Eternal Sparkle.” And by his very choice of words he demonstrates that he has glimpsed the Thing Itself.

Another writes: “I rejoice to tell you that I *have* it now. I have seen it in wonderful flashes many times, but now I have “grasped it with my mind” and have faith that I can hold it. I didn’t get it all from the alchemical quotations. In fact I had been reaching out for it all through the Basic Course, but – the Hermit was the lesson that I got the least out of in the whole course! Last night, after reading my second lesson, I saw ‘men like trees walking;’ and I said, ‘Several of these quotations are in The Hermit. Perhaps he will throw more light on the mystery.’

So I re-read the Hermit – devoured it, I should say – hungrily. And there it was, all so plain and clear; so intelligible; so exactly what I had been groping for in vain. And now – I know that whereas I was blind when I studied that ninth lesson nearly a year ago — now I see.”

A few words, in closing, about the mental attitude that prepares one for this discovery. You will notice that the letter just quoted speaks of “reaching out for it” and of “groping for it.” It also intimates that the writer was *hungry* for the illumination.

Compare this with Boehme’s statement: “I am not a master of literature nor of arts, such as belong to this world, but a foolish and simple-minded man. I have never desired to learn any sciences, but from early youth I strove after the salvation of my soul, and thought how I might inherit or possess the kingdom of heaven. Now while I was wrestling and battling, being aided by God, a wonderful light arose within my soul. It was a light entirely foreign to my unruly nature, but in it I recognized the true nature of God and man, and the relation existing between them, a thing which heretofore I had never understood, and for which I would never have sought.”

This discovery comes about through the awakening of the function of the “Third Eye,” as it is often called. This is the brain center which we also call the “Adytum,” or “Secret place of the Most High.” Its bodily correspondence is the pineal gland. Its function is expressed in direct knowledge of the fiery essence hidden behind the manifold veils of physical form.

The awakening comes to those who are hungry for it, to those who wrestle and battle for it, to those who will not be content with anything less. But, paradoxically, it does not come in moments of stress and struggle. The

hunger, the wrestling, the battling – these are but the preparation. Thus we are told, in *Light on the Path*:

‘Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm; not till then.

It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted – not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience – not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain, when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak – it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor.”

Readers who possess the Tarot may assist themselves in their quest for the perception of the First Matter by using these Keys as a means of evoking their hidden interior knowledge of it:

0, THE FOOL. This represents the most abstract aspect of the First Matter, its unconditioned essence.

1, THE MAGICIAN. This corresponds to what the alchemists term “their” Mercury.

2, THE HIGH PRIESTESS. This symbolizes the Virgin Sperm of the World, the Catholic Magnesia, and the Diana of the Wise.

3, THE EMPRESS. This represents the First Matter as the mother or matrix of all things in this world, “the soft, prolific Venus,” as Thomas Vaughan says.

Look at one of these Keys at a time. Do not try to guess what it means. Endeavor to absorb yourself in it, with the idea that it shall draw forth ideas from the depths of your mind. As the ideas come, make notes of them.

Be sure, also, to make yourself more and more familiar with the words of the sages given in Lesson 2. It is a good plan to read several of these quotations before concentrating on the Tarot Key you have selected for the day's experiment.

The next lesson will deal with the three alchemical principles, Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt.