

Profile

Inner Garden Foundation

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Introduction

Alchemy is an Art that requires a lifetime to understand, and an extended lifetime to master. The goal of Alchemy is to help Man and Nature in the fulfilment of their Growth, to quicken Nature's processes in pursuit of perfection - The Great Work. The main mode of operation can be summarized as 'the raising of vibrations', which applies to both the physical and the mental plane. The potential for perfection in essence is present throughout nature, but in a more course form. The Arcana or Quintessence within matter can be separated from its rags, and multiplied. The conversion from one body to another works in the physical as well as in the mental realm, like a vibration or an idea imprinting itself from one to another. The Inner Garden Foundation formulated the following definition of Alchemy and the Alchemical Tradition:

Alchemy: The art, philosophy and science of the actualization of man and nature by purifying and strengthening its life force and its attunement to the Divine. Its object of study is the Quintessence, the Light, its objective is the transformation of Mind and Matter.

Alchemical Tradition: A practical and esoteric tradition that is often identified as Hermeticism in the West, and which has been practiced by brotherhoods such as the Frères Aînés de la Rose+Croix, Gold und Rosenkreuz and Golden Dawn. Globally the tradition goes back to teachings of among others the Sarmounis and of Sufism, the Siddha Tradition, Pythagoreanism, Kabbalism.

From where does one take up an interest for Alchemy? Perhaps from a love of Nature, or a curiosity in the workings of Nature and the cycles of man and the world around us. For others an interest in natural medicine may have led them to the Art. Or perhaps something has been awakened in you during a spiritual journey, or a longing for wisdom or the promise of evolution and vitality that is inherent in nature, and is our long lost heritage.

Those that take up an interest in Alchemy are sometimes ridiculed. During most of the 20th century, historians of science have outright dismissed Alchemy as a "pseudo-science"¹, a farrago of symbols and parables to describe a spiritual and psychological tradition of self-transformation. Alchemy was seen as something hyperphysical and segregated from the scientific mainstream, a vain chimera of science and a gold-making fraud. But truth progresses in spite of scepticism, and more recently an increasing amount of serious anachronistic scholars have proven many prejudices wrong. A resurgence of investigations in the practical field has led to most interesting results, and a more coherent image of the place and extent of the Art². However, much is yet to be learned, and we have only begun to understand some fields within this diverse Art. Inner Garden is a Foundation for those that seek to light their path with that Lamp of Hidden Wisdom that has been transmitted through the ages in this beautiful and rich Tradition. A Tradition that finds its echoes throughout history in the most powerful of legends: the search for the Grail, the Philosopher's Stone, and the promise of Eternal Life.

Many have ventured upon the path of Alchemy and spent a lifetime in search for the Philosophers' Stone. Many have spent their family capital in the process, poisoned their lungs with metal vapours, became estranged from friends and family, and drove themselves to the edge of insanity in the maze of alchemical and archetypal symbols that constituted their fabric of reality. Cycliani relates:

Heaven having granted me success in making the Philosophers' Stone, after having spent 37 years in seeking it, stayed awake at least 1500 nights without sleep, suffering innumerable miseries and irreparable losses. I have decided to offer to youth, the hope of the future, the heart-rending picture of my life. This may serve both as a lesson and at the same time help the young to turn away from an art that at first may offer

1 Cf. Hanegraaff, W. J. Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism. Leiden, Brill Academic Pub., 2006.

2 Cf. Ibid.

the most delightful white and red roses that, however, are surrounded by thorns and of which the path the leads to the place where one can pick them is full of pitfalls.³

Cycliani then proceeds to describe the hardships he had gone through in his search for the Stone. To avoid such waste of time and resources, students of the Art often try to cooperate more closely with one another, nowadays mainly through forums on the internet. Sharing knowledge is a form of symbiosis, where students can learn from each other, and thus do not have to reinvent the wheel at every step of the way. The whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. However, the forums on the internet count few meaningful and in-depth discussions, either because advanced alchemists are reluctant to post about intimate alchemical secrets on a public forum, or simply because there is no incentive to post any intermediate results when there is only superficial feedback or no feedback at all from other forum members. The Inner Garden Foundation was created as a private research group, where knowledge is shared within the confines of a hermetic group, reminiscent of the Hermetic Brotherhoods of old.

