

THE LIFE-FORCE—UNIVERSAL AGENT OF TRANSMUTATION

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When the One Life of the Cosmos—the ALL-IN-ALL—indulges in its periodic habit of manifestation, it first awakens from the total bliss of Infinite Nothingness to the state of Infinite Allness, and from this, to the Infinite Potential to Be. This urge prompts it to make the supreme sacrifice of its unconditioned consciousness by compressing itself into an infinitesimal point of energy which then explodes out to form Primeval Space. It then sacrifices its Unity by polarizing itself into an Inner Subjective Self and an Outer Objective World or Mother-Space—the Great Illusion of Duality. Father-Self, hemmed in and oppressed by the amniotic fluid of Mother-Space, breathes out its essence into its opposite pole and begins to organize the chaotic waters into orderly levels of worlds. This out breathing is the creative Word—the “Spirit of God brooding over the surface of the waters.” This interaction of the male and female potencies produces an offspring—the first Persona of the Cosmos, the One Only Thing of the Emerald Tablet, and the agency that empowers this birth is the Universal Life-Force—the Divine Fiery Workman of the Vision of Hermes.

The Life-Force, then, is the ultimate connection—

- between Cause and Effect;
- between “Spirit” and “Matter”;
- between Inner Self and Outer World;

and as such is the universal agent of alchemical transmutation. It is the means by which the inner life interacts with its material environment—the “Spirit of God” hovering or brooding over the “surface of the waters.”

Light, the carrier of the electromagnetic force, is an aspect of the Universal Life-Force, and as such is the connection between cause and effect at the level

of the space-time continuum, where we undergo our ordinary life experiences. At higher, more subtle levels of reality, cause and effect are together in a potential of many possibilities—the quantum wave equation being intact. At the ordinary level of mundane reality, the wave equation is said to collapse into the working out of a single possibility, cause and effect are pulled apart to make room for experience, and the speed of light is finite and the same relative to all objects and events, regardless of their relative motion.

The whole scheme of the fundamental polarity of the universe and its connection and reconciliation by the Life-Force is illustrated in very basic ways by the following examples:

- The Dot, the Line and the Circle—the basic components of all more complex symbols—represent cause, means and effect; the one, the beautiful and the good; and philosophy, religion and science.
- Every stick has two ends and a middle: you hold one end (*the active principle*) and poke with the other end (*the resistive principle*), while the middle (*the reconciling principle*) keeps the two ends apart and in harmony with one another.
- Fire and Water reconcile as steam or Air—which can then do useful work. The steam, or airy element, combines the heat of fire with the moisture of water.
- The bowl, knop and flower combination—prescribed in the construction of the seven-branched candelabra or Menorah—represents the reception, conveyance and transmittance of the Life-Force at the various world levels of activity.
- The three Mother Letters of the Hebrew alphabet—*Shin* or *aish*, root fire, a triple flame symbol; *Aleph* or *avir*, root air, a connection symbol; and *Mem* or *mayim*, root water, a receptive symbol. These letters combine to form

four words relevant to our topic: Ha SHeM—the Holy Name, SHeMayim—the Holy Spirit or the heavens, SHeMah—to listen with all one's being, and SHeMesh—the Sun.

The Life-Force and its activity are described preeminently in the Emerald Tablet of
Hermes (*the Tabula Smaragdina*)—the title of which, in Chaldian Hebrew, is:

“The Secret Works of Churam Telat Machasot”

a literal translation of which is: **“Hermes Trismegistus, the three-in-one, who hides his one essential nature in three places of safekeeping, or modes of expression,”** or more concisely: **“Hermes, one in essence but three in aspect.”**

ChuRaM or HeRMes is a triple root word. In its Unity or Essence, it is the One Universal Life. In its Triplicity, it is:

- **CHAMAH**—Root Fire, focused and radiated out by the Sun, “The Father of that One Only Thing.”
- **RUACH**—Root Air, the Universal Mind. the “Wind that carries that One Only Thing in its belly.”
- **MAYIM**—Root Water (*the Mother-Space*), the Moon, the “Mother of that One Only Thing.”

ChuRaM or HeRMes emanates the Universal Life-Force, which in turn, in its Unity or Essence is the AZOTH (*from the Arabic Aza'uq—“the Mercury”*), the Universal Mercury or Digestive Agent. In its Triplicity it consists of the three *Philosophical Principles*—Salt, Sulfur and Mercury, which, in the East, are called the *Trigunas—Tamas, Rajas and Sattva*.

