

Alchemy Conference (1)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to share with you today a discovery which I started making about 7 years ago, and which I am continuing to make. What I have discovered is so extraordinary, so sublime and so exciting that I have felt the need to shout this from the rooftops for the last 7 years. My discovery is that the Harry Potter Septology contains the most fundamental and powerful message imaginable for humanity: liberation from evil, from suffering, and from death. In one word: Alchemy!

The aim in my lecture today is to start off showing you a small sample of the obvious alchemical symbols in Harry Potter. I want to show you especially the remarkable similarities between Harry Potter and the great Rosicrucian manifesto of 1616: The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosycross. This is an important point, because this manifesto is one of the most exalted and intensely powerful spiritual works ever written.

After that I want to explain to you how alchemy can liberate us from evil, suffering and death. I want to get down into the deepest essence of what alchemy is really about, and to point out the extraordinarily exciting significance of the transmutation from lead to gold, and the elixir of life. These are symbols for a process that can and should take place in the human being, and brings about radical and fundamental changes in the entire human system, including the physical, the etheric, the astral and the mental bodies, as well as the consciousness itself. Finally, and most importantly, I want to show you how this radical and fundamental change that liberates us completely, is symbolised in that divinely inspired story of Harry Potter.

In the précis of my lecture on the conference website I have quoted JK Rowling herself as saying I've never wanted to be a witch, but an alchemist, now that's a different matter. To invent this wizard world, I've learned a ridiculous amount about alchemy. That is certainly very evident in the books.

On my website harrypotterforseekers.com I have listed many of the alchemical references. There is the give away title of Book 1, Philosopher's Stone, references to historical alchemists like Nicholas Flamel, John Dee and Paracelsus, animals that occur in alchemical works, such as the phoenix, the peacock, the toad, the lion etc. The colours of alchemy are featured prominently, such as Harry's green and Voldemort's red eyes, the colours of the Houses of Hogwarts, the names of characters such as Albus Dumbledore, Sirius Black, and Rubeus Hagrid. Parts 5,6 and 7 symbolise the Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo phases of alchemy. The seven elements of Hermes Trismegistus are contained in the titles of the parts of Harry Potter in their correct order. Hermione and Ron can easily be identified as personifying the alchemical elements mercury and sulphur, and as the quarrelling couple. This is all shown on my website and I feel it would be a pity to spend a lot of time listing them here.

Harry Potter is saturated with alchemical symbols, and once you have in your mind that it is a symbolic alchemical story you will come across more symbolism yourself if you read the story with discernment.

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I now want to turn to The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosycross.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this intensely spiritual manifesto. In my opinion it is a roadmap to absolute life, free of limitations, of suffering, evil and death and free of the ignorance, doubt and despair that mark life on this planet. By absolute life I mean eternal life with a divine purpose, united with God Who is Love, in total harmony with all of life, in a state of rapture that is beyond our understanding.

The only problem is that The Chymical Wedding is purely symbolic and very veiled. I will give a very brief, succinct summary of what the symbolism is saying. However I recommend reading The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross by Jan van Rijckenborgh for a detailed explanation of the symbolism. Jan van Rijckenborgh was an alchemist who lived in the Netherlands last century and brought the message of liberating alchemy between 1945 and 1968. His book The Alchemical Wedding contains a beautiful modern translation of The Chymical Wedding, which is now nearly 400 years old. Van Rickenborgh' s books are on sale here at the conference.

The story of The Chymical Wedding is about Christian Rosycross who is invited to attend a wedding in a royal castle. He symbolises the alchemist or seeker who is desperately seeking union with God. He has to cleanse and purify himself completely, in every respect. He is then weighed by the Holy Spirit to see whether his virtues are heavy enough. He and the other successful candidates are taken to meet six kings and queens, who are later decapitated and their bodies taken to an island. Four of these monarchs personify the earthly aspects of good and evil in their negative and positive aspects, and the other two the soul and the spirit of the seeker. This means the seeker has to sacrifice himself completely, including his entire past, his good and evil aspects, and his soul and spirit.

