

Immanence, Meditation and the Hieroglyphic Monad



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John Dee's 1564 Hieroglyphic Monad contains not only an exposition of all that exists, it also contains precise instructions for the transformation of anything on and to any level. The Monad embodies the universality of the truth, so it also shares the same correspondences with the Emerald Tablet and Basil Valentine's 1659 Azoth Mandala because these Hermetic touchstones are themselves also informed by universal truths. The Monad is also a mandala for meditation and it informs the non-dual state, where the alchemist can become one with the One Mind through the One Thing. Whether it is on the microcosmic scale in the Below (the Alchemist) or in the macrocosmic scale in the Above (The One Mind), the Monad uses alchemical symbols to bring those initiated into its true meaning into a state of immanence through meditation. Thus, the Monad is fractal; being both a methodology and at the same time a living presence - it is the very thing it also symbolizes.

To anyone with initiation into the Hermetic doctrine it would be obvious first of all that the Monad contains all the symbols of the Chaldean order. That is, it has all of the symbols of the seven visible planets which, in turn, inform the archetypal signatures for anything on earth, whether it be plants, minerals or animals. From the top of the Monad down they are the moon (interlaced with) the sun, mercury, venus, mars, jupiter and saturn. In the middle of the Monad there is also contained the symbol of the four elements (the cross) and at the very bottom is the symbol for Aries, or fire.

Sitting in communion with the Monad reveals its intelligence. As is the way with many Hermetic teachings it is imparted not verbally, not rationally but intuitively. The more time

an alchemist spends with the Monad, the more the Monad becomes a living presence to guide the alchemist. Through communication that comes from Hermes (or a higher divine source of intelligence), the Alchemist may receive true knowledge through intuition (by seeing "in-to-it"). This knowledge comes to the alchemist when they are ready for it; initiation does exactly that, it 'initiates' a process which the One Mind transmits. All teachings are present inside the Monad but they will only surface at the correct time and in relation to the practitioner.

For example, if the bottom of the Monad is examined we observe the symbol for fire and Aries. Depending on the perspective of the alchemist and their personal practice, this could be intuited in different ways. In past days, alchemists were known as "Philosophers of Fire" because they were known to work with Elementary Fire. Through fire, a substance can be purified in the laboratory when it is calcinated. This is also the beginning of the work in terms of the seven operations of alchemy - fire is applied in the first operation to begin the work. However, fire is also a correspondence for other levels of being for the alchemist. Fire can correspond to Celestial Fire - that energy which slowly enacts the Great Work. Fire can also be the Central Fire - the signature of the One Mind dreaming the world into being. But allegorically fire and it's manifestation in light also penetrate the darkest parts of the soul in Spiritual alchemy. The "burn" or desire to initiate the process of transformation can be termed the Secret Fire, also synonymous with consciousness¹. So it can be seen that the Monad can embody all these examples.

Despite all of these examples of how one could intuit the concept of "fire" whilst meditating with the Monad, all these processes share a cogent, holistic, set of instructions of

¹ Hauck, 1999.

what to do next to achieve transformation, transmutation or gnosis. To the Alchemist working with Elementary fire in the lab, the Monad is simply a picture of the athanor and the work done there, the Monad instructs; fire (symbol for Aries) is applied to the separation of the four elements (symbol of the cross) in the crucible which is ultimately recombined, resulting in a new and lasting coagulation through conjunction (symbol of fire and moon intertwined). To the Alchemist working on the spiritual level the monad could be instructing the initiate to apply the Secret Fire to their body in order to achieve the marriage of their rational/thinking side with their emotional/intuitive side. Whatever level the initiate views the Monad on, it will instruct one in the process required on that level. All these levels share the same process logic because they are all part of the One Thing.

The Monad is also congruent with the instructions of the Emerald tablet, itself another initiatory text of Hermeticism which is also universal because it too is informed by universal correspondences. For example, "*that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below and that which is Below corresponds to that which is Above*" is like saying that the Monad applies whether using it to work with oneself, the world or with the mind of God. It is a symbol of man, but also of God, but also of nature/the universe, but also of all three at once, in that, they are all One and the same. The body, soul and spirit of the alchemist uses the same principles as working with nature because they are one and the same. "*Separate the Earth from Fire, the Subtle from the Gross, gently and with great ingenuity*" is like saying that the Monad instructs us to apply the archetype of fire to the four elements. "*It rises from Earth to Heaven and descends again to Earth thereby combining within itself both the powers of the Above and the Below*" is like saying that the Monad conveys that this results in the marriage of the Sun and Moon.

Finally, the Monad can be used as a meditation tool. Once the alchemist achieves a comfortable place of understanding with the symbols contained within the Monad, simply gazing at the symbol will, at an unconscious level, align all the archetypes/correspondences/phenomena into the One Thing through consciousness. If the alchemist abides in this recognition of the One Thing they will then come naturally into a non-dual contemplative state. From this place it is possible to know and understand whatever passes through the consciousness of the alchemist. For example, in the Azoth Mandala, which is just another version of what the Monad and the Emerald Tablet embody, the acronym VITRIOL instructs the alchemist to "*visit the interior of the earth, rectify it and you will find the hidden stone*". This is another way of saying focus your attention on your body, allow it to be what it is (put it right or make no mistake) and enlightenment will show itself to you. Anything coming into the alchemist's consciousness whilst meditating with the Monad such as a bodily sensation, a thought, an intuition, a smell, a sound, a taste, a vision, a memory or a plan - in short anything, it can be pooled together and focused by concentrating on the Monad. The Monad provides a visual embodiment of all things being as one. The Monad also points to the interconnection and interrelation of everything. From this place, the alchemist can abide, being in Oneness, and use this contemplation to anchor and/or infuse whatever work they are doing, whether it is on themselves or the experiment at hand, confident and resigned that they are fundamentally connected in any case. The Monad shows that the connection between body, soul and spirit is always present. Once recognized, it can be utilized and enhanced. Ultimately then, the flow of energy in the Monad goes directionally from the alchemist at the bottom (secret fire), through matter (the cross) and to the Above through soul and Spirit (sun and moon), then descends again to the alchemist on earth. Or, as the emerald tablet says, "*It rises from Earth to Heaven and descends again to Earth, thereby*

combining within itself the powers of the Above and the Below". In this way the alchemist works with Hermes as the mediator between him/herself and God, co-creating the universe and assisting in the Great Work of perfection.

Bibliography

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