



THE SEVEN BASICS

The beginning Alchemist needs to open himself up to certain influences as well as commence an internal purification regimen. The influences referred to are the planetary influences. A method of accomplishing this, which, amongst other things, is necessary prior to the commencement of the Opus Major, is to ingest tinctures made from herbs coming under the dominion of specific planetary rays. In addition, one can use this regimen to obtain certain medicinal or healing benefits. The latter obtains by selecting those herbs that have been declared as influencing certain parts of the body or having curative effects for specific ailments.

For example, referring to Culpepper's Herbal we find that Rosemary is an herb that can correct loss of speech or a weak memory. We also find that Rosemary is an herb that corresponds to or is under the influence of the Sun. Marjoram is said to be good for such problems as loss of appetite, infirmities of the spleen and disorders of the stomach and bowels, amongst other things. Marjoram falls under the dominion of Mercury. Now, since it is necessary to select one herb falling under the rulership of each of the seven planets of the ancients, make a tincture from these and partake of the appropriate tincture on each day of the week, it can be seen that the medicinal "by-product" can easily be come by.

That is, the tincture to be taken on Sunday should be made from an herb under the rulership of the Sun. Any such herb as chamomile, eyebright, angelica, etc. can be used. However, if one wishes to try and correct a problem of speech, then one should select rosemary. For stomach problems, chamomile would be the proper Sun herb. Again, for Wednesday's herb, under the dominion of Mercury, one can choose fennel, bittersweet, horehound and marjoram as examples. To correct a problem afflicting the bowels, one would choose marjoram. Using Culpepper's Herbal, Kloss' "Back to Eden" and other such texts, one can find seven herbs that address specific problems that might yield to these tinctures. All in all, one will finally wind up with seven different herbs such as Chamomile for Sunday, Cleavers for Monday, Sarsaparilla for Tuesday, Fennel for Wednesday, Agrimony for Thursday and so on.

These herbs need to be converted to a tincture by macerating with an appropriate menstruum. To extract all that the herb can yield in benefits, two menstrooms in combination should be used. These are pure water and absolute alcohol. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining absolute (200 proof) alcohol, a slightly inferior substitute, much more easily obtained, may be used. This substitute is in fact a combination of alcohol and water and is known as Vodka. Happily any liquor store can supply this item. Usually Vodka comes in two potencies (proofs) 80 or 100 proof. Use the stronger potency for the seven basics, 100 proof Vodka. ('pure water' =distilled)

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The following procedure should utilize herbs that are ground fine. Powdered will be the best. Using coarse herbs, fill a clean jar about two thirds full with the herb and "top" this with 100 proof Vodka. That is, pour over enough Vodka to cause the liquid level to rise one finger's breadth over the top of the herbs. The herbs will absorb a fair amount of the Vodka it should be noted. Using powdered herbs, less herb and Vodka should be used to prevent "caking" of the herb. A little experience here will soon show the best proportions. Label the jar now and loosely cover. Pinching aluminum foil over the jar mouth will do. Label the jar and let stand in a warm place for about a week. This is known as "maceration".