His personal servant takes him on a tour of the castle, and he finds the Sepulchre of Venus. He enters the sepulchre and sees naked Venus, asleep as if in a deep trance. The candidates are taken to the island which has on it a very large building called the Tower of Olympus . Here they have to perform alchemical processes which dissolve the bodies of the six monarchs, and reduce them to a paste which is poured into the moulds of two human beings. The Holy Spirit enters them and the young king and queen symbolising the soul and the spirit are resurrected. They all return to the castle where Christian Rosycross is accused of seeing Venus naked. He admits this and is sentenced to being gatekeeper. The story ends saying there are two pages missing, but that Christian has returned home.

The point of the story is to show that the return to God requires absolute purification, followed by a death through self-sacrifice of all aspects of the personality. Finally there is a resurrection through the Holy Spirit, which means eternal life in union with God, but the compassion for humanity which wells up from the opened Temple of Venus in the heart compels the liberated seeker to come back to earth and become a gate keeper to hold open the gate for seekers of liberation.

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I want to start with some obvious similarities between *The Chymical Wedding* and *Harry Potter*. Please keep in mind that there are many more than I can list here today.

Both Christian and Harry are handed a written invitation by an unusual person during a storm. This invitation in both cases is to go to a very large and ancient castle for seven periods of time: Christian seven days, Harry seven years. When they arrive, both are given a meal lit by candles floating in the air and served by invisible servants. Both castles have paintings in which the figures move. In both cases a very strict woman meets them and tells them their behaviour will be judged. Harry has a scar on his forehead while Christian Rosycross has a wound in the same place. In both stories this is connected with love, and symbolises a spiritual victory.

On his journey to the castle, Christian Rosycross faces four roads of which he must choose one. He chooses the right path by rejecting evil (the raven). Harry faces the selection into one of four houses at school, and chooses the right one by rejecting evil ("not Slytherin!") . He has just heard that all the evil wizards come from Slytherin.

During the stories, both heroes cross a stretch of water containing mermaids. In both stories there are references to Paracelsus and John Dee, names familiar to students of alchemy. There is a long list of real and mythical animals associated with alchemy which are mentioned in both stories, including the lion, the griffin, the phoenix, the serpent, a three headed dog, the unicorn, and the raven. A funeral at which a phoenix is present is conducted in both stories.

Both stories feature as the mastermind behind the whole sequence of events an ancient man living in a tower with a spiral staircase.

In *Harry Potter* there is a symbol known as the dark mark. It shows a serpent coming out of the jaws of a skull, and is the sign of Voldemort, whose aim is to gain immortality. In *The Chymical Wedding* this same symbol occurs to indicate eternal life.

These are just some of the more or less obvious similarities. However the more important and profound the spiritual truths being described, the more hidden the similarities are.

As mentioned before, Christian Rosycross visits a forbidden, subterranean room called "the sepulchre of Venus", as mentioned before. Venus symbolises Divine Love.

Harry Potter tries to enter a forbidden, subterranean room but finds the door cannot be opened by any magical tool he possesses. Dumbledore later tells him that that room contains a force that is at once more wonderful and terrible than death, than human intelligence, than the forces of nature. It is the power held within that room that you possess in such quantities. The power Dumbledore is referring to is love. These two rooms are the same, namely the Divine Temple in the human heart.

On top of the Sepulchre of Venus is an altar. I quote from the Foxcroft translation of 1690: This was triangular and had in the middle of it a Kettle of polished Copper, the rest was of pure Gold and pretious Stones; In the Kettle stood an angel, who held in his Arms an unknown Tree.

If you visualise this description you will be able to see the very great similarity here to what in *Harry Potter* is called the Sign of the Deathly Hallows. This is shown on the spine of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and consists of an equilateral triangle containing a circle

touching all sides, and a straight line from the apex of the triangle, through the circle, down to the middle of the base. The circle symbolises the kettle, or cauldron, and the straight line the tree.

