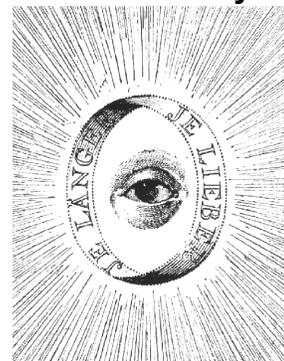


The Seven Metals of the Alchemists

by Steve Kalec

The symbols encountered with in the philosophic work of the transmutation of metals are very rewarding to the student on the esoteric path of the transformation of the soul and consciousness. In all such noble endeavours, where one dares to die to the self of yesterday and unfold his consciousness towards the light of the resurrection, leading into a higher order of being, one must always keep in mind that as an entity he is also the microcosm. If the "Above is as the Below and the Below is as the Above", what then, if one as an entity having transformed himself, has he then also transformed the Macrocosm? Meister Eckhart said that, *"the eye with which I see God is the same eye in which God sees me; my eye and God's eye, that is one eye and one seeing and one recognizing and one loving."* Rudolph Steiner said that *"everything that man undertakes in order to awaken the eternal within him, he does in order to raise the value of the world's existence"*. The truth is that everything participates in a continuum of consciousness all linked as one. No one thing can change its consciousness without effecting and changing the consciousness of all else. As each man or woman raises to whatever little degree his or her consciousness, they pull along with themselves the whole. Nothing can change its consciousness without changing the whole, the All. That is one reason why this work is called the "Great Work". As the Sepher Yetzira says, "lead the Creator back to his Throne".



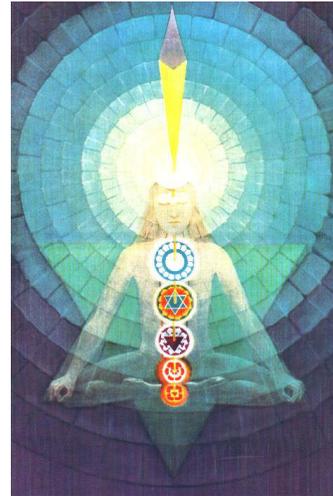
It is said that, within ourselves we have all that is required to arrive at the inner elixir of life as the inner Stone. Within ourselves, within our bodies



From Aeolia's Angel Love

and in our blood, are resident all that we need for this precious work. We have the divine essence of spirit and we have the sulfur of the soul. The most important secret in the work is to learn to set the hidden fire of the alchemists. It is said that the work is one of a scared and vigilant tending to this fire. Johannes Helmond in "Alchemy Unveiled" says that, "this fire is the Archeus of Nature who moves and digests (a form of digestion fermentation and putrefaction) the matter, when he is given his freedom, he does all the work in its nature. In the interim, the Central-Fire lies hidden under a hard shell, still weak and unable".

The transmutation of the lower energies of the soul and consciousness are allegorized through the symbolisms encountered in the philosophic transmutation of the seven metals of the alchemists. There are seven archetypal metals that we work with as far as the alchemical process is concerned. These seven metals are also the intelligences of the seven planets as a kind of subterranean astronomy. Julius Evola says, " *Thus we come to the esoteric doctrine of the seven points through which the higher powers enter into the corporeal context, whereupon they become vital currents and energies specific to man.*" Metaphysically the work is powerful and very transforming as one realizes the awesome archetypal energies that are released psychically that effect both our bodies and our consciousness.



Splendor Solis, Spirit & Soul mining in the body

What is very important for one to understand is that the alchemical symbols of the seven archetypal metals are also the same as those of the seven planets or the seven rays of creation. It is equally important to understand what the symbol for each of these metals truly represents allegorically. One should also keep in mind that just as jewels and precious stones in symbolic traditions signify spiritual truths and inner qualities that need to be mined from the "Mons Philosophorum" or the mountain of the philosophers, the alchemist himself, so too the archetypal energies of the seven traditional metals are within the alchemist in a very metaphysical way and that they do make up our inner energies as different energy levels of the soul. Gems and precious metals hidden in a cave represent intuitive and spiritual knowledge harboured in the unconscious. These are often realized in dreams and visions during meditation. A certain development can be recognized as such visions evolve ultimately leading to the brilliance of the pure light of the Spirit.

