

# An Anonymous Treatise Concerning the Philosopher's Stone

Therefore, my son, be fully warned against the sophistry of Alchemy and all sophisticating, deceitful people. Beware of them as you would beware of the devil who works mischief. Avoid them as an impure, pitiless, and consuming fire, even as a deadly poison, for a man comes to destruction of both body and soul, honour, goods, through this sophistry and self-insinuating false Alchemy. It is worse than the devil himself, for it is possible to expend (the wealth of) a whole kingdom thereon; yet everything is destroyed, and no fundamental truth is found out. Accordingly, open your eyes. Recognize the only key; avoid falsity, for it is impossible in any other way to obtain anything true or profitable, save in that way which I have now shewn in this book.

My noble and dear Son, in order that I may communicate to you, in the briefest manner, my knowledge of the right, true, philosophical Stone, now know and understand that this Stone is composed of two things, Body and Spirit, to wit, male and female seed, that is, Mercurial Water and Corpus Sols, as may be read in all philosophical works.

And it is the general opinion that Mercury --- free from foreign admixture --- should first be dissolved in a spiritual water, called by philosophers primary matter of metals, Liquor Lunae, Aqua Vitae, Quintessence, with which water, or primary matter, the metals are delivered and freed from their rigid, frozen bonds, and are dissolved into their primary nature, like mercurial water itself. Hence philosophers, in their books, have illustrated their meaning by saying that ice dissolves into water by means of heat, because it was water before its coagulation. For everything is reducible to its primary condition. Therefore, also, philosophers have written that the species or forms of metals cannot be changed into gold and silver before being first reduced to their primary matter.

With respect to this regeneration of metals, observe well, my son, that the same can take place by means of the primary matter of metals --- i.e., mercurial water alone, and through nothing else in the world. For this water has the greatest affinity to metallic nature, so that --- after equal mixture --- it can never be separated from the same.

Therefore have philosophers, in the *Turba* and other books, indicated this water, saying: Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature preserves, improves, unites with, reduces, and exalts Nature. Hence it is necessary to know how to prepare the Blessed Water, which water is a fiery penetrating spirit, a philosophical water, and the hidden key to this Art. For, verily, without this water all Alchemy is vain. Therefore, my son, remember that the whole Fundament of the Philosopher's Stone consists in bringing to a new birth the primary matter of metals --- i.e., Mercurial Water, the perfect Corpus Solis --- that it be born again by water and of the spirit, just as Christ says: "Except a man be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God". So also here in this art, I tell thee, my son: except Corpus Solis be sowed, all else is vain, and there will be no fruit. Even as Christ says: "except the Seed fall into the earth and die, it shall bear no fruit". When, now, Corpus Solis has been born again through water and the Spirit, it grows up a purified, astral, everlasting, immortal body, bringing much fruit and multiplying after the manner of vegetables.

Concerning this Roger Bacon says: I declare unto you that if the Astrum (Star) turn its inclination to, and impress it on, this clarified gold body, I can nevermore lose its virtue and power. For the body is perfect,

composed of, and agreeable to, all the elements. Therefore, my son, let him not attempt this Art who knows not of this new birth in nature, and this bringing forth of metals through the water and spirit of primary matter. For, believe me, all else is useless, vain, and deceiving. Hence philosophers have written that: “Everything brings forth its like; and what a man sows that shall he reap”.

Therefore says the Philosopher Richard, the Englishman: Sow gold and silver, that they, by means of Nature, may bring forth fruit.

Hence, my son, for thy work seek no other body but gold, as others are all imperfect. For gold is the most perfect of bodies, enlightening and vivifying all others, stable in fire, possessing a fixed, incombustible root; and, as Bacon testifies, one can alter nothing in the nobility and perfection of gold, it being free from all natural ferment, and no substance in the world is more perfect. Therefore, says Isaac the Philosopher: “The Stone can only be extracted from a perfect body, the most perfect in the world. For, were this body not perfect, how should we extract therefrom a Stone having power to give life to all mortal, to purify all corrupt, to soften all harden, and harden all soft bodies? Verily, it were impossible to extract to excellent a Stone from an imperfect body! Although many attempt it, yet they are fools”. Therefore, my son, understand that the red, philosophical, Sulphur is a gold, as Richard testifies, and King Calid also states: “Our Sulphur is no common Sulphur, but is of Mercurial nature, stable, fleeing no water”. Other Philosophers also bear witness that their Red Sulphur is gold.