The Sign of the Deathly Hallows represents three magical objects in a fairy tale. The triangle symbolises an invisibility cloak, the circle a resurrection stone, which can bring beloved ones back to life, and the line a wand of supreme power. Anyone owning all three objects at once, is supposed to be able to defeat death, which Harry does.

And that is what both Harry Potter and The Chymical Wedding are really about: defeating death. On his parents' gravestone Harry reads the words, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," a quote from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. JK Rowling said about this quote, and another quote she takes from the Bible, that "they sum up, they almost epitomise, the whole series."

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And this is the place, I think, to start talking about what Alchemy is really about: liberation from evil, suffering and death. But before I can explain where both The Chymical Wedding and Harry Potter are coming from I need to explain one basic premise:

This universe is not the real universe.

This life is not real living.

This world is not the one God created.

What we are living in here today is a pointless prison, a lunatic asylum, a desert devoid of real life, an endless merry-go-round of birth, futile physical life, death, astral life, and rebirth. At best it's a kindergarten for those willing to learn. At worst it's life in 'the matrix'.

We are here because we chose to abandon the Real World millions of years ago. In a process called The Fall we decided we had better things to do than carry out God's Plan and so we caused the formation of a universe and a life outside of that Plan.

And so here we are in a self-made prison where we, as the human race, are actively killing, enslaving, and exploiting each other, and raping, polluting and destroying our planet.

The Real World still exists, though we should think of it as a state of being rather than a place. It is a state of being that is eternal, absolute, perfect and devoid of suffering and evil. It is known by names such as Nirvana and the Kingdom of Heaven. The ancient Chinese philosophy calls it Tao.

The point that this universe is a prison is made in The Chymical Wedding by a dream Christian has before he goes to the castle. He dreams he is imprisoned in a deep pit, in pitch-black darkness, together with a crowd of other people who are all crawling around trying to find the best spot, not caring what they do to others in their struggle. Suddenly the lid of the pit is lifted, and a rope is lowered seven times for people to grab and be pulled up by into the real world. This symbolism is telling us that the purpose of The Chymical Wedding is liberation from our universe.

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The Fall is illustrated in Harry Potter in Part 6, Half-Blood Prince.

In that magical world it is possible to go into the past by means of reliving other people's memories. This is very similar to reading akashic records, as they're called in the esoteric world. Harry and Dumbledore relive an event in the life of a certain official called Ogden. You will notice that if you reverse the first two letters, the first three letters of this name form the word 'God'.

The memory starts off with Ogden walking through a paradisiacal landscape. As he approaches a decrepit and derelict hovel, a man drops out of a tree in front of him. This is a symbolic fall. A snake is nailed to the door of the hovel. We can see a close similarity to Genesis Chapter 3, when God walks in the Garden of Eden to find that Adam and Eve have taken the advice of the snake.

The memory reveals three people living in the hut: the father, who is called Marvolo, and his two children, Merope and Morfin. What we are seeing here is the hovel symbolising the human microcosm after the Fall: Marvolo, the mind or spirit, Merope the soul, and Morfin the body. Morphé is Greek for form or body, Marvolo is a variation on the word 'marvel' which is what the mind does. In mythology, Merope was a daughter of Atlas, one of the Pleiades, whose star is dimmer than the others because she married a mortal.

We learn that Merope marries a muggle and has a son called Tom Riddle. She dies straight after he is born and Tom is left in an orphanage. Tom grows up to be Lord Voldemort, who makes himself immortal by killing others. Voldemort means 'fleeing from death.' He takes over the magical world and causes immense suffering. Evil reigns supreme.

This whole story is a stunningly accurate and vivid description of the present state of affairs of humanity.

Friends, we all have within us a Voldemort! He has grown out of the fallen original divine soul. Before we can understand Harry Potter, before we can understand The Chymical Wedding, before we can understand alchemy, we have to understand who Voldemort is.

