

The Alchemical Mystery



of the Rose Croix

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This essay begins with the observation that the 18th Degree of the Scottish Rite, Knight Rose Croix, makes significant use of Rosicrucian symbolism. Rosicrucianism is a form of Christian esotericism that blends Hermeticism, alchemy and Qabalah, and many scholars consider it to be a forerunner of Freemasonry. The Rosicrucian movement has perpetuated the tradition of the *Great Work*, the process of personal and spiritual transformation allegorically illustrated in such Renaissance texts as *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, and in even older documents like the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus. This essay carefully examines a key symbol of the 18th Degree and, placing it in context with certain references from Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*, and also drawing from other esoteric works, it provides an interpretation of the Rose Cross as an alchemical emblem summarizing the Great Work. Finally, it provides reflections on the nature of that work and crucial considerations in its pursuit.

Part 1: Dissolving and Distilling the Symbolism

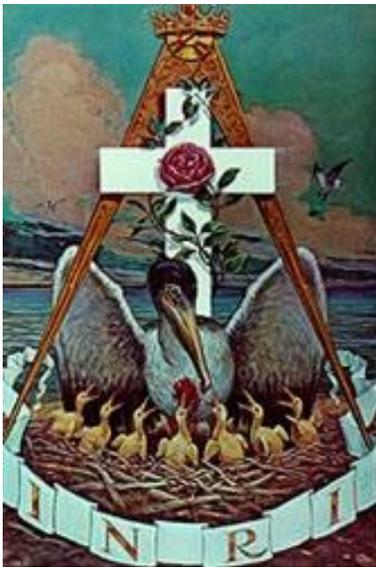


Diagram 1

In the ritual of the Rose Croix, we find the acronym *I.N.R.I.* inscribed above the Master's seat. While the secret work of that degree supplies Masons with a special meaning to this acronym, in Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* and other sources we learn that it has many interpretations. Among all Christians, *I.N.R.I.* is regarded as a reminder of the spiritual authority of Jesus the Nazarene, yet there are esoteric and mystical meanings that are not so widely known.¹

Among Rosicrucians the acronym provides further clues to the performance of the Great Work. The following two are of utmost importance: *Iebeshah, Nour, Ruach, Iam*; and *Igne Nitrum Roris Invenitur*. Although not an exact translation, Rosicrucians interpret the first as Hebrew words representing the four elements of classic philosophy – respectively earth, fire, air, and water. This

interpretation is of general importance to Qabalistic symbolism, which is at the heart of the Rosicrucian movement. We shall see that it unlocks the Rose Cross as a symbolic framework or context for the performance of the Great Work. The second is interpreted as Latin for “by fire the niter of dew is extracted.” This statement receives special attention because of its overtly alchemical language, and because Pike himself refers to it as an aphorism framed by “Alchemical or Hermetic Masons.” Using these two interpretations as a key, we can use the acronym *I.N.R.I.* to unlock the symbolism of the Rose Cross and reveal a formula for personal and spiritual transformation.²

The Cross of the Four Elements

In the previously noted quote from Pike, attention is drawn to I.N.R.I., and thus the Rose Cross, as a symbol having special meanings to Alchemical or Hermetic Masons. It is interesting to note that the cross and the four elements are brought together in the second of the only two places where Pike refers to “Hermetic Masons.” Here are his words and illustration:

*The four Elements, the four symbolic animals, and the re-duplicated Principles correspond with each other, and are thus arranged by the Hermetic Masons:*³

