

# Practical Spiritual Alchemy

Solve et coagula



Your spiritual (higher) self is held within a cage. To gain true freedom, and, therefore, serenity, the spiritual self must be freed; freed from wounds - whether external or core; freed from core beliefs ingrained over years of material indoctrination causing a loss of soul; freed from other self-destructive personality traits that keep our true Self caged and un-free.

The goal of spiritual alchemy is the transmutation of the lead of the lower self - base qualities such as selfishness, arrogance, vanity (the conditioned self) - into the gold of the higher self - such as kindness, tolerance, humility and an acceptance of our destiny/ karma (the awakened self). It is a process that seeks to restructure one's personality and the various levels of attachment, avoidance, and identification that have long shaped who we are and how we relate to the world around us.

This process is broken down into 7 stages. However, it is important to understand the core principles by which life is directed as the evolution of the earth and humankind unfolds. These principles, also 7, are the 7 Hermetic Principles. These principles are a high level outline of worldview, the spiritual scientific worldview. This implies they postulate universal principles found in the ancient wisdom teachings of all ages. They are, in fact, universal laws.

Below is an overview of these principles.

### The 7 Hermetic Principles

# The 7 Hermetic Principles

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## 1. Everything is Spiritual

"The Universe is Mental — held in the Mind of  
The ALL." — The Kybalion

This maps to the concept of the absolute divinity or beingness as the 'all' underlying creation and the whole cosmos which is spiritual in nature. Our authentic nature is Spirit, created in the image of God.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God: in image he possesses freedom of will, and in likeness he possesses virtues. The likeness has been destroyed [through the Fall]; however, man [retains] the image. Through fate as such [the image] is not effaced, but subsists. Wherever the soul is, there also will be the image. It is not so with the likeness. This remains in the soul which accomplishes the good; in the soul which sins it is wretchedly transformed. ~ St. Bernard of Clairvaux

The entire cosmos was brought into existence by the thought of God. Similarly, we shape our own reality both metaphysically and physically by the power of our thoughts. Our thoughts determine our lives.

Spiritual Alchemy, then, is the process by which one seeks to regain the likeness of God i.e. purity of soul.

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## 2. Correspondence

"As above, so below; as below, so above; as within, so without; as without, so within." —The Kybalion.

The Principle of Correspondence allows us to gain a deeper knowledge of the entirety of the Universe and our lives by exploring the higher and lower nature of things. There is a higher, spiritual, aspect behind everything we experience (and see, hear and feel) in life. There is a connection between what we think, feel and do in our life and what the spiritual hierarchies seek to send down to us. The unknown becomes known. To understand this brings clarity.

The Principle of Correspondence reveals that your external reality is a reflection of your internal state; what you think and feel inside manifests in your life outside. This principle emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and inner work to create positive changes in your circumstances.

In the process of Spiritual Alchemy, as we begin to 'see' the spiritual realities behind everything, our world, our sense of reality, is first shredded - which is painful, chaotic and dark - but these cracks in our previous understanding is where the light of the Spirit streams forth. Enlightenment then begins to shine in our soul.

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### 3. Vibration

"Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates." —The Kybalion.

The Principle of Vibration states that everything is in a continuous dynamic of evolution: Everything, creation and the cosmos, is dynamic and not static, but in continuous evolution towards a target, in other words it has purpose and a goal, it's not just random.

God does not rest, He is forever active upon His creation. If it were possible to catch a glimpse of His being, however, He would appear as if He were indeed at rest. This is due to the high frequency at which He vibrates. Objects of His creation vibrate at varying frequencies, from the highest, which is Spiritual, to the lowest, which is of the grossest material form. Human beings, created in the image of the Creator, possess the power to control the frequency of thought at which they function on the physical plane through the disciplined exercise of free will. To discipline the mind to operate at a higher frequency brings oneself closer to God - while he yet remains on the physical plane.

Through Spiritual Alchemy we break down the bars that prevent our taking control of our thoughts so that we may begin to vibrate at increasingly higher frequencies, freeing our Higher (Spiritual) Self.

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#### 4. Polarity

"Everything is Dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled." —The Kybalion.