Voldemort is the immortal force in our microcosm that survives in between incarnations. During our life in the flesh it records all our experiences. When we die, it does not, but absorbs all our life's experiences. After a certain time it radiates its essence into a new foetus. This is born and is given its karma by the microcosmic Voldemort. The newly incarnated person continues his life where the previous inhabitant of the microcosm left off. In some circles this immortal force is called 'the higher self'.

This planet is populated by thousands of millions of people all of whom have a Voldemort as their creator. All of these people have a force-field which radiates energy and together they create a world encompassing, conscious force-field which rules the earth, and so we end up with a planet where selfishness reigns, where millions of people are hungry, human trafficking is rife, drug barons run bigger economies than some countries, wars are an everyday occurrence, crime is waxing stronger daily, and suffering is the hallmark of life on earth.

I'm not denying that from our human point of view there is good in this world, that there is beauty, fine art, altruism and self-sacrifice. However from a divine point of view this entire

universe, this fallen seventh cosmic plane is one great kindergarten where works by Beethoven, Leonardo Da Vinci and Shakespeare are merely infantile efforts, essentially worthless compared to the Divine Creation. Our human ideas of goodness and beauty have to be sacrificed for the perfect, as both Harry Potter and The Chymical Wedding make clear. I'll come back to that.

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How do we do this? By Alchemy. By turning the lead of our earthly, biological self, into the gold of the divine child of God we once were. We have to start a process of transmutation and transfiguration which will destroy Voldemort's hold on our personality, step by step, and restore our citizenship of the Real Universe. However as Voldemort's existence is dependent on our existence, we have to dissolve our biological personality completely before our Voldemort can be destroyed. The dissolution of the personality will not involve physical death.

We as a biological personality cannot achieve this dissolution by our own devices. We do not have the faculties, the ability or the means to destroy our Voldemort and turn ourselves from lead into gold. Before we can do anything in accordance with the Divine Plan we need a new soul, or rather the rebirth of the original Divine Soul from the latent seed in the nucleus of our microcosm. Only the Divine Soul can destroy Voldemort, as Harry Potter clearly shows. It is the New Soul that is the alchemist within us; he is 'the chosen one.'

To begin the process of Alchemy we need only one thing. It's a very simple thing. It is so simple some of you might be tempted to laugh when you hear it. For centuries our most developed philosophers have sought for the meaning of life and written stacks of books about it, as have theologians, mystics and occultists.

After today you can throw away your books on philosophy and theology. The simple answer to all our problems, to our finding the meaning of life, and to defeating evil, suffering and death is this:

To yearn for God.

All that is required is a deep, unquenchable thirst for the Living Water, for the golden astral substance of the Sixth Cosmic Plane, for the Blood of Christ, for the Elixir of Life.

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This is not an intellectual thirst for knowledge of God, but an intense homesickness to return unconditionally to our lost home in the Real Universe. It is a humble realisation that we are in the pit of death, that we have made a big mistake, and that we need help in getting out. In other words, a deep, genuine remorse. It is the realisation of the prodigal son that he has sinned against heaven and against his father, and is willing to return as the lowest hired servant.

This longing for the Source of the Universe is superbly worded in Psalm 42: As a hart longs for flowing streams, so my heart longs for thee, O god. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

This quote from Psalm 42 is one of the most important keys to understanding Harry Potter and therefore to alchemy and liberation. A hart is an old fashioned word for a stag, and those of you familiar with Harry Potter will know that Harry's father was a wizard who could turn himself into a stag. This stag, James Potter, known by the nickname "Prongs", marries a girl called Lily.

The lily is a powerful alchemical symbol for the divine in man. When the original divine microcosm 'fell' into this undivine, dualistic universe, the original soul, symbolised by Merope, died. However the Divine Idea underlying its creation is eternal and indestructible, and so it still lives in the core of every microcosm, in the heart of every seeker. However it is dormant, and has the potential to flower open like a pure white lily, a white rose, or a lotus. If the pure white lily bud begins to open, and the seeker surrenders himself to the longing to return to God, a new soul is born in the heart. That is Harry Potter. In the old mystery schools in Judea, the new soul was symbolised by Jesus.