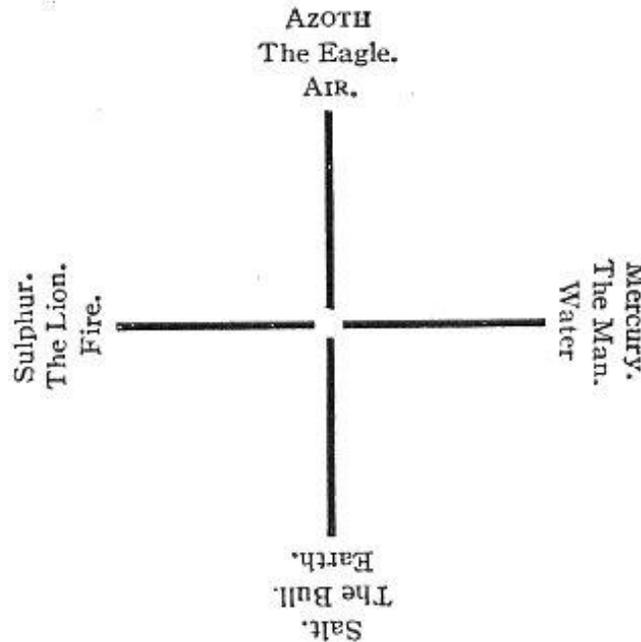


Diagram 2

While this diagram provides some intriguing associations with the zodiac through the four archetypal creatures, that is not our present concern.⁴ Rather than aligning the elements with the constellations and the points of the compass, we are placing this arrangement onto the vertical and horizontal axes of a cross. It is worth noting that these oppositions of the elements are present on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The following diagram is thus constructed using the image of a Rose Cross, the Hebrew words corresponding to I.N.R.I., and the alchemical signs for the elements:

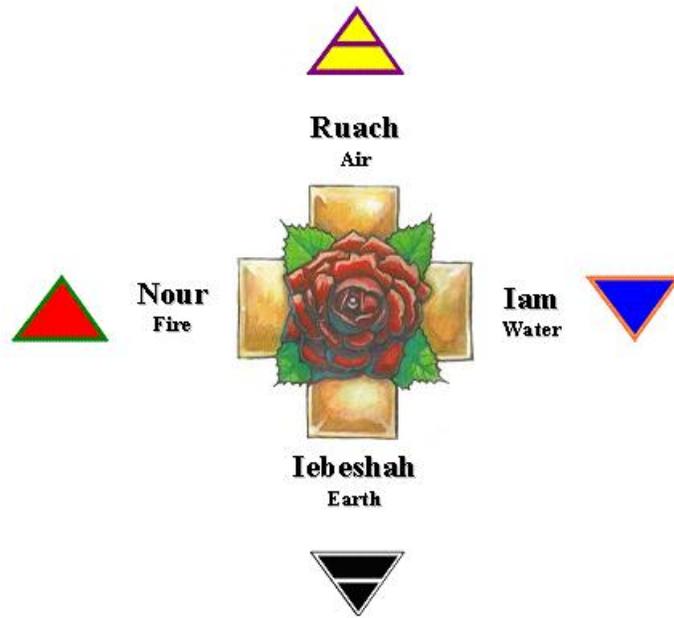


Diagram 3

Pike goes on to say: “As all the great Mysteries of God and the Universe are thus hidden in the Ternary, it everywhere appears in Masonry and in the Hermetic Philosophy under its mask of Alchemy. It even appears where Masons do not suspect it; to teach the doctrine of the equilibrium of Contraries, and the resultant Harmony.” Taking this passage as a guide, we can consider the rose upon the cross of the elements as itself somehow representative of that doctrine and the harmony it begets. What has yet to be addressed is exactly how this symbolism can help us proceed with the Great Work of transformation.⁵

The Four Elements of the Soul

Among Rosicrucians, and in other esoteric traditions, the four elements are often employed in an allegorical system of classification for different faculties and functions of the soul. While the specific attributions may vary, these are not uncommon:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Air (Ruach) | the impersonal higher intellect, including the imagination, abstraction, analysis, contemplative insight and intuition |
| Fire (Nour) | the personality; the conscious sense of self in the world, and one’s personal will and desires |
| Water (Iam) | the unconscious and its effects upon the psyche reflected in emotions, dreams and visions |
| Earth (Iebeshah) | the physical body and its basic functions and needs |

That the various influences from these elements of the soul are often “contrary” to one another needs no explanation; we all know it from personal and sometimes painful experience. In this context, the Rose Cross suggests that the blossoming of a very special and beautiful harmony occurs as the result of equilibrium among these elements, and illustrates polarities that warrant closer examination.

First, we note that fire and water are placed opposite of one another on the horizontal axis of the cross. It could be reasonably argued that the discipline of psychology, at least in the therapeutic field, is based on establishing a healthy working relationship between the personality and the unconscious. In fact, approaches such as Jung’s Analytic Psychology and Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis specifically point to such psychological integration as their purpose. Their methods and aims are based upon the observation that the health, maturity and progress of a human psyche depend upon the degree to which its various parts work together in harmony. Special emphasis is placed on using the higher intellect to identify and resolve conflicts and oppositions between the personality and the unconscious. Techniques like active imagination and dreamwork draw out unconscious content, and these combined with analyses of conscious desires, fantasies and intentions help the individual attain a more holistic understanding of self. Such an understanding supports more informed decisions, healthier behaviors, and less self-defeating patterns of thought and action.