The Principle of Polarity can be referred to as duality. All things have two opposites, which are really two extremes of the same thing. Examples of this are heat and cold, light and dark, heavy and light, gift and curse, love and hate, good and evil, happiness and suffering, etc. This line of polarity explains why there is such a wide range of states of existence, as there are countless gradations between these poles.

In terms of Spiritual Alchemy, we can see that the extremes bring unbalance in one's life, whether it is our inner life (thoughts and feelings that lead us to outward expression) or those circumstances that are thrust upon us from the outside. The goal, then, is to train ourselves to seek the 'middle ground' between extremes and therefore become properly balanced.

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#### 5. Rhythm

"Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates." —The Kybalion.

The Principle of Rhythm is exemplified in the cycle of the seasons, the alternating of day and night, the flux of emotions, the cycle of life and death, reincarnations, eras (Yugas in Vedas), and the rise and fall of

civilizations. Karma itself follows this hermetic principle.

The movement of the Pendulum is unavoidable and cannot be halted. However it is possible to learn (within ourselves) to counterbalance its effects. Through Spiritual Alchemy we gain the ability to compensate for the swing of the Pendulum in either direction, thereby avoiding the extremes as mentioned above.

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## 6. Cause & Effect

"Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law." —The Kybalion.

Stated simply, the Principle of Cause and Effect states that nothing happens without reason. There is no such thing as 'chance' or 'coincidence'.

Spiritual Alchemy seeks to help us experience the empowering force of this concept; taking control and becoming the master (the Cause) of your own destiny instead of just being an Effect of others or the situations we find ourselves in.

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## 7. Gender

"Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles; Gender manifests on all planes." —The Kybalion.

The Principle of Gender embodies the fact that both the masculine (active) and feminine (passive) exist in all things.

The masculine is the penetrative, progressive, assertive, and explorative energy that drives progress. The feminine is the receptive, treasured, sacred, protective energy that maintains tradition and nourishing that which is most essential to life.

Too much masculine energy brings imbalance and leads to a growth of power to the extreme of reckless abandon. As a result, we lose perspective of what is most important and disconnect from our intuitive side.

Too much feminine energy also creates disharmony and leads to a life deeply grounded in the present. As a result, our lives are missing the perspective and become determined by cycles and external circumstances out of our favor.

As with the Principle of Polarity, achieving the goals of Spiritual Alchemy helps us maintain a balance between these energies.

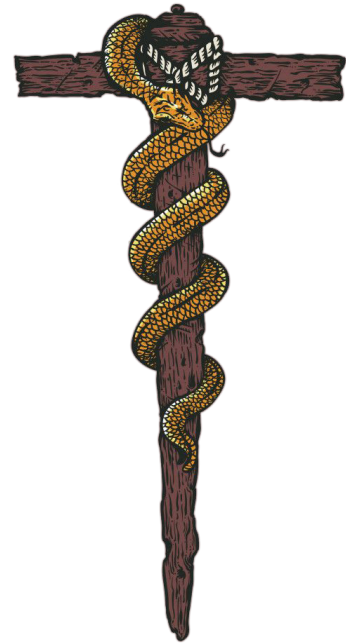
\* Man's physical gender and male and female sexuality is a temporary phenomenon in evolution that appeared in the middle of the Lemurian epoch and will disappear again in the future.

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# Introduction to Spiritual Alchemy

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Spiritual alchemy has been practiced since ancient times, when it was believed to be an alternative path to spiritual transformation and enlightenment. Although there are a variety of approaches to spiritual alchemy, hermetic philosophy offers an overview of seven stages or steps involved in this process: calcination, dissolution, separation, conjunction, fermentation, distillation and coagulation. Spiritual Alchemy is an ancient tradition of transforming the soul through mystical and metaphysical practices. It has its roots in antiquity, with early references found in the Hermetic Corpus – a sacred collection of texts dating back to 1st century Egypt. Through the centuries, this powerful practice has been updated and adapted to meet the spiritual needs of every era, allowing us to use it as an ever-evolving tool for personal transformation.