The Group

Inner Garden is an association of a small elite of students of Alchemy that believe in the benefits of collaborative research that is carried out in a private circle. In the past Hermetic Brotherhoods were formed as a vehicle to advance secret or specific knowledge and wisdom in peace. Knowledge is one of the few commodities that grows by sharing, provided it is shared in the right context and environment.

Basil Valentine for example worked with a small group of monks within the protective walls of the monastery to fathom the mysteries of Philosophical Antimony. Not all monks worked on the same project, and by processing the Philosophical Antimony in different ways, a whole spectrum of characteristics was covered. The results were shared within the group and served as cross-pollination for others and further experimentation. The knowledge Basil Valentine passed on in his books gives us a glimpse of the high level of achievement they reached. Inner Garden is a partnership of researchers and students of the Art that seek to advance in that same spirit of brotherhood.

Inner Garden Foundation was formally established on summer solstice in 2010. It is a non-profit organization, set-up solely for the advancement of its Partners/members and the emancipation of Alchemical knowledge. It is sovereign in the sense that it has no bonds with any other organization. Exploitation of discoveries or teachings of the foundation for profit or financial gain is prohibited.

Heritage

From remote antiquity, and through successive intervals in the higher spheres of mind, the tradition of an Art has circulated; but so dark and enigmatical as to evade vulgar apprehension entirely and baffle the most acute.⁴

Alchemy has been practised since ancient times, according to legend by the Lemurians at first, who later carried it into India. Some dare trace it aeons back, even to what in Hindu time units would be the beginning of the present Kalpa. Fragments of books under authorship of the great Rāmacandra have survived to this very day. Through the rise and fall of many races, alchemy found its way through history in lighter and darker periods. Some believe it had one of its golden ages 125.000 years ago in Lemuria, practised by the lesser Gods and the most advanced men of that race. Before Lemuria sank beneath the waters of the Pacific, it was carried into India, where it has been practised until today. The Atlanteans however also practised the Art. They carried it into Northern Africa with the submersion of Atlantis.

The Egyptians were the heir of this knowledge. With the fall of Indian culture in one of the more recent equinoctial cycles of evolution, the best of the race travelled westward and met the custodians of the Atlantean knowledge, and the knowledge of the two races was combined. Then finally, in the present cycle, when intellectual darkness settled towards the beginning of our current

³ Cycliani, Hermes Unveiled. 1831

⁴ Atwood, M.A. A Suggestive Inquiry Into the Hermetic Mystery. Belfast, William Tait, 1918, revised.

era, and through the subsequent rule and censorship of the church, Arabia became the custodian of the Lamp of hidden Wisdom.

In addition to the writings in stone that were left by the Egyptians, Arabian manuscripts probably provide the most 'original' of sources, and the Inner Garden Foundation gratefully draws upon that heritage, most notably with regard to the Inner Work. Today the true nature of the Alchemical tradition is known by few. A steady stream of books is becoming available on the subject today, but one will often find they excel in superficiality or romantic superstitions. The discredit done to Alchemy in the last centuries has firmly marked the Art in a deleterious way. However, as mentioned, a turn towards the better is observed in the current Age of Aquarius, and its pioneers are ready to move onward, forward.

The Inner Garden Foundation is fortunate to be able to draw on the valuable resource of an ancient line of Alchemical transmission. Through the kind patronage of our senior brothers, the foundation has access to the Arabic teachings as they were before the dark ages of growing ignorance. We honour the Masters of old, the Poor Knights of Christ and our Muslim Brothers of the House of Wisdom "Bayt Al Hikmah".