Next, the vertical axis presents a polarity of air and earth, of the higher intellect and the physical body. Plato regarded the higher intellect as the means by which humanity perceives the divine realm of ideal or perfect forms, the metaphysical archetypes of everything in existence. It is also noteworthy that the word *ruach* not only refers to air, but is also a word for spirit. In Genesis, for example, the “ruach chayim” is literally the “spirit of life” *breathed* into all creatures by God. This reference draws our attention to the role of earth in this polarity, for it tells us that the body of Adam was formed from the dust of the earth and brought to life by the breath of God. Thus the physical body is a vessel or vehicle for the spirit that animates it. Just as psychotherapy addresses itself primarily to the dynamics of the horizontal axis, the dynamics of the vertical axis are the special interest of spirituality and religion. Religion concerns itself with the proper relationships among creatures in this world and their Divine Creator, and serves those ends by providing guidelines for a healthy lifestyle, ritual observances and moral codes for the physical domain, and metaphysical doctrines and disciplines of meditation and prayer to nurture the higher intellect.

It is no surprise that the vertical line of spirituality intersects the horizontal of psychology. We have already seen how the higher intellect is called upon to facilitate the integration and harmonization of the psyche, and anyone who has aspired to fulfill the ideals of any religion can attest to the psychological challenges it can present. How fitting it is that among the central aims of religion is an intimate awareness of the spirit, the very breath of life from God, realized by the human psyche while in a physical body on Earth. This is the *psychospiritual* crux of the alchemical cross, and here we find the image of a rose.

The Alchemical Rose

At the meeting place of the four elements, at the intersection of heaven and earth within the human psyche, we find the rose, universally regarded as a symbol of beauty and love. But to Rosicrucians the rose can have other and more esoteric meanings. In pondering the meaning of the rose, we return to the second interpretation of I.N.R.I.: Igne Nitrum Roris Inventor, or “by fire the niter of dew is extracted”. In the context of the four elements, this formula introduces both niter and dew as new symbols relevant to the Rose Cross and worthy of special attention.



Diagram 4

Since it is from the dew that the niter is to be extracted, we begin by noting that Godfrey Higgins and A.E. Waite both held the name *Rosicrucian* was not merely derived from *Rose Cross*, but that it is also a play on the Latin *Ros*.⁶ This word means dew, and dew is a common and important element of alchemical literature and imagery. Consider these excerpts from Rosicrucian and alchemical texts:

*I am the moisture which preserves everything in nature and makes it live, I pass from the upper to the lower planes; I am the heavenly dew and the fat of the land; I am the fiery water and the watery fire; nothing may live without me in time; I am close to all things yea; in and through all things, nevertheless unknown.*⁷

*...fire, water, air, earth be proceed from the first Chaotic Waters..., they produce the Universal Sperm..., they continually regenerate the Chaotic waters for generation, preservation and Regeneration of all Things. This Universal Sperm is generated by condensation and evaporation of Vapours, which are circulated in the great Alembic of the Air, until they are sufficiently impregnated or animated by fire, when they are again condensed and resolved into water. This Chaotic Waters are commonly called Dew....*⁸

So the alchemical rose is dew, and dew is literally the moisture that has evaporated from the earth into the air to condense once more upon the earth when the proper balance of heat and humidity occurs. Dew is thus a most fitting analogy for the quintessence of being, the prime metaphysical emanation from which all forms of life and states of consciousness are generated. The power of this dew is spoken of in both scripture and esoteric literature.

Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will give birth to those long dead. (Isaiah 14:9)

From the Skull of the Ancient Being wells forth Dew, and this Dew will wake up the dead to a new life. (The Zohar, "Idra Rabba.")