The Seven Stages of Spiritual Alchemy are a transformative path to enhanced wellbeing. From the initial stage of Inquiry, to cultivating Transformation and completing the journey in Purification – each step is designed to help us discover our deeper self and full potential. By reflecting on our experiences, we can identify which stage we're at and take steps to progress further down the alchemical journey.

Saint Germain urged the masses to focus on their thoughts. According to him, this was necessary to attain a higher conscious awareness. He suggested that the process of turning base metals to gold had a lot to do with spiritual development.

According to ancient beliefs, who we are as a person is an accumulation of our actions. These actions entail our past lives and our present. All our strengths and weaknesses, the physical appearance and our emotional state is the result of creating ourselves since the origin of the world.

The three primary elements in alchemy:

- Mercury: the mind/thought: life force bridging the body and spirit
- Salt: the body
- Sulfur: the soul/spirit

An alchemist is an embodiment of power. He is in control of himself and his surroundings. The alchemist isn't a slave to anyone. He is his own master. To become an alchemist a person must first live the alchemy. This means one needs to accept both success and failure in life. One needs to embrace the hardships.

Some vital characteristics of an alchemist are:



- He must know how to balance his emotions
- An alchemist does his work with dedication
- An alchemist knows when to speak and when to remain silent
- He must embrace simplicity
- Pride doesn't reside in the mind of an alchemist
- An alchemist has faith
- Perseverance is an integral part of the alchemist's personality
- He embraces his internal values
- An alchemist is a balanced individual. He isn't influenced by others.

Only when one cultivates these, he will attain the philosopher's stone (or perfection).

# The Seven Stages

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## 1. Calcination



The calcination stage has been likened to the Dark Night of the Soul; the collapse of a perceived meaning in life, an eruption into your life of a deep sense of meaninglessness, often characterized by depression.

Calcination is often represented by the color black which refers to chaos, darkness and the material from the unconscious element (burdened by limitations, fears, and attachments). This stage involves awakening one's internal state through honest introspection and exploring one's shadow side. Through this process we can become more aware of our limiting beliefs and patterns that are no longer serving us.

The Materia Prima (first matter) is also associated with this stage which refers to the idea that all matter originated from an original primitive source (the Godhead or Spirit - All is Spiritual). We can use calcination as a means for connecting with this source energy (our Higher Self, our I) within ourselves.

Calcination also refers to the burning off of all of the superfluous elements of ourselves that no longer serve us. We are purified by fire, and the hardened and dead parts of ourselves have burned away and become ash. Our preconceived notions about our identity and our limiting core

beliefs are put to the test in this stage. Our ideologies and neuroses begin to lessen their grip on the persona, enabling the spiritual alchemist to stop self-sabotaging behavior and take the first steps towards awakening.

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## 2. Dissolution



The second stage of spiritual alchemy is dissolution or sometimes referred to as death. This symbolizes destruction of our old identity so that we can create new forms of ourselves – just like ashes dissolve in water. Water is often used to symbolize the unconscious because it contains our hidden parts that up until now have remained unknown or unexplored. We sift through the ashes of our previous identity and begin to question what is really important.

The dissolution stage involves the outlet of repressed emotions from traumatic events that we have pushed down in our psyche. It can be a very cathartic step as we free ourselves of past painful experiences and self-doubt to start the process of emotional healing.

In this stage, our inability to take responsibility for our many faults, our repressed traumas, and other inner tensions rise to the surface, causing us to become aware of how our behavior might be affecting others.

This stage is, therefore, the beginning of spiritual maturity and the spiritual awakening process.

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## 3. Separation



In the separation stage, the pure essence is extracted from the rest of the mixture. As the first two stages were associated with fire and water, separation is related to the air element. In a spiritual sense, it can be understood as a separation from one's habitual thought processes or emotional trigger responses, allowing us to step back and distinguish our essence from our acquired personality.

The element air signifies intellectual exploration. Therefore, the separation stage involves deep thinking and understanding. However, it doesn't mean that one will hide away in their thoughts to avoid their emotions.