- **Salt or Tamas**—Inertial form or body and ignorance—man asleep, and in the compound human body, the LUNAR force current or *Ida (the passive or feminine principle)*.
- **Sulfur or Rajas**—Passion and movement—man in action, and in the compound human body, the SOLAR force current or *Pingala (the active or masculine principle)*.
- **Mercury or Sattva**—wisdom, rhythm, and solvent power—man harmonious, and in the compound human body, the MERCURIAL force current or *Sushumna (the neutral or hermaphrodite principle)*.

The three *philosophical principles* can also be represented by the breaking up of crystallization when common table salt is dissolved in water. Salt is represented by and indeed crystallizes as a cube—the fixing of the volatile sodium and chloride ions. Sulfur is represented by and indeed crystallizes as a pyramid-prism—the stirring action. Mercury is represented by the sphere and indeed forms into spherical droplets when spilled—the volatilization in solution of the ions fixed in place in the crystal.

The circulation of the Life-Force occurs at three cosmic levels:

- At the subatomic or etheric level, by the “Ultimate Physical Atom” (*the Babbitt model*) or *Anu*—which circulates the *Pranic* force of vitality.
- At the microcosmic level, by the human heart—which circulates the blood or vital fluid of man, a fiery essence.

- At the macrocosmic level, by the Sun, the physical heart of the Solar Logos—which circulates the *Prana*, *Fohat* and *Kundalini* aspects of the Life-Force.

The three aspects of the Life-Force that originate from the Sun (*the source of the Great Work in the Emerald Tablet*) are further described as follows:

- FOHAT or Cosmic Electricity—Will-Power or *Ichcha*, the form destroyer, the electro-weak force of modern physics.
- PRANA or Vitality—Love-Wisdom or *Jnana*, the form preserver, the gravitational force of modern physics.
- KUNDALINI or Serpent Fire—Active Intelligence or *Kriya*, the form creator, the strong or nuclear force of modern physics.

To understand the essence of, and to bring about alchemical transmutations, we must be able to move up and down four levels of worlds and seven levels of principles.

The four world levels correspond to those described in the Kabbalistic and Brahmanic systems and in Scripture: *“Thou shalt build ten curtains each of fine linen spun, of blue and purple and scarlet.”*

- The DIVINE WORLD or Causal Sphere of Emanation—*Olam Ha Atziluth* or prearchetypal realm of pure BEING.
- The SPIRITUAL WORLD or Intellectual Sphere of Creation—*Olam Ha Beriah* or subatomic realm of pure KNOWING.

- The PSYCHIC WORLD or Actualizing Sphere of Formation—*Olam Ha Yetzirah* or atomic realm of pure DOING.
- The PHYSICAL WORLD or Crystallizing Sphere of Action—*Olam Ha Assiah* or molecular realm of MAKING.

The Seven Principles are based upon Hindu scriptures and writings and as described in more modern Theosophical and Rosicrucian texts, and are listed below in descending order:

- ATMA or Divine Spirit—to BE, the realm of Samadhi or Adoration.
- BUDDHI or Life Spirit (*Intuition*)—to KNOW, the realm of Contemplation.
- HIGHER MANAS or Human Spirit (*Abstract Mind*)—to DO, the realm of Meditation.
- LOWER MANAS (*Analytical Mind*)—to THINK, the realm of Concrete Thought, Discrimination and Concentration.
- KAMA RUPA or DESIRE BODY (*Desires and Emotions*)—to FEEL and impel action.
- PRANA or VITALITY—To LIVE.
- LINGA SARIRA or VITAL BODY—to SENSE, the realm of observation.
- SHTULA SARIRA or GROSS FORM (*dense physical body*)—to BUMP INTO THINGS, the realm of coarse physical contact.

These levels of principles can be effectively illustrated by means of a number of diagrams that show in particular the division between the subjective formless (*arupa*) spiritual levels of consciousness, and the objective levels of bodies of form (*rupa*) that constitute the personality—and the Link of Mind which connects the two. These diagrams can be found in several of the author's books, namely *Spiritual Alchemy*, *The Gurdjieff Teachings*, *Connecting*, and *Studies in Occult Anatomy, Volume 1*.

We will now propose a theory of transmutations in spiritual alchemy whereby the subtle bodies of the personality and higher abstract mind are refined and developed by bringing to bear the Life-Force through focusing of the attention at aesthetic emotional, mental and intuitional levels of awareness, and ultimately at the highest spiritual state of abandonment of the personality. This scheme is summarized in the outline entitled *Carriers of the Life-Force in the Production of Alchemical Transmutations* given on the next page. Based upon the statement in the Emerald Tablet that:

“In great measure it [the Azoth] ascends from the Earth up to Heaven, and descends again, newborn, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.”