The Niter of Dew

Niter is literally a chemical often used as a fluxing material in the refinement of metals. Niter thus serves two purposes: (a) it can help metal liquefy more easily, and (b) aid in removing impurities. To discover more of the meaning of niter in psychospiritual terms, we return to the Golden Chain of Homer, where it is said that the alchemical dew has within it two basic potentials that work together to give rise to all things. The following chart shows some of their associations.⁹

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Niter | Salt |
| Acid | Alkaline |
| Spirit | Body |
| Father | Mother |
| Universal Agent | Universal Patient |
| Hammer | Anvil |

We can see that niter represents the *active* and *transformative* potential in dew. Continuing the analogy with a chemical fluxing material, when used with skill and knowledge this psychospiritual niter has a dynamic and forceful role in refining the various elements of the soul, softening those that have become hardened and removing the impurities that are our vices and superfluities. The hammer and anvil associations should grab the attention of even the newest Entered Apprentice!

Mark Stavish has also explored this meaning for niter. He writes:

The energies of Niter are also referred to as the force of Kundalini, or spiritual forces. In alchemy, this is the Secret Fire. To the Salt, belongs the force of Prana, or Vital Energy.

The function of the Vital energy is to maintain physical life forms and existence. It is completely instinctual and unconscious and is heavily influenced by cosmic cycles, astrological pulses, and other natural phenomena. The function of the Secret Fire is to increase in humanity, the only place where it is present, its sense of self, or "I". At the lowest level or functioning, this is the ego, at its highest, it is Divinity incarnate, as both are two sides of the same coin. One is 'self' in relation to the physical world and others; the other is 'self' in relationship to all of Creation and as a co-creator.¹⁰

This statement leads us directly back to I.N.R.I. and the four elements of the soul, where fire is said to represent the conscious sense of self in this world, including one's more or less unique will and desires. We see here that the Secret Fire of alchemy, the niter of dew, is the essence of the allegorical fire that each of us experiences as "me". Recall also the Latin formula of I.N.R.I., which is now understood to say that this Secret Fire is extracted from alchemical dew by our self-awareness. How does the lesser fire of the conscious self manage to extract the greater fire that is the transformative force within the quintessence? Heat is the quality most naturally associated with fire. To "put the heat on" something is a metaphor that speaks of an unrelenting intensity of attention, passion and desire focused on that one thing.

Having dissolved so much of the symbolism of the Rose Cross and I.N.R.I., we now distill from it this partial solution to the mysteries of the Rose Croix: *When one has achieved the psychospiritual integration and harmony necessary to reveal to himself the quintessence of his being, a continued fervency in his attention to the work may in time enable him to draw out the transformative force of creation and regeneration.*



Diagram 5

Part 2: Performing the Great Work

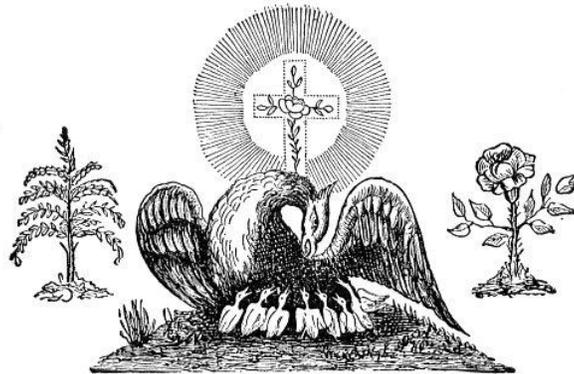


Diagram 6

Equilibrium, Extraction, Application

Solved mysteries almost always lead to further questions, and there is still much about the Great Work that we have not examined. Exactly how does one achieve such a state of psychospiritual equilibrium? Once that is accomplished, what specifically must be done to extract the power of transformation? Once that power has been extracted, what is one to do with it?

Equilibrium



Diagram 7

To some extent, the process of achieving psychospiritual equilibrium has already been addressed in this essay. Recall that in examining the polarities and dynamics of the two axes on the psychospiritual cross, we discussed various practices of psychotherapy as well as guidelines and information provided by religion. Because the Great Work concerns itself with harmonizing both the psychological and the spiritual dimensions of consciousness, it follows that we need to be applying heat in both dimensions.

Modern society offers many options for people drawn to psychospiritual evolution. Therapists, counselors, life coaches, support groups and self-help books abound. Most of these resources offer some degree of valuable insight and assistance to people seeking psychological balance. On the spiritual side of things, the world's major religions continue to have a powerful presence, and in the more progressive nations there is an unprecedented opportunity for experimentation with different traditions. The New Age movement has also delivered a plethora of non-sectarian approaches to spiritual life and nurtured the development of new religions, many of which are attempts to revive traditions that were swept away by militant Christian evangelism.