Here the person will be able to align their emotions with their logical mind. Emotion (feelings) is the expression of the soul. Therefore, it is necessary to listen to and express one's emotions. Even though our society condemns self-expression it is a necessary measure to know one's soul's purpose.

In this way, a person will be able to make the correct decision in life. The process of separation will empower the person to separate the right from wrong. He will be able to distinguish between his limiting and empowering qualities.

Separation is a very liberating stage where we can free ourselves of resentment towards ourselves and others. It is a kind of inner liberation from negative emotions. By doing so, we can become aware of our true feelings. We separate ourselves from our inauthentic selves and step closer to our essential or higher self. The separation occurs when we no longer identify with the character we have been playing, but rather we become the awareness itself. We have conscious awareness of our own thoughts, feelings, and desires, but without identifying with them or becoming attached to them.



The separation stage is a kind of detachment from our old skin (as the snake sheds its old skin). After the emptiness and suffering in the first stage of calcination, and then the fearful stage of dissolution where hidden emotions emerge, the separation stage comes as a welcome relief as we experience the stillness of being separated from our inferior and inauthentic qualities.

Separation is closely entwined with shadow work (\*) in that we must allow all feelings and thoughts within us to surface side by side and become aware of our "darker side." This practice helps us to isolate particular elements of our character to honestly see and assess them, then to eventually consciously embrace and transform them.

During this process we may resort back to old habits or ways of thinking from time to time but as long as we keep going forward we will eventually be ready for new discoveries about ourselves. St. Anthony the Great said to expect temptation until our last breath. When we fall, we must muster the courage, willingness, and commitment to get back up and move forward, using our failures as the motivation to do better the next time.



(\*) Shadow Work is a practice that helps us to regain access to our innate wholeness. It works on the premise that you must completely befriend your Shadow, rather than avoiding or repressing it, to experience deep healing. All of us carry demons inside. What is the human Shadow? In short, the Shadow is our dark side, our lost and forgotten disowned self.

Your Shadow is the place within you that contains all of your secrets, repressed feelings, primitive impulses, and parts deemed "unacceptable," shameful, "sinful," or even "evil."

This hidden place lurking within your unconscious mind also contains suppressed and rejected emotions such as rage, jealousy, hatred, greed, deceitfulness, and selfishness.

When our Shadows are suppressed or repressed in the unconscious long enough, they can even overtake our entire lives and cause psychosis or extreme forms of behavior like cheating

on one's partner or physically harming others.

Intoxicants such as alcohol and drugs also have a tendency to unleash the Shadow.

Thankfully, there is a way to explore the Shadow and prevent it from devouring our existence, and that is called Shadow Work — separating out the shadow within, accepting those qualities exist within us, but no longer allowing them to control us. The nature of being human is to possess both a light and a dark side, and we need to embrace that.

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#### 4. Conjunction



Conjunction refers to the process of combining the elements from the previous three stages. In a sense, we see what still remains within us, which is of value, and then begin to combine these elements to form one's authentic spiritual self. After the first three stages of purification by fire, water, and air, our disparate elements are brought together under the earth element. We begin a process of embodiment as the spirit begins its process of materialization.

We begin to feel unified in body and soul, but we are still drawing together the different strands of our true self, and we are not yet finished. Polarities cease their conflict and come together, such as male and female, body and soul, spirit and matter. Harmony is achieved between the different elements of our being. The attributes typically associated with divine feminine energy, such as intuition and emotion, unify with those attributes conventionally associated with the masculine, such as intellect and logic.

While in the previous stage we learned to distinguish all of the feelings and thoughts within us, Conjunction provides the inner space — the simmering — that is required for us to truly and honestly accept all the parts of our authentic self.

When we experience this stage of spiritual alchemy, many of our long forgotten (or suppressed) unconscious thoughts and feelings bubble up to the surface and into the light of conscious awareness.

In this stage, journaling, introspection, solitude, and meditation are particularly useful practices to facilitate movement towards the next stage.

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## 5. Fermentation



Fermentation is the fifth stage and describes the decay of one's old self and the rebirth of one's true self. The first four stages involved discarding our old, inauthentic self and drawing together the authentic elements within us. At this stage, however, we catch a glimpse of a more refined, authentic self. This stage can be likened to the rebirth of the phoenix from its own ashes.

