



Universal Fire Circle Alchemy

By [Jeff Magnus McBride](#) and [Abigail Spinner McBride](#), assisted by Nikki Christian

"Alchemy is the gentle acceleration of growth through the use of the fire of nature." - *Paracelsus*

Since the dawn of time, human beings have gathered around the fire to make music, to dance, and to weave magic in the firelight. Alchemy is a paradigm of transformation, using the "fire of nature" to accelerate growth and change on interior levels. The Alchemical Fire Circle, grounded in this paradigm, is an evolving ritual form that has been in a state of refinement for the past sixteen years. Fire Circle Alchemy's fundamental components are comprised of voice, music, movement, and service, which correspond to the magical elements of air, fire, water and earth, respectively. The rationale for these correspondences proceeds in a fairly logical fashion. Hence, voice corresponds with air for the reason that breath is

essential to the production of human sound; similarly, music corresponds with fire, as it is the music that supplies the circle with its energy. Movement's correspondence with water is an external reflection of the constant motion of the fluids held within; and service corresponds with earth, given that service is the ever-present foundation upon which all of the other work rests.

Fire Circle Alchemy rituals include:

1) A Beginning: this is a time when the entire group of celebrants unites in a collaborative effort to ensure the mindful creation of the ritual/alchemy container in which the ensuing magical Work will soon transpire. Most often, this is a task with multiple layers, accomplished in part by asking community members to create "Prayer Flags," strips of fabric which they have the opportunity to adorn with their intentions or invocations in whichever way they find most appropriate (e.g. language, symbols, etc.). These prayer flags are then tied onto a cord that has been affixed to long torches secured to stakes, encircling the ritual area, and thereby forming the boundary of the vessel.

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2) A Middle: this period is defined by an amalgam of multi-faceted symbiotic relationships, in the midst of which there is a collective awareness of the planetary influences on the actions and reactions of the people in the circle—a veritable embodiment of the alchemical metals in solution.

3) An Ending: as the solar disk begins to rise, there is a concomitant raising of the energetic vibration of the group, followed by an interlude of stillness, an intimate pause for reflection, internal and external, juxtaposed with reverence. It is in this space of conscious, group connection that the sun's ascendance is celebrated, a cosmological mirroring of the Gold that has been created during the ritual process, and a symbolic ending of the ceremony.

Fire Circle Alchemy is a ritual of transformation derived from a mystical tradition. Availing ourselves of imagery and processes cognate to those pioneered in early alchemy laboratories, we embark upon a mythic journey of re-creation, an adoption of the alchemist's Great Work, or Magnum Opus: the Quest for the Philosopher's Stone.

The Quest is a pilgrimage from the *prima materia* to the *quintessence*—to that which transforms all it touches to gold. When we realize that we ourselves are the *prima materia*, or primal matter, we can willfully endeavor to proceed through the stages of refinement that empower to become living, breathing forms of the Philosopher's Stone - vessels of Divinity, with the re-collected capacity to transmute all that we touch to gold. Alchemy is a formula for the spiritualization of matter, effecting all of our actions and interactions to exist as spiritual acts. We consider each of the operations involved in bringing forth this ritual to be a meditation, essentially imbued with the potential to deliver countless spiritual lessons. There are no mundane undertakings. Every stone that is set in the fire circle, and every torch that is filled and placed, can be approached with sincere mindfulness.

Fire Circle Alchemy is a ritual composition conducted with fluidity copious enough to embrace, encourage, and inspire spontaneous expression, and as such it is also an unbounded and eternal experiment, one in which mutual creation is delivered from the celebration and discovery of each other. Emerging from this venture is a ceremonial union of opposites, a *mélange* of formal structure, artful improvisation, and inspired spiritual offerings. Although the lineage of the Alchemical Fire Circle can be traced back to pagan gatherings, it has evolved beyond the conventions of its origin, for it is an approach that welcomes all modes of life-affirming spirituality.

In order to maximize the elegant flow of the experiment, there are a number of fundamental details that must be addressed, starting with set-up of the ritual container and gathering of materials. If the ensuing magic is slated to take place outdoors, this Work is comprised of gathering wood for the fire, assembling and positioning benches for the musicians, ensconcing tiki torches for illumination, supplying water bottles to facilitate hydration, preparing a food area for sustenance, constructing a welcome portal or gate to encourage conscious entry to the vessel, and organizing a rattle altar, upon which shakers and other small percussion toys are made available to all celebrants for use throughout the duration of the rite. If you are indoors, it can be as simple as clearing the middle of the room, turning off the phones, lighting a few candles in the center, and cleansing the area with incense or sage.