Today's psychospiritual treasure chest may be overflowing, but there is nonetheless much dross to separate from the gold. The challenges facing the modern seeker certainly include making well-informed and wise decisions with regard to which psychological and spiritual sources will be tapped. The sheer number of options itself can lead many would-be illuminates to fall into the relatively unproductive pattern of hopping and skipping from one approach to another, sampling a little on the surface of each, but never really penetrating to the greater depths that any single system or tradition has to offer.

Should one make careful and definite choices, and assuming that the selected sources are legitimate, there are also common problems that arise from the psychological and spiritual realms being addressed separately. Psychology and religion have become so compartmentalized that the experts of each field are often defensive if not hostile with regard to the other. This situation makes it easy for people to assume that their psychological and spiritual quests must be pursued somewhat separately, and sometimes it seems that one path must be chosen over the other. But if the Great Work begins with equilibrium, then the labors of the two axes must be integrated. On a positive note, it is true that many clergy are now trained in counseling, and increasing numbers of psychotherapists are becoming educated in religion and spirituality. Unfortunately, we do not easily find such helpers with extensive personal experience in the union and harmonization of both kinds of work, and even fewer still who are able to transcend the usual limitations that mainstream psychology and religion place on human consciousness.

To perform the Great Work, one must be willing to venture into the most mythical and magical realms of depth psychology and ascend to the most sublime heights of gnostic and mystical spirituality. Furthermore, there are advantages in the work of each domain complimenting the other in symbolism and philosophy and pursuing them together in a coordinated manner. This is the calling of alchemical traditions and orders of initiation like those in the Rosicrucian movement and the Hermetic Masonry referred to by Pike. We turn to him again for a clue as to how we might actually begin the Great Work.

He who desires to attain to the understanding of the Grand Word and the possession of the Great Secret, ought carefully to read the Hermetic philosophers, and he will undoubtedly attain initiation, as others have done; but he must take, for the key of their allegories, the single dogma of Hermes, contained in his Table of Emerald and follow, to class his acquisitions of knowledge and direct the operation, the order indicated in the Kabalistic alphabet of the Tarot. ¹¹

Following Pike's lead and studying the Emerald Tablet, we find an alchemical description of a mysterious "one only thing" that, while never actually called dew, certainly fits the metaphor.

The father of that one only thing is the sun, its mother is the moon, the wind carries it in its belly; but its nurse is a spirituous earth.

*That one only thing is the father of all things in the Universe.
Its power is perfect, after it has been united with a spirituous earth.*

The text continues with instruction on how to work with the dew.

Separate that spirituous earth from the dense or crude by means of a gentle heat, with much attention. In great measure it ascends from the earth up to heaven, and descends again, newborn, on the earth, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.¹²

The wording here is strikingly similar to instructions for a meditative exercise sometimes called the *Fountain of Light*. In this exercise, the practitioner draws energy up through the body to the top of the head, where it then pours out like a fountain to rain down all around and through the body again. Many psychospiritual traditions, such as Yoga and Qi Gong, use some variation of this exercise, and it is especially noteworthy that it is practiced with the Middle Pillar technique of Rosicrucian Qabalah. The energy being employed is visualized in the imagination as bright light, and felt as a warm and tingling sensation in the body, which is likened to electricity or magnetism. This energy is often referred to as the *Astral Light*, and Pike was apparently familiar enough to recognize it as “Azoth, the universal magnetism of the Sages” and “the grand magical agent.” So, by his reference to the Emerald Tablet, we conclude that Pike almost certainly intends to point toward practicing such operations as essential to the Great Work.¹³

Dew, the Universal Agent, is seen in the mind’s eye as the Astral Light, but that is not all there is to it. With just a little reflection on the actual workings of the eyes and brain, we can also know that the Astral Light is the quintessence of *all* that is seen, and not only of what we imagine. Even a materialist, who believes we are nothing but atoms and molecules, knows that the brain does not actually reflect physical light in the phenomena of vision. In the materialistic explanation, photons strike the rods and cones of the retina, which in turn stimulate the optic nerve that carries a chemically encoded message to the visual centers of the brain for decoding. As far as that part of the brain is concerned, vision is vision, no matter if it is the result of the physical sense of sight or of fantasies, dreams, hallucinations or psychic visions. Basically the same dynamics apply to all our other senses. Thus everything we experience, remember or imagine, all of known existence, is actually perceived in and by the energy of the mind. We can speculate, hypothesize and experiment about external things that might stimulate this energy to move and take form, yet those operations are themselves processes and events moved and shaped by the internal processes of the mind.