Aim

Each of us have our individual paths and each of us share some collective paths. Generally we tend to move toward an increase in consciousness, a purification of the soul, or 'the raising of vibration' as mentioned earlier. Alchemy is the art of raising vibrations in both Matter and in Spirit. It refers to a compound of practical, psychological, nature-philosophical, mystical and medical aspects. The core of the alchemical tradition consists of a practical, exoteric component and a practical and theoretical, esoteric component.

Some students of the Royal Art focus mostly on the spiritual aspects of the path, whereas others feel labwork and 'learning through the hands' is the principal way to internalize knowledge and wisdom and fathom the secret laws of God and Nature. Traditionally alchemists were involved in both the internal and external paths. They had both an Oratory and a Lab, hence the conjunction 'laboratory'. The Oratory was a space dedicated for meditation and prayer, often arranged as a secluded sanctuary within the lab, and the lab itself was the place for the "labora"- the physical work. These alchemists of old found the material and spiritual to be complementary in their search for the Stone. In line with the adage "A healthy mind in a healthy body" they set out to purify both the body and mind. The spiritual path helped them to remove gross cognitive misconceptions, fears, and destructive phantoms within the mind. The controlled intake of their medicinal potions allowed them to remove physical blockages and at the same time mental blockages that otherwise would lead to imbalance and sickness.

This raising of vibrations has been an ongoing quest throughout the history of mankind. In Alchemy it became known as the quest for the Philosophers' Stone. Many legends in some way or another relate to this quest. In Eisenbach's *Parcival* for example the Grail is described as an emerald stone rather than a cup. The Royal Art of making this Stone links the world of creation to the material world, and on a personal level changes the very fabric of one's reality. In that light the attributions of the Stone as the fountain of youth, able to bestow immortality, and to transmute lead into gold, can be considered both a spiritual and physical reality. As above, so below. What form this will take in our own lives and personal paths, we can only learn per adventure. The Inner Garden Foundation is meant to serve as a platform for like-minded souls to inform each other and stimulate each other in this quest.

It should be noted that the Foundation's activities primarily revolve around applied research of external Alchemy and Internal Alchemy. External Alchemy includes the analysing and rediscovering the processes involved in the production of Elixirs, the Primum Ens, the Alkahest, the Circulatum Minus, and other alchemical products. More specifically the aims of the foundation are formulated as follows:

- a. to promote and conduct research on traditional and modern forms of Alchemy. This research involves both internal and external Alchemy;*

- b. to collect and combine knowledge about Alchemy, and sharing that knowledge with partners worldwide;*
- c. to propagate and pass on the Alchemical Tradition and its nature-philosophical lifestyle and mystical heritage;*
- d. to perform any further operations which in the broadest sense are connected with the above or could advance or facilitate the above.*

The foundation tries to achieve its aims by inter alia the following:

- a. to carry out applied research about the form and value of (traditional) alchemical processes, both individually and as a group, concerning both internal and external Alchemy;*
- b. to research alchemical medicine and methods of healing in the broadest sense;*
- c. to explore the nature's finer forces and the laws of harmony;*
- d. to carry out transcriptions and translations of manuscripts on alchemy, and recording new knowledge;*
- e. to organize trainings, courses and initiations in the field of Alchemy;*
- f. to exchange results from the above with Partners and public dissemination among others as (e-) publications of a selection of hereof.*

The Foundation works predominantly according to the scientific method – investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, correcting and integrating previous knowledge; all on the basis of observable, empirical and measurable evidence. Structured and well documented forms of experimentation have been found to be most satisfactory. One should be aware though that modern science has thrown out the baby with the bathwater. Where there used to be both a Lab and an Oratory, now there is only a lab. The principle of animation (Sulphur), and the principle of Spirit (Mercury) are not measurable in a quantitative sense and are therefore ignored. It is advised to seek to combine the advantages of modern labware and the scientific mindset, with the careful and intuitive approach of nature's finer forces, and the respect for divine revelations in our Oratory.