Anyone interested in the art of transformation and alchemy, should take a closer look at the metaphysical aspects of the seven metals of the alchemists. As one does so, he or she will find that he is entering into some very symbolic and allegorical concepts, which can result in a very fruitful realization that would greatly enrich his understanding of this most "Noble Art". In the alchemical process we start from the lower levels of energy from the darkness of Lead and go up the scale in metallic evolution to Gold. The metaphysical aspects of these metals are really only energy levels of the same principle, consciousness, which is a fire. Metaphysically and spiritually, the different metals are the different degrees of the fire of the Soul.

We can take a closer look at the traditional symbols belonging to each of these metals. The seven traditional metals laid out and placed in a certain order, give us a visual suggestion of the alchemical process. The seven metals are, Mercury, Lead, Tin, Silver, Iron, Copper and Gold. If we look at our picture we can see that the symbols of the metals are made up of three ideographic elements. The (Cross), as the alchemical symbol of



Cross
Salt
Matter



Crescent
Moon
Reflective Nature



Solar Spiritual
Radiating Force

(Mercury)

Lead

Tin

Silver

Iron

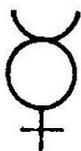
Copper

Gold



salt as matter, which symbolizes our lower, earthly, instinctual, and animalistic natures, which keep us materialistic and earthbound. When the cross dominates, the soul is buried by the earth. The next ideograph is the (Crescent), the alchemical symbol of the moon, which symbolizes the achievement of the first order of the transmutation. The moon is the wonderful and perfected reflective faculty and mechanism for the higher life. It is the level of the realization of subjective consciousness, through which consciousness perceives itself as self realization. The third ideograph is the (Circle), as the alchemical symbol of wholeness, which symbolizes man at his highest order of being. It also represents the spiritual life of attunement with that which is the universal. It is the fire of the solar force as the expansive and radiating centre of divinity.

These three aspects of man, the cross, the crescent and the circle are represented in the symbol of the metal Mercury as can be seen in our



picture. Mercury is like quicksilver; it is solid and liquid at the same time. It can take on the shape and form of anything it is placed in. When heated is very volatile, it expands rapidly and turns to vapours. It can be frozen and made into a hard solid.

Because of its ability to mix with other metals and form amalgams, it is used as a purifying agent. It is an ideal symbol for consciousness in that it can be anything it wants to be.

Within the symbol for Mercury, we see the moon
 And the sun dominating the earth. This symbol
 reveals the three levels of consciousness, the
 fixed in matter as the animalistic nature the
 (Cross) and the earthly elements, the reflective
 self-consciousness the (Crescent), and the
 radiating spiritual divine centre the (Circle).
 Mercury is the allegorical symbol of conscious-
 ness in its raw state. It is the face of the still
 Waters of the Great Sea over which the Spirit
 Flew in the description of creation in Genesis.
 Mercury is the prima materia as the first
 matter out of which we are to make the
 Philosopher's Stone.



We can examine how the transformation
 of our consciousness is depicted through the
 transformation of these metals. The first stage
 of consciousness of the ordinary man is represented by the metal lead, whose traditional symbol is the (Cross over Crescent). Here the earth dominates and buries the moon. We can see here that the reflective perceiving nature of consciousness is dominated entirely by the world of the physical senses and instincts. Consciousness is flowing outwards towards the outer world and is far removed from the inner world. We are absorbed in the objective consciousness and are unconscious of our higher natures. The planet Saturn as the dark planet rules the metal Lead. It is for this reason that in alchemy we refer to the blackness of Lead as the Saturnian darkness of the dungeons of the corpus. This blackness is the darkness of the soul and it is this blackness that must be whitened through the alchemical process. When the black is blacker than black, the raven of the alchemists has marked our path. We should not consider this metal as an inferior metal, for as Jung has said, the essence of darkness is Gold (Light). Saturn or the metal lead is the first on the tree of life of the Cabala to receive the cosmic forces and it imparts its awesome strength to all the other metals.