“Know this,” he said. “That which sees and hears within you is the Word of the Lord, and Nous [Mind] is God the Father. They are not separable from each other, for their union is life.”

“Thank you,” I said.

*“But perceive the light and know it,” said Poimandres.*¹⁴

While the Fountain of Light exercise closely parallels the description given in the Emerald Tablet, it would be an oversimplification to assume that this one exercise is all that the Tablet was meant to communicate or that it alone is sufficient for the Great Work. There are many ways that our alchemical dew can be heated to ascend and descend, and many ways to increase the power of the superior and the inferior, each with their own particular contributions to the Great Work. In Rosicrucian Qabalah, for instance, the Middle Pillar technique involves a number of different energy circulations, and is expanded upon by studies and meditations in the arcana of the Tarot, just as Pike has recommended. With any system such as this, devoted and careful practice is intended to produce improved physical and psychological health, a more abiding sense of inner harmony, and aid the intellect in preparing for the most profound depths of spiritual contemplation – all the conditions of equilibrium alluded to by the Rose Cross.

Extraction

In effect, if not in fact, our metaphorical dew, the energy of mind, is the divine quintessence of our being. To intellectually grasp this concept can be ground shaking, but it is nothing short of a spiritual revelation to actually experience and realize its truth. That blossoming of consciousness is the alchemical rose upon the cross of the soul. To genuinely achieve that insight is the beginning of the extraction of niter, drawing out the active and transformative power inherent in the essence of mind. In actual fact, we are always working directly with niter, for we could not think or do anything creative without it. Everything done to achieve greater equilibrium is accomplished only because niter is employed to that end. In conventional terms we would simply say that one’s desire, attention and intention are focused on greater equilibrium, and this heat drives the thoughts and behaviors that in time actually bring about the transformation.



Diagram 8

To extract niter is not to bring forth some new power, but to actually recognize the transformative power for what it is, refine it, and be able to use it more efficiently and effectively. Recall that niter is equated with Kundalini, which many people in the West automatically equate with sexual energy. It is true that Kundalini is intimately involved in sex, which is obvious when we consider how much sexual behavior is a matter of desire and personal will, but this is only one of its manifestations. Many traditions refer to Kundalini as the *Serpent Energy*, and it is known in Qabalah by the name *Nehustan*, which was the brazen serpent on the staff of Moses. That serpent, like those on a caduceus, represents the subtle energies of life ascending and descending through the psychophysiological energy centers along the spinal cord. Each of these energy centers, when stimulated by Nehustan, or niter, generates its own class of drives, desires, thoughts, virtues and vices. There is also a reciprocal dynamic, such that giving

conscious attention to a certain class of desires and thoughts actually directs the transformative energy to the associated energy center. Tradition holds that the centers in the lower half of the body are concerned with survival, sex and social status. So long as a person's consciousness remains primarily focused on those matters, there is relatively less stimulation of the centers from the heart upward. But when one begins to attend to the greater mysteries of life – such as the spiritual depths of beauty, justice, love, understanding and wisdom – then the transformative energy is drawn up from its enmeshment in the lower centers to stimulate even further development and awakening in the higher. To knowingly and intentionally use the proper meditative techniques to pull the transformative energy up, directed into specific operations and then re-circulated down, is what we mean by “the extraction of niter.” It is much the same kind of work as practiced to achieve psychospiritual equilibrium, only now with greater understanding, awareness and precision. In effect, the work of equilibrium never stops; it only becomes refined and applied in new ways.



Diagram 9

The Emerald Tablet says the Great Work is accomplished “by means of a gentle heat, with much attention.” The raw energy of transformation is like a wild beast that must be tamed, yet it is far safer and more rewarding to tame this beast with a mild hand and warm affection than with a whip and hot domination. This point is important because one's equilibrium can be disturbed by too much fervency, yet a steady commitment and patient fortitude is indispensable. Focusing too fiercely on the stimulation of any one or few energy centers can result in the associated principles and dynamics being pushed to an extreme at the expense of others. That kind of *dis-ease* is readily apparent in people with obsessions related to the lower centers. Examples include cases where unrestrained sexual addictions or constant battling for social power have robbed people of the higher faculties of deep compassion or

sound moral judgment. Similar dynamics can occur with the upper centers, and convenient illustrations are the spiritual escapist who has suppressed all concerns for worldly matters, or the aspiring psychic who has instead slipped into psychosis. To be sure, both the superior and inferior require gentle but constant attention. An ongoing refinement in the art and science of Rosicrucian alchemy is its own most crucial level of practice, for it provides the practitioner with the knowledge, skills and power to accomplish other labors in the Great Work.

