THE GOAL OF THE ALCHEMISTS

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Rom. XI-33

1. From the Instructions already given, students will have noted one predominant feature, namely; the obvious emphasis placed upon Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, which are referred to as “substances” alchemically, and “principles” philosophically.

2. These Three principles or Substances are said to be compounded of the Four Elements and their Qualities, which we list as follows:

   1. Fire………………..Warm and Dry
   2. Air………………..Moist and Warm
   3. Water……………..Cold and Moist
   4. Earth……………..Dry and Cold

3. These we shall amplify; first noting that Fire and Water are opposite, and Earth and Air are opposite; Earth and Water and Heavy, (Passive or suffering) and Air and Fire are Light, (Active). These classifications are according to Cornelius Agrippa, giving to each Element TWO specific properties, the first of each group being the exclusive property of the Element itself; the other being "like unto a medium connecting the Element with another Element.

4. According to Plato, each Element has also Three Qualities:

   FIRE   Sharpness, Thinness, and Mobility.
   EARTH Darkness, Thickness, Rest or Quiet.
5. According to this designation Fire and Earth assume opposite polarities so far as the qualities listed are concerned, and the other Elements borrow their qualities from these two:

**Air**

Has with Fire, the Thinness and Mobility, but takes of the Earth the Darkness.

**Water**

Takes two qualities from the Earth, Darkness and Denseness (Thickness) and one quality from the Fire-- Mobility.

**FIRE**

is 2 times as thin,  
3 times as movable,  
4 times as sharp as AIR.

**AIR**

is 2 times as sharp,  
3 times as thin,  
4 times as movable as WATER.

**WATER**

is 2 times as sharp,  
3 times as thin,  
4 times as movable as EARTH.

6. Now, as FIRE is in proportion to AIR, so AIR is to WATER, and WATER to EARTH, and vice versa.

7. Again, referring to Instruction Number Two, we note that in the process of extracting the Three Principles from the Four Elements, we find in Mercury a Water and a Spirit; in Sulphur, a Fire and a Soul; and in Salt, an Earth and a Body. The whole process being completed in the bosom of the AIR.

8. This recapitulation has been made in order that we may make it clear as to the relation of the Elements and the Principles to the ultimate goal of the Alchemists, the subject of this Instruction.

9. The Great Central Point around which all our study revolves is the Sun, which has already been described, terrestrially and celestially, as well as philosophically.

10. The Sun is our immediate Author and Source of Being. From it result the Four Elements, which are the Sun in manifestation under the name of Nature. From the Four Elements or Nature, we extract the Three Principles and Substances, philosophical and alchemical.

11. The Four Elements and the Three Principles and Substances in their ultimate manifestation as known to us, compose Man, Physically, Mentally and Spiritually.
12. We are taught in Rosicrucianism that the Subject of Rosicrucianism is MAN. The object of its Art is the Perfection and Improvement of Man--his transformation FROM A STATE OF NATURE TO A STATE OF GRACE.

13. This means the amplification and expansion of Man's human and mortal consciousness into the Cosmic Consciousness, which is knowledge of and at-one-ment with, GOD.

14. In other words, the attainment of the Supreme Wisdom.

15. Let us see how this is borne out by the teachings of Scriptures and the Traditions of the Sages.

16. The Scriptures of all ages and races are absolutely at one upon this point, so we are justified in appealing to those most familiar to us for ready reference; “Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” Eccles. XXI-13.
   “The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” Psalm 111-10.

17. In several translations and in all esoteric study the word “fear” when rendered as “know” will be found not only to fit the context but also to amplify and clarify the entire passage. Instead of “fear” God therefore, we have “know” God.

18. It will be noted that the first citation, “fear (or know) God and keep his commandments” is commonly ascribed to Solomon to whom is accredited superlative wisdom. This sage informs us that to KNOW God is the whole duty of man, and in the next citation we are told that to KNOW GOD is the BEGINNING OF WISDOM.

19. Now the very name Solomon is impressive and commands our attention at the start, inasmuch as it is simply the name or word-expressing Deity in three different languages; Sol, Om and On collectively, and in alchemical usage signifies the Sun of Wisdom. And coincidentally, we find the name Solomon ascribed in Hebraic History to the human being who is alleged to have been the wisest man who ever lived.

20. The fact therefore that the name of the so-called wisest man is that of the Sun of Wisdom, and that the imperative statement of the “Sun of Wisdom” as represented by the threefold names of Deity is to “Know God,” and that to “Know God,” “is the Beginning of Wisdom,” leads us at once to connect the process of the attainment of the goal of the Alchemist with a specific Divine Fiat.
21. The three greatest fiats ever known in connection with this planet and its evolution were, “let us make in our own image,” i.e., a reasoning creature; second, after Man's evolution was well under way — “Man, KNOW THYSELF”; third, “let there be Light.” Light is also wisdom.

22. As Man progresses through his incarnations and evolutionary waves, each human unit comes sooner or later to the realization of its divine ‘sonship’, and still later to its own inherent divinity in latency, and this realization when fully awakened means at-one-ment with God.

23. Therefore, when Man knows himself, he knows himself to be God in manifestation, because IN God and PART OF God, and INSEPARABLE from God at any moment of time, in eternity past or future.