The process can be split into two: putrefaction and spiritualization.

1. Putrefaction is the rotting away of our former selves as the superfluous is let go - the death of the old self takes place. Putrefaction can be a difficult stage and can involve strong feelings of depression or despair since we fear losing our identity, which is associated with our old self.
2. Spiritization is where the death of the old self is complete - it gives great relief as we begin to see the world in a new and luminescent way. It involves letting go of those parts of ourselves that no longer serve us in our present life, and, as a result, this step can be accompanied by blissful feelings of inner peace and contentment.

The true self has emerged. This stage symbolizes a heightened state of consciousness and spiritual awakening. One begins to connect with their spiritual purpose and to remember more and more aspects of the soul's



journey and cosmic origins. During this stage one has many opportunities to practice the new patterns of thinking and keeping their energy field aligned with higher states of consciousness.

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## 6. Distillation



Once we begin our Spiritization, we must find a way to continue to integrate all of these spiritual realizations into our lives in order to allow them to become permanent. Distillation is the level of further purification.

One example of Distillation is finding ways to live from a daily place of inner peace – even in the most mundane circumstances.

With enough repeated practice of constantly dying and being reborn (If one has it not, this dying and becoming, then one is but a dreary guest upon this dark earth - Goethe) in the present moment without entering again into the habits, identifications, and cycles of the mind, we experience a strong and profound inner transformation.

Distillation serves as an essential bridge between fermentation and coagulation. In this stage one attains a state of elevated intuition, wisdom, and reflective qualities. This stage involves deep introspection, embracing the interconnectedness of all things, and transcending the ego's limitations. Seeing that everything in the outer world is a reflection of one's inner self and that any circumstance can be alchemized through the power of thought. One practices love, whether all is perceived as light or dark with the understanding that there is no separation.

Alchemists often compare distillation to gathering steam particles from boiling liquids. In essence, by boiling away impurities and reflecting upon them through sincere questioning, one can obtain pure knowledge that leads toward greater understanding. It marks the point at which our



essence becomes spiritualized. In other words, in spiritual alchemy, distillation is a metaphor for the actualization (to bring into reality) of one's spirit.

In Jungian terminology, this stage also involves the assimilation of any shadow aspects into our true self. It is the distillation of one's true self and represents a step up in consciousness as our core identity is freed from any inferior elements. At this stage, the ego has ceased dominating behavior as we begin to hear the voice of our soul. It also marks the point at which the conscious and unconscious aspects of the self are brought into harmony.

In this stage, the person will undergo further purification after facing a series of hardships. In the distillation stage, a person will become a purified soul. He will turn into someone who thinks beyond his selfish interests.

With the ego washed away, the person will now listen to his soul. He will be able to understand both his conscious and unconscious self. Whatever, he has learned so far, he will be able to apply them in his daily life.

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## 7. Coagulation



In alchemical terms, coagulation is the process of hardening and forming a more solid structure. In spiritual alchemy, this stage involves the internal work of solidifying one's beliefs, intentions, and desired outcomes. Through reflection, study and contemplation of esoteric teachings, practitioners are able to identify the root issues that have kept them stuck in unhealthy patterns of behavior and thought. By understanding their own inner truth, they can create new structures that are aligned with their higher selves.

At this stage of spiritual alchemy, one learns to be mindful of their thoughts and behaviors by anchoring into their core values with little effort. This enables them to manifest their highest potential through unencumbered thoughts, feelings and action. Not only does this create harmony within but also paves the way for deep healing from past traumas and undesirable behaviors.

In the achievement of this goal, one embodies Christ consciousness (not I, but Christ in me). This final stage of spiritual alchemy represents the pinnacle of transformation and enlightenment. Alchemists refer to this as the "philosopher's stone". Those who have reached this stage embody the radiant and pure essence of gold, transcending the limitations of the physical world and uniting with the divine.

Coagulation is the meeting point of the soul with the spirit. This stage is the meeting point of life and death. It is the meeting point of light (conscious) and darkness (unconscious).