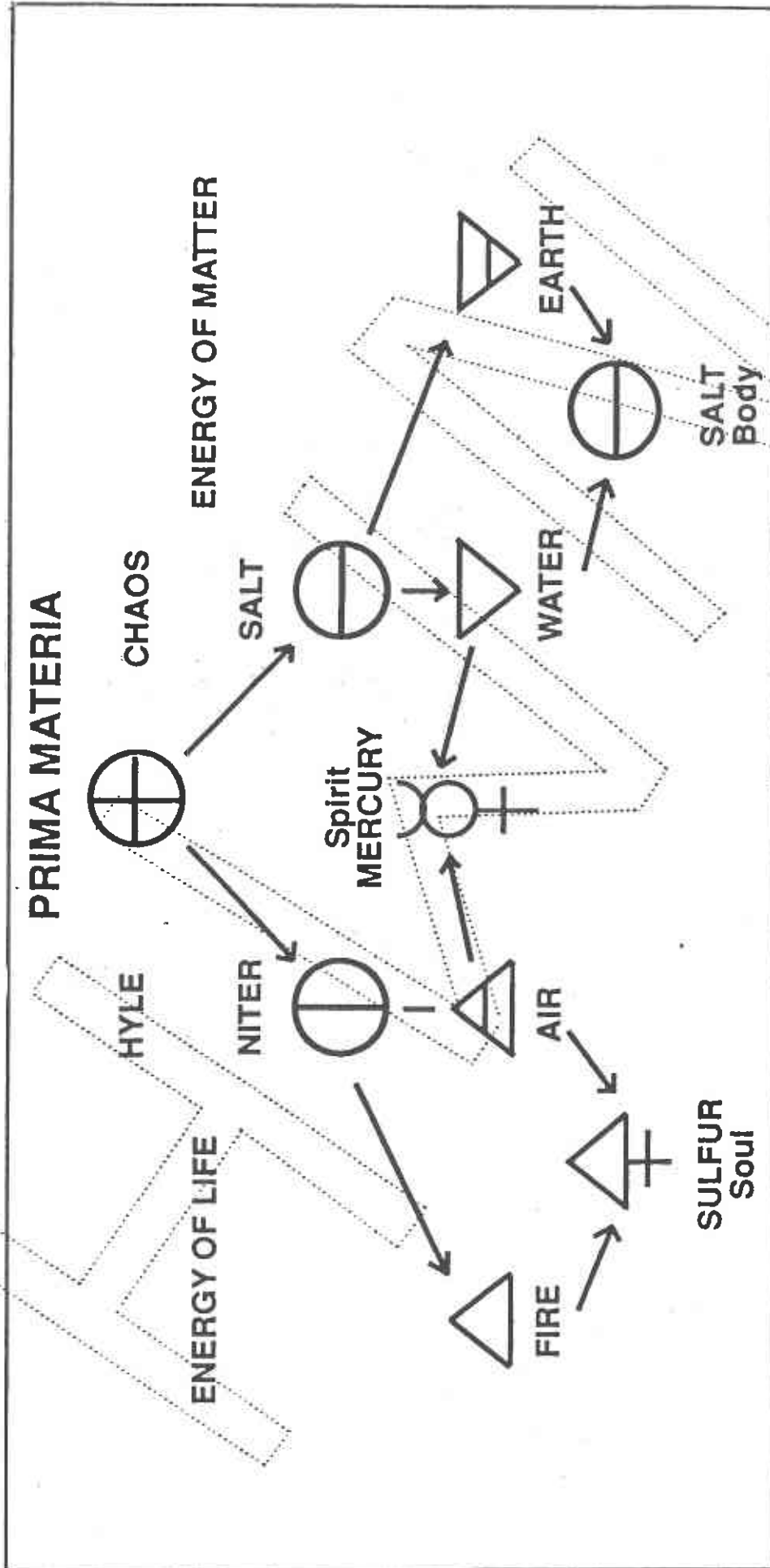
After a week or so, a color or tincture as it is known, is given off. Over time it will get darker. When it seems fairly dark (another experience factor) decant the liquid, filter it and save. Pour fresh Vodka over the herb and set in warm place to macerate once more. Again, decant, filter and save. Repeat this process until no more tincture is given off by the herb. (save the residue of this herb, labelling it). Now combine all the tinctures (from the same herb) into one bottle or jar and label it. You will have now one herb for each day, the "Seven Basics". Take about a teaspoonful of this tincture in a glass of water on the appropriate day. That is, if using chamomile, take a teaspoon in water on Sunday. Taking it during the hour ruled by the Sun will enhance the effect. Again, Sarsaparilla, under Mars, is taken on Tuesday. Note that if picking the herb fresh (for drying and use) pick it on the day of its ruler and preferably during the hour of its ruler. Follow this time procedure for preparing the tincture as well. Label all!

Kloss and others view Golden Seal as almost being a panacea. Thus, for heightened medicinal benefit, an eighth tincture can be made from Golden Seal. Add one seventh (or so) to each of the Seven Basics. (or take by itself) The Alchemist, from experience will soon determine if this has any worthwhile effects. (It will even if not noticed!)

The efficacy of the Seven Basics can be increased by adding the body or salt of the herb to the proper tincture. The salt is obtained from the calcined residue of the herb. To accomplish this, take the feces or residue of the herb, following maceration, and while still moist, place in a metal or pyrex dish. Place under a fume hood or bring outdoors as there will be some smoke and odor. Light the residue and stirring gently, reduce to a black powder. When no coals glow, pour some more alcohol (use a cheap alcohol like methanol for this) over it and incinerate once again. Place the incinerated herb (body) residue in a mortar and grind fine. Pour the ground body into a pyrex dish and place over a high gas flame. Allow this body to calcine for several days (or more) until it turns into a light grey in color. Once this is done, two methods are available for "strengthening" the tincture. (Grind this grey powder fine)

Note that the addition of the body (salt of salt and salt of sulphur) is not absolutely necessary, it is an enhancement however, worthwhile doing. Take the grey powder, grind fine, place in a beaker and pour distilled water over it. This is known as leaching. Let this stand for twenty four hours, carefully decant and filter and save liquid. Pour fresh distilled water over grey body, etc. Do three such leachings. Combine all the saved liquid and pour into an evaporating (pyrex) dish and set under a flame (quickest) or in the sun. Evaporate all the liquid leaving behind a rime or white powder. Pour this powder (the salt of salt and the salt of sulphur) into the tincture.

The second method is to pour the calcined herb (grey powder) directly into the tincture. Let stand for a week then carefully decant and filter. This then is the liquid that will be taken. Note that the "enriched" tincture should be taken in a dosage of 5-7 drops on the right day. As techniques, pour tincture into evaporating dish to eliminate scraping or line evaporating dish with Saran wrap. Keep all tinctures canned and labeled



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