24. And when Man knows himself to be a God in latency, he becomes at-one with God and KNOWS God. Because in the consciousness of God's immanence, and when the process of Man's development and unfoldment has reached this stage, that of KNOWING God, then wisdom just begins; for we are also told that the KNOWLEDGE of the Lord, (God) is the BEGINNING OF WISDOM.

25. Thus, going back to our starting point, the Sun, which is dual in its nature, i.e., a physical body for the inner spiritual Sun or God of our Solar System, we find resulting therefrom the Four Elements, the Three Principles or Substances, and finally in obedience to the primal fiat — Man.

26. And the process and progress of the Rosicrucian Art is therefore Man's unfoldment and his transformation from a state of Nature OR THE FOUR ELEMENTS-- to a state of GRACE by the proper application of the Three Principles and the Three Substances. The “State of Nature” being a state of ignorance and blind obedience to the guidance of Nature principles, and the “State of Grace” being the attainment of the state of Wisdom by the proper understanding of the Three Principles compounded of the Nature Principles or Four Elements.

27. The Ultimate goal therefore, of the Alchemists was the supreme or divine wisdom. And back of all the apparently incoherent jargon of allegorical, symbolical, and scientific nomenclature and formula, Wisdom will be seen to be their goal, plainly and indisputably to the initiate. Their processes, operations, coagulations, sublimations, etc., being symbolical of the processes, trials, tests, and victories of the seeker and pilgrim along the Path of Attainment.
28. Thus the term,

**Putrefactio**, means the gradual putrefaction and decomposition of the accretions of the Astral and Physical Bodies; desires, and lusts.

**Purefactio**, the purification of the lower vehicles of Man for the greater facility of use by the Ego;

**Regeneratio**, the act of being reborn in the Spirit. The penetration of the Soul and Body by the Divine heat of love, and the light of intelligence, emanating from the divine fire within the heart. The awakening and development of spiritual self-consciousness and self-KNOWLEDGE.

**Resurrectio** means the resurrection or initiation into a higher state of existence. It refers to the new life into which the perfected elements of a being enter after the imperfect ones with which they have been amalgamated have been destroyed.

29. The Solomonic advice is reiterated many times; in Proverbs I-7, we have “The fear (knowledge) of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

30. Again, Prov. IX-10, “The fear (knowledge) of the Lord is the BEGINNING OF WISDOM: and the knowledge of the holy is Understanding.”

31. Every student of these Hermetic Instructions is urgently requested to read carefully the 7th, 8th and 9th Chapters of Proverbs covering the whole of Solomon's teachings on the subject of wisdom.

32. It will be seen at once, that the only true goal of the Alchemists in the light of the Solomonic teachings and our present knowledge of the Hermetic Arts, could only have been the perfection and improvement of Man to the attainment of Wisdom, his transformation from a state of natural ignorance, to a state of grace or intelligence, which is wisdom; and finally, the attainment of the alchemical gold or Sol, which is the Sun of Wisdom through processes analogous to the transmutation of metals.

33. We are told that with the philosophical Stone we can accomplish great power.
34. Hear what wisdom sayeth of herself:

Prov. VIII, 10-36:
10. “Receive my instruction, AND NOT SILVER; and KNOWLEDGE, rather than choice GOLD.
11. For Wisdom is BETTER than RUBIES: and ALL THE THINGS THAT MAY BE DESIRED are not to be compared to it.
12. I wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.
13. The fear (knowledge) of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth do I hate.
14. COUNSEL is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, and I have strength.
15. By ME Kings reign, and princes decree justice.
16. By ME princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.
17. I love them that love me, and those that seek me early, SHALL FIND ME.
18. Riches and honour are with ME; yea, durable riches and righteousness.
19. My fruit is better than GOLD, yea than FINE GOLD; and my revenue than choice SILVER.
20. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgement.
21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.
22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
24. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no mountains abounding with water.
25. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.
26. While as yet he has not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
27. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth;
28. When he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep;
29. When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth;
30. Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.
31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.
32. Now therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.
33. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.
34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.
35. For whoso findeth ME, findeth LIFE, and shall obtain favor of the Lord.
36. But he that sinneth against ME, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death.”
35. Prov. IV-7. “WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding.” Rom.XI-33. “O depth of the riches both of the WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! How unsearchable are his judgements and his ways past finding out!” 1 Cor III-19. “For the Wisdom of THIS WORLD is foolishness with God.” 1 Cor III-18. “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.”

36. Fellow students, if WISDOM is the PRINCIPAL THING, if wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, if Wisdom was the one thing chosen in place of all else, by the personage who has been called the wisest among men, can we doubt that Wisdom in the esoteric or highest, inner sense was the one thing sought by our ancient and medieval Fraters?

37. The complicated processes of their art are the sure methods to success and ultimate attainment for us to follow if we would attain the sublime heights they undoubtedly attained, for those methods were based upon principles of proven scientific accuracy.

38. In the light of such wisdom as is manifest in the lines quoted, we can readily understand they are covered through truthful assertions of absolute power over all things, “for the Lord by Wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens…Let them not depart from thy eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion; So shall they be life unto thy soul.”

QUESTIONS

1. What is your definition of Putrefaction?

2. What is your definition of Purefaction?

3. What is your definition of Regeneration?

4. What is your definition of Resurrection?

PROBLEM

Send in a short essay, stating as briefly and concisely as possible your understanding of what constitutes the "Supreme Wisdom," and embodying the various points developed in this Instruction.

Sincerely yours,
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