Here the physical universe becomes interconnected with the spiritual world.

We have found the Elixir of Life also known in alchemy as The Philosopher's Stone.

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# A Few Thoughts

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*"If thou has it not, this dying and becoming, one is but a dreary guest upon this dark earth."*

Exploring spiritual alchemy can take on various forms due to its highly individualistic nature. For example, some may research hermetic philosophy and esoteric teachings while others may use meditation and self-reflection as a tool for transformation.

Keep an open mind:, Most paths towards enlightenment involve breaking through barriers posed by societal norms or preconceived notions regarding what is deemed possible or impossible; so it's important not to let any bias affect your journey.

If you want to unlock your most powerful and potential spiritual self, it's important to create a sacred space. Find a quiet, peaceful and undisturbed area where you can go to explore the depths of your own spiritual journey. Make sure to keep this space just for yourself – free from distractions – so that you can reach your highest level of awareness.

No matter what life throws at us, we all have our own individual hurts and pains. It's essential to recognize these experiences before we can move forward. Embracing the wisdom of alchemy is a great way to begin this process, starting with a recognition and understanding of where we are right now.

# Light on the Path

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These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them.

Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears.  
Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness.  
Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

1. Kill out ambition.
2. Kill out desire of life.
3. Kill out desire of comfort.
4. Work as those work who are ambitious.

Respect life as those do who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness.

Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it. It lives fruitfully in the heart of the devoted disciple as well as in the heart of the man of desire. Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death. And it is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himself innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured: it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life: it may not come until the last. But, O disciple, remember that it has to be endured, and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought.

5. Kill out all sense of separateness.
6. Kill out desire for sensation.
7. Kill out the hunger for growth.

8. Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is imbodyed, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you. Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder. Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

9. Desire only that which is within you.

10. Desire only that which is beyond you.

11. Desire only that which is unattainable.

12. For within you is the light of the world—the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you; because when you reach it you have lost yourself. It is unattainable, because it for ever recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.

13. Desire power ardently.

14. Desire peace fervently.

15. Desire possessions above all.

16. But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul; that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life, which is your only true self. The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons. And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.

17. Seek out the way.

18. Seek the way by retreating within.

19. Seek the way by advancing boldly without.

20. Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labor, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onward. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of man are steps indeed, necessary—not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone. The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and, by the force of his awakened spiritual will,

recognises this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful complex separated life exists, then, indeed, and then only, he is upon the way. Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing, all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong. Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural: and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light.

21. 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. But it can be felt after, looked for, and desired, even amid the raging of the storm. The silence may last a moment of time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that Nature can be still.

These written above are the first of the rules which are written on the walls of the Hall of Learning. Those that ask shall have. Those that desire to read shall read. Those who desire to learn shall learn.

**Peace be with you.**

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**Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears.**

Tears may be called the moisture of life. The soul must have laid aside the emotions of humanity, must have secured a balance which cannot be shaken by misfortune, before its eyes can open upon the supersensible world.

It is a truth, that, as Edgar Allan Poe said, the eyes are the windows for the soul, the windows of that haunted palace in which it dwells. This is the very nearest interpretation into ordinary language of the meaning of the text. If grief, dismay,

disappointment or pleasure, can shake the soul so that it loses its fixed hold on the calm spirit which inspires it, and the moisture of life breaks forth, drowning knowledge in sensation, then all is blurred, the windows are darkened, the light is useless. This is as literal a fact as that if a man, at the edge of a precipice, loses his nerve through some sudden emotion he will certainly fall. The poise of the body, the balance, must be preserved, not only in dangerous places, but even on the level ground, and with all the assistance Nature gives us by the law of gravitation. So it is with the soul, it is the link between the outer body and the starry spirit beyond; the divine spark dwells in the still place where no convulsion of Nature can shake the air; this is so always. But the soul may lose its hold on that, its knowledge of it, even though these two are part of one whole; and it is by emotion, by sensation, that this hold is loosed. To suffer either pleasure or pain, causes a vivid vibration which is, to the consciousness of man, life. Now this sensibility does not lessen when the disciple enters upon his training; it increases. It is the first test of his strength; he must suffer, must enjoy or endure, more keenly than other men, while yet he has taken on him a duty which does not exist for other men, that of not allowing his suffering to shake him from his fixed purpose. He has, in fact, at the first step to take himself steadily in hand and put the bit into his own mouth; no one else can do it for him.