Application

Until now we have spoken of the Great Work as the process of transformation within the practitioner himself; however these aims cannot be the sole end of one's labors. To truly realize the quintessence that informs one's personal being is to know spiritual unity with our fellow human beings as an actual fact. We are all children of the One God, and our souls all partake of the same dew and manna from Heaven. The

illuminated alchemist loves his neighbor as himself, because he knows that his neighbor and he are both extractions of the same Divine Self. So it is that wherever the Rose Cross has bloomed, one finds himself naturally obligated to further the Great Work in the lives of others.

There are many different ways that niter can be employed on behalf of others. As stereotypical examples we might think of spiritual healing, or teaching and mentoring others in esoteric knowledge and practice. Both of those pursuits are legitimate and laudable undertakings, but not everyone is talented in these ways and some people would be doing others and themselves a disservice by not pursuing different forms of service. For example, in addition to things that might seem more glamorous and magical, the Apostle Paul also lists *giving* and *administration* as spiritual gifts. In any case, to be acquainted with and accepting of one's special talents and gifts, and to be employing them in the service of others is a sign of an emerging adept.

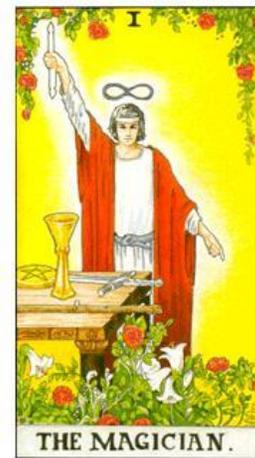


Diagram 10

In the scope of this essay we cannot do justice to considering all or even a few forms of service, but we can give a closer examination to one that should be dear to the hearts of Alchemical and Hermetic Masons – the magic of ritual initiation. In recounting the rites of the ancient mystery religions that so inspired earlier generations of Masons, Pike clarifies exactly why initiation has an important place within traditions of the Great Work:

Though Masonry is identical with the Ancient Mysteries, it is so in this qualified sense; that it presents but an imperfect image of their brilliancy....

*The object of the ancient initiations being to ameliorate mankind and to perfect the intellectual part of man, the nature of the human soul, its origin, its destination, its relations to the body and to universal nature, all formed part of the mystic science; and to them in part the lessons given to the Initiate were directed. For it was believed that initiation tended to his perfection, and to preventing the divine part within him, overloaded with matter gross and earthy, from being plunged into gloom, and impeded in its return to the Deity.*¹⁵

As Pike has noted, Masonic initiations do not, at least typically, match the power of the ancient initiations. This failure is because ritual initiation, in order to attain its potentials, must offer the candidate more than an experience of hollow secrecy, rote performance of liturgy, obligatory presentation of unvalued symbols, soulless recitation of standardized prayers, and farcical threats to enforce obligations to common moral codes and ethical values. To be optimally effective in aiding the psychospiritual

transformation of an initiate, ritual and all its elements must come alive as inspired and intentional expressions of transformative power. As John Michael Greer writes:

An initiation is a formal process for bringing about specific long-term changes in human consciousness. ...

*Magical initiation is to the new initiate what consecration is to a talisman: something inert and unformed receives energy, shape, direction.*¹⁶

Many conditions should be in place for a truly magical initiation to occur. Most fundamentally, the initiators must have already proven themselves in the work of their own transformations. They ought to understand how to manipulate the Astral Light to establish an atmosphere fine-tuned to the purposes of the given initiation. The skill to access and harness the powers and principles they would seek to evoke within the new initiate is required, as is the ability to invoke the archetypal characters represented by the various roles of the drama. The candidate has to be adequately prepared with instruction and other measures contributing to a receptive and fertile state of consciousness. To crown all of their work, the initiators will revere it as a rite of sacred love and mystical reunion among spiritual kin, a holy sacrifice dedicated to the Glory of the One God.