CARRIERS OF THE LIFE-FORCE IN THE PRODUCTION OF ALCHEMICAL TRANSMUTATIONS

Aestheticized Emotions— bring to bear that aspect of the Life-Force that *transmutes the vital body*. This results in sharpened sense perception and awareness of life impressions, and builds the “Soul Body.”

Focusing of the Attention at the Highest Level of the Analytical Mind and that of the Abstract Mind— brings to bear that aspect of the Life-Force that *transmutes impressions of life events* to sharpen our power of observation and discrimination.

Focusing of the Attention at the Level of the Intuition— brings to bear that aspect of the Life-Force that *transmutes the analytical mind* to its highest potential.

Surrender of the Personal Self to Higher Being— brings to bear that aspect of the Life-Force that *transmutes highest intellect* to abstract mental power and intuitive perception, to build the “Causal Body.”

This describes the circulation of the attention as a reflexive action between a higher level of awareness and the lower body or energy field of the personality to be transmuted. Consider the Azoth as a digestive enzyme whose potency increases as the work progresses. The lower the number assigned to the potency the higher its digestive power. Referring to the tables on the next page, in physical digestion solid food in the stomach (*food potency 768*) will be liquefied (*food potency 384*) by digestive enzymes of potency 192. The lower ethers of crude insentient vitality of level 96 will be digested by the “enzyme” power of aesthetic practices of potency 24 to finer sensibilities of the higher ethers of level 48—the transmutation of the vital body. Raw impressions of level 48 will be digested by the “enzyme” of higher mental discriminatory power of potency 12 to the finest aesthetic emotional sensibility or more capable mental capacity for day-to-day reckoning of level 24, and so on. Digestive potency of 12 may be called the Lunar Azoth, whereas that of potency 6 may be called the Solar Azoth. The most potent transmuting agency that we can tolerate at our present stage of evolution is that of potency 3, which we may call the Holy Spirit, the Light of the Logos or the blood of the Solar Christ. So then, focusing the attention at the intuitional or *Buddhic* level brings to bear the Solar Azoth 6 to transmute the concrete mind at level 24 to its highest discriminatory power at level 12—our alchemical silver. Finally, surrender of the personal ego to the higher being of the Solar Logos brings down the Holy Spirit of potency 3 to transmute our alchemical silver to our alchemical gold—the Causal Body or Augoeides of level 6—the Holy Grail in us, which is the only vehicle which can become filled with the Holy Spirit, because 6 is not digested by 3.

This whole process of digestion can also be looked upon as a finer vibratory potency (*the digestive “enzyme” or Azoth*) merging with a coarser vibratory potency (*the food or substrate to be transmuted*) to produce one of intermediate vibratory frequency (*the transmuted body or energy field*).

The Causal Body (*from the Hindu term Karana Sarira*) or Augoeides, a Greek term, is also known as “The Robe of Glory”, a Gnostic term, and the “Discriminating Sheath” or *Vijnanamayikosha*. It is our relatively immortal “body”

of abstract thought, the repository of the essence of all our worthwhile life experiences, and the outer garment of the “Inner Knower” or *Jnana Atman*—the Intuition or *Buddhi*, the “Bliss Sheath” or *Anandamayikosh*a—Christ and Buddha in us, the Hope of Glory”! It is the “Spirituos Earth” stated in the Emerald Tablet, and has been called “The Golden Flower” in Taoist philosophy. **Its growth and development in us is the culmination of the Great Work of Spiritual Alchemy.**

SUMMARY OF ENERGIES INVOLVED IN SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

F O O D S

- 768 — Solid organic food
- 384 — Liquid organic food (*soluble polypeptides and polysaccharides*)
- 192 — Air and other gaseous food
- 96 — Rude physical vitality and lower Pranic fire
- 48 — Raw impressions and higher Pranic fire

D I G E S T I V E E N E R G I E S

- AZOTH 192 — Chemical enzyme power
- AZOTH 96 — Higher chemical enzyme power
- AZOTH 24 — Highest aesthetic emotional fire
- AZOTH 12 — LUNAR AZOTH—Highest concrete mental fire (*Akasa*)
- AZOTH 6 — SOLAR AZOTH—Abstract mental and intuitional (*Buddhic*) fire
- AZOTH 3 — HOLY SPIRIT (*Ruach Ha Kodesh*, “*Blood of Christ*”)

T R A N S M U T E D H I G H E R B O D I E S

SUBSTANCE 24 — ALCHEMICAL BRONZE: Venus (copper) and Jupiter (*tin*) combine to form the purified and transmuted desire or astral body.