The condition of the soul when it lives for the life of sensation as distinguished from that of knowledge, is vibratory or oscillating, as distinguished from fixed. That is the nearest literal representation of the fact; but it is only literal to the intellect, not to the intuition. For this part of man's consciousness a different vocabulary is needed. The idea of "fixed" might perhaps be transposed into that of "at home." In sensation no permanent home can be found, because change is the law of this vibratory existence. That fact is the first one which must be learned by the disciple. It is useless to pause and weep for a scene in a kaleidoscope which has passed.

An intolerable sadness is the very first experience of the neophyte in Occultism. A sense of blankness falls upon him which makes the world a waste, and life a vain exertion. This follows his first serious contemplation of the abstract. In gazing, or even in attempting to gaze, on the ineffable mystery of his own higher nature, he himself causes the initial trial to fall on him. The oscillation between pleasure and pain ceases for—perhaps an instant of time; but that is enough to have cut him loose from his fast moorings in the world of sensation. He has experienced, however briefly, the greater life; and he goes on with ordinary existence weighted by a sense of unreality, of blank, of horrid negation.

The most intense forms of suffering fall on such a nature — persons so near the door of knowledge that life itself prepares them for it, and no individual hand has to invoke the hideous guardian of the entrance — till at last it arouses from its stupor of consciousness, and by the force of its internal vitality, steps over the threshold into a place of peace. Then the vibration of life loses its power of tyranny. The sensitive nature must suffer still; but the soul has freed itself and stands aloof, guiding the life towards its greatness. Those who are the subjects of Time, and go slowly through all his spaces, live on through a long drawn series of sensations, and suffer a constant mingling of pleasure and of pain. They do not dare to take the snake of self in a steady grasp and conquer it, so becoming divine; but prefer to go on fretting through divers experiences, suffering blows from the opposing forces.

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## Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness.

The voice of the Masters is always in the world; but only those hear it whose ears are no longer receptive of the sounds which affect the personal life. Laughter no longer lightens the heart, anger may no longer enrage it, tender words bring it no balm. For that within, to which the ears are as an outer gateway, is an unshaken place of peace in itself which no person can disturb.

As the eyes are the windows of the soul, so are the ears its gateways or doors. Through them comes knowledge of the confusion of the world. The great ones who have conquered life, who have become more than disciples, stand at peace and undisturbed amid the vibration and kaleidoscopic movement of humanity. They hold within themselves a certain knowledge, as well as a perfect peace; and thus they are not roused or excited by the partial and erroneous fragments of information which are brought to their ears by the changing voices of those around them. When I speak of knowledge, I mean intuitive knowledge.

Intuitive knowledge is not acquired in any way, but is, so to speak, a faculty of the soul; not the animal soul, that which becomes a ghost after death, when lust or liking or the memory of ill deeds holds it to the neighborhood of human beings, but the divine soul which animates all the external forms of the individualized being.

This is, of course, a faculty which indwells in that soul, which is inherent. The would-be disciple has to arouse himself to the consciousness of it by a fierce and resolute and indomitable effort of will. I use the word indomitable for a special reason. Only he who is untameable, who cannot be dominated, who knows he has to play the lord over men, over facts, over all things save his own divinity can arouse this faculty. "With faith all things, are possible." The skeptical laugh at faith and pride themselves on its absence from their own minds. The truth is that faith is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is the covenant or engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self.

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## Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound.

Speech is the power of communication; the moment of entrance into active life is marked by its attainment.

The disciple who has the power of entrance, and is strong enough to pass each barrier, will, when the divine message comes to his spirit, forget himself utterly in the new consciousness which falls on him. If this lofty contact can really rouse him, he becomes as one of the divine in his desire to give rather than to take, in his wish to help rather than be helped, in his resolution to feed the hungry rather than take manna from Heaven himself. His nature is transformed, and the selfishness which prompts men's actions in ordinary life suddenly deserts him.