Code of Ethics

For is it not that very light which in us looks out beaming in our eyes that, directed within, and being purified also, and scientifically inquiring, discovers at last that other light which is the substance of its own, until light meeting light apprehends itself alone?⁵

This statement poetically sums up the most important attributes that we as students should adopt, as well as the ultimate destiny of the journey towards the Light.

Many achievements in the field of Alchemy are the result of a group effort rather than individual research. As mentioned the works of Basil Valentine may astound the reader in their detail and the amount of research that has been put in different applications and different forms of processing of Antimony., and that this was not a single monk at work, but a group of monks, each concentrating on different paths and processes, and each sharing the information with the group and helping each other to greater understanding. Life is relatively short, and the path to a possible prolongation of life or health is uncertain. There are a number of private and hermetic research groups, in which practitioners learn from each other and freely share information. This is in the

⁵ Atwood, M.A. A Suggestive Inquiry Into the Hermetic Mystery. Belfast, William Tait, 1918, revised.

same spirit as monks that shared the secrets of the trade of wine making, application of herbs or Alchemy within the wall of the monastery. They dedicated their efforts in expanding upon knowledge. In the same way the aim of modern-day groups generally is the development and exchange of information resulting from alchemical research. The main tool in achieving this aim is a form of information management by the group as a whole, involving the organization, structuring, and distribution of information.

In this light each student is encouraged to make a continuous effort to overcome motives of mere personal salvation or spiritual superiority over others. The world is out of joint, or ready for improvement, and it has always needed progressive minds to adjust the dislocation and to become in tune again with the forces of nature. We ask students to try to develop an attitude of modesty and mindfulness, a scientific and inquiring mind, and a willingness to co-operate.

Partners/members of our Foundation adhere to a code as scientists as well as that of brothers in a fraternity. The waste of energy on personal attacks about groundbreaking or controversial research as we see in the scientific world at large, is avoided when operating in the sense of brotherhood. As a group we aim to engage in full no-holds-barred debates on theoretical or practical issues. Successful cooperation in this sense requires one to purify one's intention and to realize that the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts.

A third ethical code relates to financial gain. The Inner Garden Foundation does not have commercial motives. We advise caution in the field of Alchemy with regard to commercial enterprises that ask a contribution beyond a regular group membership to cover the material or a remuneration related to tutelage. A faithful intention and directing ones attention within, will lead to revelation. As action and re-action follow each other in nature, so also inevitably revelation and faith act and re-act. The greatest teachers have strived to encourage of this faith within, and offered the keys to self-initiation, and natural progression through the Hierarchy of Knowledge.

Code of Secrecy

A fourth ethical code is related to secrecy. This code is addressed separately to underline its importance. The Inner Garden Foundation is a Hermetic Brotherhood, which means that we share knowledge within the confines of our group, refrain from publicity and adhere to a code of secrecy. Fortunately, in this day and age alchemists are no longer beheaded for turning lead into gold. Nevertheless experience has shown that advancements in this field are better kept private. The term brotherhood does not mean women are excluded; man and women are equally welcome to the Foundation.

Access of information

Most forms of grade systems with badges, titles, diplomas or levels will at a certain point distract from the Great Work. A grade system, however, may be functional in the early stages of the Work. The Hierarchy of Knowledge and the revelation thereof demand a step by step initiation into the Art. One has to be able to crawl, before one can start to learn to walk, especially if one intends to walk the "straight and narrow path". Those who have shown progress and have contributed a fair share of research to the foundation, will be given access to more information. These access levels of information also serve to protect the foundation's assets from unscrupulous members who do not have the intention to contribute anything themselves.

In order to help beginning students through the initial stages of the work and to help set and achieve their aims, senior students from the foundation usually volunteer to act as a proctor or personal coach or guide. This is on a voluntary basis, so there is no guarantee that a proctor will step forward right from the start of admittance as candidate partner of the foundation. The student may have to prove his worth first in order to get noticed by a potential proctor. The senior student is primarily responsible for monitoring his/her progress and contributions in knowledge, and to recommend him or her for advancement.

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