SUBSTANCE 12 — ALCHEMICAL SILVER: The purified and transmuted concrete mind (*mental body*)

SUBSTANCE 6 — ALCHEMICAL GOLD: The Causal Body (*the “Holy Grail”*)

The methodology for the accomplishment of the Great Work is summarized in the Emerald Tablet:

“That ONE ONLY THING [*the Heavenly Man of the Macrocosm and the Human Monad or Divine Spark of the Microcosm*] is the Father of all wonderful things in the Universe. Its power is complete when it has united with a Spirituous Earth. SEPARATE that Spirituous Earth from the dense or crude by means of a GENTLE HEAT with MUCH ATTENTION. In great measure it [the Azoth] ascends from the Earth up to Heaven, and descends again, newborn, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.”

And in the following statement:

Eugenius or Irænius Philalethes “Concerning the Difficulties and Length of the First Operation” and “On the Sulfur that is in the Mercury of the Sages,” both from “An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King.” — *“It is a marvelous fact that our Mercury contains active Sulfur, and yet preserves the form and all the properties of mercury.¹ Hence it is necessary that a form be introduced therein by our preparation, which form is a metallic Sulfur. This Sulfur is the inward fire that causes the putrefaction of the Composite Sun. This sulfureous fire is the spiritual seed that our Virgin (still remaining immaculate)² has conceived . . . All their efforts³ to prepare and purify it, however, were doomed to failure. At length they bethought them that it might possibly be found somewhere in nature in a*

¹ Please keep two things in mind now: First, Mercury is at this stage the voice of conscience and Sulfur is psychic energy and soul-fire. Secondly, most metals dissolve in chemical mercury—amalgamate with it—and in turn congeal it, like the silver amalgam used to fill tooth cavities. This changes the form of both the mercury and the other metal. Furthermore, ordinary chemical sulfur corrodes mercury, blackening and solidifying it. (*The same chemical reaction is the cause of silver tarnishing.*)

² This is psychic energy spiritually directed by the Higher Ego or Virgin, which remains sinless or “immaculate.”

³ That is we, the “artists.”

purified condition—and their search was crowned with success. They sought active Sulfur in a pure state, and found it cunningly concealed in the House of the Ram⁴. This Sulfur mingled most eagerly with the offspring of Saturn⁵, and the desired effect was speedily produced—after the malignant venom of the ‘air’ of Mercury⁶ had been tempered by the doves of Venus⁷.”

Now, we will interpret the above passage—typical of the old alchemical writings: The House of the Ram is *Aries*, which sign of the Zodiac is ruled by *Mars*, which in turn rules the metal *iron*. *Saturn* rules the metal **lead**, symbolic of our lower nature with all of its different features that the anonymous writer (evidently *Thomas Vaughan* or *Eugenius Philalethes*) calls “the offspring of Saturn.” **Venus** signifies the loving gentleness and moderating influence of the Higher “Christ” Nature. So here we have the methodology for accomplishing the Black Stone that will vanquish and transmute our Dweller or Sin-Body: **We must enlist our Martian energy** or moving spirit—the “purified metallic Sulfur”—by separating it from any connection with the Personality or lower nature, so that our “unripe Mercury” becomes the **voice of pure conscience**, moderated by a loving spirit of gentleness and patience. Our Mars becomes the **warrior of the Higher Ego**, and as the Christ Spirit, speaking through the man Jesus, said:

“I come not to bring peace, but a sword”; and, “A man’s foes will be those of his own household.”

This will be our St. George who will slay the dragon of our lower nature—the Dweller on the Threshold. This warrior, the dynamo of our microcosmic solar

⁴ Here now is the real clue to this entire allegory.

⁵ These are features of the lower nature or Dweller that will need to be transformed or eradicated.

⁶ Ordinary chemical mercury vapor is very poisonous.

⁷ So the voice of conscience, to be effective, must be gentle, loving, non-judgmental and objective—detached from personal egotism and the critical nature.

system, will be motivated by an ***iron will and persistence***, softened by a spirit of loving gentleness and patience.