The demand of the neophyte remains unheard until the voice in which it is uttered has lost the power to wound.



There are always the devotees to knowledge who forget their own lives in their pursuit of it; there are always the flippant crowd who come and go—of such, Epictetus said that it was [as] easy to teach them philosophy as to eat custard with a fork. The same state exists in the super-astral life; and the adept has an even deeper and more profound seclusion there in which to dwell. This place of retreat is so safe, so sheltered, that no sound which has discord in it can reach his ears. Why should this be, will be asked at once, if he is a being of such great powers as those say who believe in his existence? The answer seems very apparent. He serves humanity and identifies himself with the whole world; he is ready to make vicarious sacrifice for it at any moment—by living not by dying for it. Why should he not die for it? Because he is part of the great whole, and one of the most valuable parts of it. Because he lives under laws of order which he does not desire to break. His life is not his own, but that of the forces which work behind him.

In the various great cities of the world an adept lives for a while from time to time, or perhaps only passes through; but all are occasionally aided by the actual power and presence of one of these men. Here in London, as in Paris and St. Petersburg, there are men high in development. But they are only known as mystics by those who have the power to recognise; the power given by the conquering of self. Otherwise how could they exist, even for an hour, in such a mental and psychic atmosphere as is created by the confusion and disorder of a city? Unless protected and made safe their own growth would be interfered with, their work injured. And the neophyte may meet an adept in the flesh, may live in the same house with him, and yet be unable to recognise him, and unable to make his own voice heard by him. For no nearness in space, no closeness of relations, no daily intimacy, can do away with the inexorable laws which give the adept his seclusion. No voice penetrates to his inner hearing till it has become a divine voice, a voice which gives no utterance to the cries of self. Any lesser appeal would be as useless, as much a waste of energy and power, as for mere children who are learning their alphabet to be taught it by a professor of philology. Until a man has become, in heart and spirit, a disciple, he has no existence for those who are teachers of disciples. And he becomes this by one method only—the surrender of his personal humanity.

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Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

The word soul, as used here, means the divine soul, or "starry spirit."

"To be able to stand is to have confidence"; and to have confidence means that the disciple is sure of himself, that he has surrendered his emotions, his very self, even his humanity; that he is incapable of fear and unconscious of pain; that his whole consciousness is centered in the divine life, which is expressed symbolically by the term "the Masters"; that he has neither eyes, nor ears, nor speech, nor power, save in and for the divine ray on which his highest sense has touched. Then he is fearless, free from suffering, free from anxiety or dismay; his soul stands without shrinking or desire of postponement, in the full blaze of the divine light which penetrates through and through his being. Then he has come into his inheritance and can claim his kinship with the teachers of men; he is upright, he has raised his head, he breathes the same air that they do.

But before it is in any way possible for him to do this, the feet of the soul must be washed in the blood of the heart.

The sacrifice, or surrender of the heart of man, and its emotions, is the first of the rules; it involves the "attaining of an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotion." This is done by the stoic philosopher; he, too, stands aside and looks equably upon his own sufferings, as well as on those of others.

In the same way that "tears" in the language of occultists expresses the soul of emotion, not its material appearance, so blood expresses, not that blood which is an essential of physical life, but the vital creative principle in man's nature, which drives him into human life in order to experience pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow. When he has let the blood flow from the heart he stands before the Masters as a pure spirit which no longer to incarnate for the sake of emotion and experience. Through great cycles of time successive incarnations in gross matter may yet be his lot; but he no longer desires them, the crude wish to live has departed from him. When he takes upon him man's form in the flesh he does it in the pursuit of a divine object, to accomplish the work of "the Masters," and for no other end. He looks neither for pleasure nor pain, asks for no heaven, and fears no hell; yet he has entered upon a great inheritance which is not so much a compensation for these things surrendered, as a state which simply blots out the memory of them. He lives now not in the world, but with it: his horizon has extended itself to the width of the whole universe.

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