Now, my son, the Sages say in their books that common gold and silver are not their gold or silver, since theirs are living, while the common are dead, and therefore incapable of imparting to others the perfection they themselves are wanting in. Now, my son, those words of the Philosophers are true; it is impossible for common gold or silver to perfect other imperfect bodies, except --- as I have said before --- the *Corpus Solis* and *Lunae* be born again through the Water and Spirit of Primary Matter, and arise as a transfigured, spiritual, clarified, externally fixed, subtle, penetrating body, which afterwards shall have power to perfect and multiply imperfect bodies. Therefore have our Philosophers said: For this reason are such labours undertaken on our Stone, that its tincture may be improved, for our Stone must be much more subtle and decocted than common gold and silver. Bernhardus says: “We therefore take this body as created by nature. But it is necessary to more than perfect the masculine body by natural art in order that in its more-than-perfection it may render the imperfect perfect, by its superabundant fertility in weight, colour, and substance. And, if its perfection were not greater in degree than that imparted by Nature, what use would our time of nine-and-a-half months be?”. Hence Arnoldus de Villa Nova, in his Epistle concerning our Stone, says: “The power and virtue and nature of gold and silver are in the Stone, else no gold or silver could be made. But the gold and silver in our Stone are better than the common, since the former are living. Hence Philosophers call the Stone their gold and silver, because the same are in it potentially and essentially, but not visibly”. Euclides says: “A perfect thing is unchangeable. For example, bread. Bread, baked and kneaded, is perfect in degree and nature, has attained its final form, and of it can be made nothing but bread. Thus also with philosophical gold. Hence it is impossible to perfect other bodies with common gold, except the perfect *Corpus Solis* be again dissolved into its primary matter, whereupon it is converted by our Art into a veritable Ferment or Tincture, philosophers saying the process is not finished until Sol and Luna are joined into one body. My son, understand here the *Luna Metaphorica*, not the literal, since philosophers explain Luna to be of a cold, moist nature, giving the same definition also to Mercury. Hence by Luna is understood Mercury, or Mercurial Water, or primary matter, which is the Philosophers’ Luna, or *Liquor Lunae* of the *Clangor Buccinae*.

Now, my son, you have a short explanation why it is impossible to do anything in this Art, except we reduce perfect bodies, by philosophical fire or mercurial water, to their primary nature, which primary nature is a Sulphureous Water, and not Quicksilver as Sophists assert. For the primary matter of metals is not Quicksilver, by a sticky, sulphureous steam, and a viscous water, in which water are united in the three principles, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury. Therefore it is necessary to know the Blessed Water of Mercury, or celestial, supernatural fire, by which bodies are dissolved and fused. This knowledge is the greatest secret and is revealed by God alone. For the Philosopher Bacon says: God Almighty has created man above Nature and all creatures --- although man is of Nature, excepting the Breath of God breathed into him at the creation --- and he shall be the lord of Nature's works. This Divine Spirit fashions the mind and thoughts of man, teaching him to perceive the first principles of Nature. The inspired Apostle, St Peter, tells us that the Earth and its work shall consume therein, and a new world shall be born, beautiful and good, as is described in the Apocalypse. Thence the Philosopher concludes --- like St Peter --- that the elemental world can only be destroyed by fire. Therefore, remember in this Art that fire is the instrument, according to Nature's example, and, next, understand further that this water, whereby Corpus Solis (gold) --- which, as Roger Bacon testifies, is a world perfectly created --- is burnt, destroyed, and melted, is not a common fire -- since common fire can neither burn nor destroy gold --- but a supernatural, inconsumable fire, which alone has power to burn gold and release it from its hard, rigid bonds. Also, my son, understand that this supernatural fire, possessing such power over gold and other metallic bodies, is alone the spiritual, sulphureous, fiery water of Mercury, in which Corpus Solis is fused and burnt; and, out of this melting and destruction, is again born and created a new world, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, i.e., an eternal, clarified subtle, penetrating, stable body, which can penetrate and perfect all other bodies. Hence Bacon says: "Just as a supernatural or elemental fire is that which disintegrates and fuses the elements of the whole world, and as the new Creation will be born from the mortal, molten elements, and will be an eternal Creation; even so has the Holy Trinity in the Celestial Stone also revealed to us a supernatural fire. My son, philosophers in their books have concealed this Fire, describing it in parables, and by countless names; in particular, they call it Mary's Bath, and a horse-dung, Menstruum, Urine, Milk, Blood, Aqua Vitae, etc.". Concerning this Fire, Bernhardus says: "Make a vaporous fire, steady, digesting, not strong, subtle, airy, clear, condensed, inconsumable, penetrating, and equable". And he continues: "Verily, I tell thee, all wisdom is in this fire, for the said vaporous fire performs all things". Hence he directs us to copy his words concerning this fire, word for word. Therefore, a wise man will easily understand that such words refer not to a common, but to a supernatural fire. Hence Maria says: "The Element Water makes white and melts bodies". Concerning the preparation of this fire --- which he calls menstruum --- Raymundus Lullius says in his books (which are *Testam. Test. Noviss., Codicil, Anima Metallorum, Lux Mercuriorum, Liber Mercurius, Liber de Secretis Naturae, de Quintessentia*, and especially in *Elucidarium Testamenti*, Chap. 4: That it is not of men but of Angels to reveal this Celestial Fire, for therein is the greatest secret; and he indicates in figurative words that such Fire of the Sages is composed of horsedung and living chalk. What living chalk represents I will explain elsewhere. As to "horsedung", I have already indicated that it is the water of primary matter, for the same is warm and moist. But it is not common horsedung, as many ignorantly imagine. Therefore the Philosopher Alanus says: "Philosophers have named the moist fire horsedung, in which moisture is retained the latent heat; and it is the property of the fire in the horse's belly not to destroy gold, but to multiply it by reason of its moisture". Alchidonius says: "Verily our medicine is to be hidden in horsedung, which is the Sages' Fire". And Alanus: "Dear son, be diligent in disintegrating, and the same must take place in gentle heat, that is, in tepid horsedung". So also Arnold de Villa Nova, Chap. 9 (Concerning Heat), says that "the heat of horsedung is its fire". And Alphidius: "Let it be boiled and buried in the warmth of horsedung". Alos Aristiteles: "The Earth, or body, will rejoice in no strength unless sublimated by horsedung". Hermes: "Roast and boil it in the warmth of the horse's belly". And Morienus: "If thou find not