As an aside, it is truly remarkable that, chemically, iron is one of the only metals that do not form an amalgam with mercury (*platinum is one of the few others*). It is not dissolved by the mercury, and in turn does not cause the mercury to solidify. ***The two elements coexist without changing one another.*** So, too, our Martian iron will and persistence moderated with gentleness ***works synergistically with our Mercurial conscience***, neither one interfering with the work of the other, but rather, each enhancing the activity of the other.

A striking illustration of this allegory was given by the Comte de St.-Germain in his *La Très Sainte Trinosophie*. In the left-hand diagram, the Inner Warrior Mars (*with helmet*) has set aside his sword and shield (*engraved with symbols of the Moon and Saturn indicative of the baser nature*) and is uniting with Mercury-Venus (*with winged head and holding the Caduceus*) by means of an iron chain, and at the terrestrial level. In the right-hand diagram, the two are walking together synergistically at the etheric level with Mars (*“tempered by the doves of Venus”*) holding a staff rather than sword and shield, and Mercury-Venus holding three globes—signifying the inferior and superior worlds linked by the two levels of mind—in her right hand. On her chest—the heart level—is depicted the higher Ego, while she gestures with her left hand toward the spiritual hierarchy above.

In a second remarkable illustration, if the metals assigned to the planets are arranged in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life diagram, copper and tin—signifying the Bronze Transmutation of the emotional nature—line up on the right-hand column (*the masculine pillar of mercy and magnanimity*); while iron and mercury—signifying the synergy between the inner warrior and the voice of conscience—line up on the left-hand column (*the feminine pillar of severity and restriction*). When these metals, including Uranium, Plutonium and Neptunium for the three outer planets, and Antimony and Zinc for the earth planet, are inserted in the Periodic Table of the elements, they form the letters of the

Tetragrammaton or Holy Name (YHVH)—which signifies the Demiurge or Divine Fiery Workman, the artificer of the Life-Force. The *Yod* (*symbolic of the hand or finger of God, and the father of all letters*) occurs at the metal Iron—one of the most stable elements in the universe.

Finally, in a third diagram, when the letters of the Tetragrammaton are expanded into a Tetraktys, the whole arrangement, through the numerology of Gematria, adds up to 72—the angle of the pentagram ($360^\circ \div 5$) and the archetype of the humanoid form. Descending one horizontal row down and inserting the letter *Shin* (*symbolic of the Holy Spirit*) in the middle of the YHVH, the Hebrew name of Jesus—*Yehoshuah*—emerges. Thus the enfoldment of consciousness from Divinity culminates in the perfected man. As Paracelsus declared:

“God created Man so that He might have a dwelling place for His Spirit.”

The results of this work can be seen in the development of the ovoid auras or energy fields of the desire or astral body, the mental body or field of the concrete mind, and the causal body or field of the abstract mind. The depictions of the auras are found in C. W. Leadbeater’s book *Man, Visible and Invisible*. The observations may be summarized as follows:

The structuring and colors become increasingly well defined and delicate with capacity for affection rather than raw passions, devotional tendencies, and connection and control by the concrete mind in the desire or astral body; development and growth of the bright yellow mind sheath surrounding the head centers and absence of emotional attachment in the mental body with a connection (*Antahkarana—the Internal Instrument of the Higher Ego*) to the causal body; and, finally, growth, layering and raying out of the causal body with an increasingly spherical shape (*that of the Buddha having been described as a mile in diameter*).

A fitting conclusion to this article is given in the following quote from Thomas Vaughan's (*Eugenius Philelethes*) *Lumen de Lumine*—The Invisible Magical Mountain:

“After all these things [the great Wind, Earthquake and Fire] and near the daybreak there shall be a great calm, and you shall see the Day-Star arise and the dawning will appear, and you shall perceive a great treasure. The chiefest thing in it, and the most perfect, is a certain exalted tincture, with which the world (if it served God and were worthy of such gifts) might be tinged and turned into most pure gold.

“This tincture being used, as your Guide shall teach you, will make you young when you are old, and you shall perceive no disease in any part of your bodies. By means of this tincture also you shall find pearls of that excellency which cannot be imagined. But do not you arrogate anything to yourselves because of your present power, but be contented with that which your Guide shall communicate to you. Praise God perpetually for this his Gift, and have a special care that you use it not for worldly pride, but employ it in such works which are contrary to the world. Use it rightly and enjoy it so, as if you had it not. Live a temperate life, and beware of all sin, otherwise your Guide will forsake you, and you shall be deprived of this happiness. For know this of a truth, whosoever abuseth this tincture and lives not exemplarily, purely, and devoutly before men he shall lose this benefit, and scarce any hope will there be left ever to recover it afterwards.”