As the alchemical process is initiated, consciousness is raised as our reflective consciousness is elevated above the level of the ordinary lower man, giving us the stage represented by Tin (Crescent rising above Cross). Jupiter with his thunder bolts of flashing light rules Tin. It is here that we begin to perceive some sparks of divine illumination as we acquire a sense of a Higher Self, that which is the more noble in us, that which is the divine in us. At this level of consciousness the light of the moon dominates the earth and the whitening of the darkness has begun as the Alchemist rejoices knowing that he is in the right path.

In the next stage the Crescent rises over the top arm of the Cross. Alchemists represent this stage as a Crescent on its own without the Cross, since the reflective process has now the power and the intensity of its own energy system to act freely on its own. It has a certain specific charge and luminosity and is our metal Silver. It is here that our raw psychic energies are purified as the subtle is separated from the gross. The purified personality and consciousness experiences the whitening process and the raven is transformed into a white swan. This is our first order of the transmutation of our lead into our living silver. It is here that consciousness becomes conscious of consciousness. The purification of the cold, dark, and raw psychic energies becomes the purified and exalted astral body of light. This experience is so profoundly beautiful that alchemists have exclaimed this experience as beholding the "most beautiful body of our Diana stripped of all her terrestriality". Most alchemists fail at this level believing that they have achieved the whole work. As Silver is purified it can also be easily contaminated due to its very reflective nature. Silver tarnishes because it has not the incorruptibility of Gold. The work on this state must continually be one of purification until we achieve the higher fire needed to continue on to the second order of the transmutation, that of Gold.



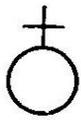
We have so far worked in the first part of the work as the dissolution and separation phase. Though we have commenced our coagulation we are still predominantly in the wet path of the work. Having passed from the black stage where our reflective nature was buried in the earth, we have now arrived at the rejuvenating energy of the albaedo. It is time now to



begin the dry way in which we must begin to increase our fire. Here we must keep with Vulcan's very meticulous and untiring method. We must also continue to circulate this light and fire as is related in the 'Golden Chain of Homer', "when gently moved or agitated, it manifests warmth and heat, as in the case in all frictions and in fermentation of moist things. When violently

agitated it is manifested into burning fire". To complete the work, we must pass through the Red Stage as we bring our work back down to earth.

We must now continue on our work with the introduction of the spiritual radiating principle (the Circle) into the ordinary man. This is represented by Iron, which is ruled by Mars (Circle under a Cross). Here we see the spiritual principle coming down to the very base of physical nature. In Christian symbolism this corresponds to the infant Jesus as the divine man born in a cave or stable among the cattle (our lower animalistic natures and instincts). The highest is found in that which is the lowest in us. It is here that we are born into a new and higher spirituality as we experience the youthful reawakening force of the alchemical process. It is with the virility of Iron that the seed of divinity breaks through the earth to effloresce into the inner developing golden light of consciousness.



The next stage is marked by the spiritual radiating centre dominating the physical nature of man in the sign of Copper a (Circle over a Cross). This is the metal Copper whose ruler is Venus. It is here that our spiritual energies are exalted and have predominance. The flow of the solar spiritual energies are rich and supra terrestrial. Consciousness is transformed and refined as we acquire the sense of the beautiful in the world. We develop within ourselves an appreciation for the finer, more noble aspects of life. A spiritual love is nurtured as our consciousness unfolds towards harmony and the will of that which is the universal.



We have arrived at the final phase of our work. Here we achieve the total transmutation as the spiritual principle infuses all, as can be seen in the symbol of Gold represented by the (Circle with a small central point) within it. The point represents the entity as the purified ego personality immersed in the centre of the solar principle. It is here that the entity is at one with the universal creative force. "I and the Father are One". This transmutation is a state of permanence as is the incorruptibility of Gold. Neither the elements nor the corrosive acids can destroy this Gold. It is here that we behold our King adorned in his fiery robe representing the intensified solar energies of our purified and awakened consciousness.



This is the final phase of our work, as the final stage of the transmutation. It is said that mastery is achieved when one has wholly assimilated the inner nature of this most adorable and divine fire. Blessed is he who dwells within this fire, for he is like the phoenix that rises out of the fiery ashes. Death has no further hold on him, for he has become an immortal.