what thou seekest in horsedung, spare thyself further expense". Arnoldus: "And seek no other fire but this, for this is the Sages' Fire and Furnace. This water dissolves and calcines all metals, and fuses them white and red". Therefore say the Turba and Senior: Our water is the fire, and our water is stronger than all fire, making out of gold a pure spirit, which natural fire cannot do, although natural fire also belongs to it. For or water, penetrating the natural metal, converts it into primary water, and afterwards into an earth or powder, which burns gold more than natural fire. Hence gold more than natural fire. Hence Calid says: "It is verily a fire burning and destroying all things". But philosophers have concealed the preparation of this philosophical water or fire, i.e., Mercurial Water. Raymundus Lullius has written most plainly concerning the same: "And it will first be necessary to purify Mercury from its external moisture and earthy earthiness, but not with pernicious, destructive things, whereby its noble, fruitful, teeming nature would be destroyed". Avicenna, Arnold, Geber, Raymundus in the Codicil, and others, assert that Mercury is best purified by the sublimation of common, prepared salt. By treating the sublimate with hot water, the spirit of salt is dissolved out. Dry the sublimate, and mix with Tartaric Salt. Heat several times in a retort, when the Mercury will distill over vivified, and in this way will be somewhat freed from external moisture and impurities. This purgation, says Bernhardus, is not injurious, since the hot water and salt penetrate it not. But, my son, understand that Mercury cannot be thoroughly purified by external treatment, since it is a homogeneous, indivisible substance, "whose impurities penetrate its inmost being, and can therefore be removed by no sublimation". Hence another means must here be sought, viz., that of dissolving purified Quicksilver and loosing its natural bonds, and changing it into its primary, which is a sulphureous, spiritual water. Bacon and Raymundus Lullius both testify that unless purification and solution be effected, the menstruum will not be worth a fig.

When now Mercury is freed from its bond and resolved into its primary water, we can inwardly purify it, and, by distillation, separate the spirit from the water and earthy earthiness. Concerning which separation the philosophers have written mysteriously, and in particular have discovered the same figuratively in the distillation of wine. For in vinous distillation we see that the spirit of wine is mixed with much water and earthy impurity. But, by artificial distillation, the spirit can be separated from phlegmatic wateriness and earthy impurity, a residue remaining. From which residue, after calcinations, is extracted a white salt which --- added to the spirit, and repeatedly distilled --- produces a spirit mightily strengthened and sharpened by this salt of nitre. Verily the above is a figurative description given us by philosophers, which we should follow in the preparation of Mercurial Water. Since the same --- after disintegration and solution, i.e., similarly to wine --- can, by sublimation, be separated from the water or phlegm, rectified, etc. And, verily, no one has written more clearly concerning the preparation of his Mercurial Water than Raymund Lullius, viz., in *Test. Noviss.*, also in *Liber Mecurorium* (Test. I), etc., etc., in which he plainly enough declares that, after putrefaction, distillation, and separation of philosophical spirits of wine, the spiritual water is again mingled into its earth, and distilled over the alembic, further explaining how the said philosophical wine, or menstruum, is sharpened and strengthened with a salt.