What greater work can be performed in the service of another? To administer a magical rite of initiation as an act of the Great Work is a true blessing, not only to the initiate but also to the initiators. It is a psychospiritual healing as surely as any form of therapy, and a giving of the most rare and precious gifts. When a new initiate emerges from such an experience, he is certain that mysterious forces have been applied to inspire his soul, forces that will urge him toward transformations he intuitively desires, yet only dimly foresees.

Conclusion

The quest of the Knight Rose Croix is identical to the aims of the Rosicrucian alchemist. We begin by seeking psychospiritual transformation. If by our fervency, skill and divine grace we witness the blossom of the alchemical rose upon the cross of our souls, it is only to realize our truest selves living within the hearts of our fellow human beings. It is then that we know our labors are never finished until the hope expressed in the Fourth Apartment of the Rose Croix is fulfilled:



Diagram 11

*... when the great plans of Infinite Eternal Wisdom shall be fully developed; and all God's creatures, seeing that all apparent evil and individual suffering and wrong were but the drops that went to swell the great river of infinite goodness, shall know that vast as is the power of Deity, His goodness and beneficence are infinite as His power.*¹⁷

¹ Albert Pike, “XVIII, Knight Rose Croix”, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*, New and Revised Ed. (Washington, D.C.: Roberts Publishing, 1966), p. 291

² Ibid, p. 291

³ Ibid, p. 791

⁴ The most intriguing aspect of this diagram is that it provides unusual associations between the four archetypal creatures and the four elements. The eagle, or the constellation Aquila, near Scorpio, is typically associated with water. The man, or the constellation Aquarius, is typically associated with air. The attributions of Azoth and Mercury could also be questioned.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 791-792

⁶ Manly P. Hall, The Second Postulate, “The Fraternity of the Rose Cross,” *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy*, Third Casebound Printing (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1977), p. CXXXIX

⁷ “Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians”, *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer, aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert. Erstes Heft. Aus emem alten Mscpt. zum erstmalig ans Licht gestelit. Altona, 1785. Gedruckt und verlegt von J. D. U. Eckhardt. Zweites Heft. Altona, 1788.*

⁸ Anton Josef Kirchweger, “The Golden Chain of Homer”, Sigismund Bacstrom, translator

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Mark Stavish, “Secret Fire: The Relationship Between Kundalini, Kabbalah, and Alchemy”, 1997.

¹¹ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 777

¹² Manly P. Hall, The Emerald Tablet of Hermes, “The Theory and Practice of Alchemy, Part Two”, *An Encyclopedic Outline...*, p. CLVIII

¹³ Pike, p.791

¹⁴ “Book 1, Poimandres Hermes Trismegistus”, *The Way of Hermes: New Translation of The Corpus Hermeticum and The Definitions of Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius*, Clementr Salaman, Dorine Van Ovin, William D. Wharton, Jean-Pierre Mahe’, editors (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 2000) p. 18

¹⁵ Pike, pp. 23, 397

¹⁶ John Michael Greer, Part One: First Principles, “Art and Science of the Magical Lodge”, at <http://www.winternet.net/~blister/index.html>

¹⁷ Pike, p. 289

Diagrams

Front: Collar, apron front and jewel front for the Knight Rose Croix, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, by Great Scott Design and Kerry Hannon, in Rex R. Hutchins, *A Bridge to Light* (Anderson, SC: Electric Printing, 1988) p. 140.

1. “The Jewel of the Rose Croix”, by J. Augustus Knapp, in *An Encyclopedic Outline...*, p. LXXXIX. Note that this image of the pelican is suggestive of an alchemist’s athanor and alembic.
2. Albert Pike’s cross of the elements, symbolic animals and alchemical principles. *Morals and Dogma*, p. 791.
3. Composite Rose Cross with elements and Hebrew words for I.N.R.I. by author, Rose Cross artist unknown.
4. Detail from Meditative Rose, by Salvador Dali. Note the dew upon the lower petal.
5. 2nd illustration from “Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians”, a Rosicrucian philosopher in meditation.
6. Illustration at beginning of “XVIII, Knight Rose Croix”, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 276. Composite of Masonic and Rosicrucian symbols.
7. “The World”, Universal Waite Tarot, by Pamela Colman Smith and Mary Hanson-Roberts US Games Systems Inc.
8. “Temperance”, Ibid.
9. “Strength”, Ibid.
10. “The Magician”, Ibid.
11. “Judgement”, Ibid.

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