This Water Menstruum, or philosophical spirits of wine, therefore, dissolves its own body, or animated Mercury, into the primary matter, or water, by which it can then be indefinitely multiplied with the help of putrefaction and distillation. Arnold de Villa Nova writes concerning this water thus: "There is a crumbling substance containing a fatty mixture, from which substance the master separates Philosophers' Liquid, which is suitable for the work and exceedingly clear. Therein dwells the Fifth Essence (Quintessence) Metallically, and the same has affinity to metals, and in it is the Tincture to be brought together, as being a perfect metal, for it has within itself the nature of Quicksilver and of Sulphur".

I will here (although forbidden) quote *Rosarium Philosophorum* concerning the distillation of this menstruum, or water: "In the distillation of the spirit care must be taken, and the vessels in which thou purifiest thy spirit must be of glass, that the spirit find not a place to flow out, by reason of its quickness. For if the Red Spirit escape, the Artist labours in vain. Artists call the Red Spirit a blood, and menstruum; therefore take heed with thy vessels that thou collect the dry spirit with its blood by itself in a receptacle, without diminution of its strength, so that thou mayst store up the same for future use". But, in distillation, seeing is more than writing. Hence nobody should be a master before having been a disciple. Therefore be careful in the work. Place a receptacle beneath, and distil first --- with gentle heat --- the element of water. Set the same aside, substituting another receptacle; close well the joints, that the spirit escape not, and increase the fire a little. Then will rise in the helmet, and distill over, a dry, yellow spirit; keep the fire steady while the helmet is yellow. Afterwards, when the helmet begins to get red, increase the fire slowly, and deep it so until the Red Spirit and the Blood have quite distilled out, passing through the helmet like clouds in the air. When the Red Spirit has distilled over, the helmet will become white. Then cease quickly, and thou hast in the receptacle the two elements, Air and Fire, and thus hast extracted the right dry spirit, and hast separated the pure from the impure. Behold, thou hast now the primary matter of metals, having thus separated the pure from the impure! Behold, thou hast now the water in which all metals have their origin, which is of all metals the root! Hence are they dissolved into water, even as frozen ice is resolved into water, since the same clearly was water in the first place. Therefore marvel not at this, for all things upon earth have their root in water. Oh, how many are there that, working, never think of this root, which is the key of the whole work? The same immediately dissolves bodies, is father and mother, opens out and locks up, and reduces bodies to their primary matter. It dissolves bodies, coagulating itself with them, and the Spirit of the Lord is led forth upon the Water, i.e., the strength of the spirit is seen to be active therein, and this takes place when the body is placed in this water. And the philosopher adds: "Behold the base thing with which our Sanctuary has been opened! For it is a thing well known by everyone; ye, he who understands it not finds it seldom or never. The wise man keeps it, the fool throws it away, and its reduction is easy to the initiated". But, my son, the freeing of this Stone, or Mercury, from its natural bonds, and its resolution into primary water, is the greatest and most secret of mysteries. And, without it, all else were vain, for we could not separate or extract the right spirit or Watery Essence that dissolves bodies. And this dissolving has been kept secret by all philosophers, and they have paced the revealing of the same in God's hand, and have cursed the man who should punish it. Hence they have spoken briefly and with subtlety of this resolution, that the same might remain hidden from the ignorant. But, thou, my son, observe that such resolution of Animated Mercury can hardly be effected without the proper means (coagulation). But, observe further, that here are not to be used sophisticated means, like those used by ignorant fools who, reducing common Mercury to water by sophisticated contrivances, vainly imagine they possess the true water. They sublime Mercury with all manner of corrosive salts and vitriols (whereby the sublimate generates Spirits of Salt), and, afterwards, dissolve the sublimate into water in a bath, cellar, and otherwise. They also make it into a water by means of Salmiac, herbs, soaps, aquafortis, with strange vessels, and such like sophisticated methods, which are, altogether, great phantasy, foolishness, and vanity; and then they imagine they can again separate such things from Mercurial Water, and thus obtain the true water desired of philosophers. But all is false, and they find not what they seek. And the cause of their failure is their neglect of the teaching of philosophers, who plainly declare that it should be mixed with no foreign matter. Bernhardus says in his Epistle: When Mercury is dried by Salt, Aquafortis, or other thing, it is no more suitable for philosophical work; for, dried by Salts, Alums, and Aquafortis, it dissolves not any more. But, thou, my son, remember what I now tell thee, and what philosophers have, in their books. Revealed to the understanding, that this water is to be prepared with no foreign matter in the world, but alone by Nature, with Nature, and out of Nature. These are to the understanding plain, clear words, which I will not in this

place explain more at length, but will embody them in a Treatise. Yet as an aid to memory give you the following verses:

Take it fresh, pure, living white and clear,  
Then bind firmly both hands and feet  
With the very strongest cords,  
That it suffocate and die.  
In the closed House of Putrefaction,  
According to nature's example,  
Let the same Nature dissolve it  
Into the same Nature dissolve it  
Into pure and beautiful primary matter.  
Then shall it be a living, spiritual Fount,  
Flowing from heaven pure and clear;  
Eating its own flesh and blood,  
Whereby it is multiplied.

He who, by Divine Aid, has attained this Blessed Water, let him praise God; for he holds in his hands the key with which he can unlock the treasure houses containing gold, silver, precious stones, honour, power, and health. This Blessed Water is by philosophers called Pluto's Daughter, having power over all treasures. She is also called the white, pure, tender, undefiled Virgin Bega, without whom no bringing forth nor mingling can take place. Therefore have philosophers married this pure, tender Virgin to Gabricus, that she might bear fruit; and Gabricus, having known her, died. Bega, by reason of her great love, swallowed and devoured her great love, swallowed and devoured him, as Aristotelese cleverly shews in Turba Philosophurum; and Bernhardus in his Practica says: "The fount is to the king as a mother, whom she bears within herself, and kills him. But the king rises again, and becomes so strong that no man can wound him". Hence philosophers say: "Although the king is, before the world, more precious and worthy than Bega, yet alone can he bear no fruit". This Virgin and Blessed Water have philosophers in their books called by a thousand names, as a Heaven, Celestial Water, Heavenly Rain, Heavenly or May Dew, Water of Paradise, Aqua Regia, Corrosive Aqua Fortis, a sharp vinegar and brandy, a Quintessence of Wine, a waxy green juice, a waxy Mercury, a water becoming green, and Green Lion, a Quicksilver, a Menstruum, a Blood and Mesntruum, urine and horse-urine, Milk, and Virgin's Milk, white *Arsenic*, Silver, a moon and a humour of the moon, a woman and woman's seed, a sulphureous, steamy water and smoke, a fiery burning spirit, a mortal penetrating poison, a basilisk which kills everything, an envenomed worm, a poisonous snake, a dragon, a poisonous serpent which devours its offspring, a strong fire, and a clear fire, a fire of horse dung and horse dung, a sharp salt and sal armoniac, a saltary and common salt, a sharp soap, lye, and viscous oil, an ostrich-stomach which devours and digests an eagle, a vulture and hermetic bird, a seal and vessel of Hermes, a smelting and calcining stove. Innumerable other names of beasts, birds, vegetables, waters, humours, of milk, of blood, and of men have been given to it. Philosophers have spoken of it in their books, moreover, in a figurative manner, that such a water should be made out of such things, and all the fools who have sought it in such things, have never found the desired water.

But, know this, my dearest son, that it is only made out of live Mercury, and from no other foreign thing in the world. The philosophers have given it these many names in order that the unwise may never know it. And you, my son, will have concluded the first part of this treatise, when you understand and know, that without this fire all the toil of the whole world and of alchemy is mere loss, and all alchemical processes are

a delusion, unprofitable and false. For the Great Rosary says: “The receipt consists of only one thing, and with this key all the books of the philosophers are particularly and universally closed, and surrounded and guarded as with a strong wall. He who has no yet acquired the key can never enter the fortified castle, or obtain anything profitable. For this water is the one only key for opening the metallic walls. Further, this water is the strong aquafortis which Isaac refers to in his fragmentary work, and wherewith he dissolved bodies and made them spiritual. Therefore, diligently note, all alchemical work without this is only lies and falsify, whether metallic, mineral, vegetable, or animal substances are used. It is dissolved, sublimated, distilled, calcinated, extracted, mixed, compounded, as one will. One may dissolve it in cellars, in the bath, in dung, in aquafortis, and in all manner of strong waters, in every possible way, as the alchemical processes direct. We may make oil, water, lime, powder, black, white, yellow, and red. We may burn it, we may melt it in any possible fashion, even as the alchemical receipts tell us, and call it the true means for making gold and silver, yet from beginning to end it is abomination and falsity. I myself, with my own hands (for once I disbelieved this), have experienced such loss and damage.

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