The ceremony begins with connection, by way of the physical linking of hands, the emotional meeting of eyes, the mental contact of naming, and, periodically, by the spiritual correspondence of invocation through expression of ritual intentions. This initial interlacing of essence is attentively followed by a circle casting (See [Note #1](#))

Our magic circle, or alchemical vessel, if you will, is formulated from a conglomeration of hands, hearts, minds and spirits, interwoven through music, chant, spoken word, and movement. There is no pre-scribed liturgy or pre-rehearsed form. By re-solving ourselves to dis-covering each other within the mystery of sustained, mindful engagement, and by consciously choosing to cross the threshold into the collaborative process of introducing, inventing, spinning and galvanizing spontaneously emerging themes, celebrants are empowered to witness and nurture each other's creativity, beauty, process and art, thus becoming a harmony of communal inspiration, as we dance through the alchemical stages from darkness into light.

Every Alchemical Fire Circle is unique and inimitable. To be clear, because the process unfolds extemporaneously, it is never exactly the same, although there are apparent similarities in the pattern. For

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instance, a fire-lighting ceremony of some nature invariably occurs, along with an opening ritual that consistently stimulates and fuels a thematically aligned chant... for example, on an evening when grandmothers have been called upon to light the fire, the group might be motivated to sing "There is an old woman who weaves the night sky, watch her spinning wheel, watch her fingers fly. She weaves within us, beginning to end, our grandmother, our sister, our friend. She changes everything she touches and everything she touches changes..." (See [Note #2](#)) These words could then conceivably evolve into music and movement that echoes their sentiments, gradually becoming motion that intimates spinning, thus sparking someone else to offer a spoken word piece about web-weaving, and, in turn, awakening a new voice to call out: "Weavers, weavers, we are weaving the web of life...", (see [Note #3](#)) another chant which will, in all probability, ripen into a related but divergent theme.... and on the circle turns, all the way to illumination. When we consciously observe and attend to what is actually happening in the circle, finding our inspiration and improvisational directions from each other while staying mindfully engaged in the process, we deepen into discovery of ourselves, our relationships and our community.

We arrive at a juncture of metaphorical and literal portent in our quest when the golden rays from above converge with our golden hearts below. The advent of the sun is frequently celebrated by a period of sustained silence and tranquility, a time set aside for group meditation on the very essence of the life-sustaining orb. Upon consummation of this tacit operation, we customarily conclude with solar adorations and prayers of thanksgiving (See [Note #4](#)), after which there is a unique opportunity to reconnect as an altared group, hand to hand and heart to heart. In this expanse of intimacy, heartfelt offerings and requests are often decanted... and then the circle is opened. The Alchemical Fire Circle process is commonly repeated for three successive nights, with each amplifying and forging upon the previous, and accordingly giving rise to a morning filled with progressively more gold. Following sunrise on the final morning of the opus, we share in a supreme release of all energies summoned and invoked in service to our working, at which point the process of dismantling the physical container of the Fire Circle and related installations (such as an Ancestors Altar or other distinctive shrines and temples envisioned and manifested by the community) is initiated and completed as a community project. People are encouraged to gather a small quantity of ashes from the ritual fire before their departure, to be used in personal magical efforts as an energy-rich touchstone, as well as a tangible reminder of the procession and recession of all things. Frequently, ashes are taken from one fire and used to seed other fires—a way of symbolically blending and connecting magical workings from around the globe.

The Alchemical Fire Circle Architecture and Orbits

One relatively universal way of understanding the composition of the Alchemical Fire Circle is by correlating the pathways of movement with the planetary orbits and their mythology. This model is an archetypal mirror of our solar system, and our dance is a recreation of the great cosmic dance of life.

The fire in the center of the vessel is representative of the Sun, the source of energy, heat, light, and transformation. The metal that corresponds with Sol is Gold -- Attainment. Wisdom. Self-realization. Often seen in perennial members of the community as they channel the energy of the circle, the Sun corresponds with our seventh chakra, the crown, and the foremost connection to Source.

It is common knowledge that numerous planets have moons. In our Fire Circle tradition, the Moon is associated with the Priest/ess current—nurturing, serving, assisting, and maintaining gravitational balance in any of the planetary orbits. The metal of the Moon is silver, and it corresponds with the sixth chakra, inner vision, intuition and dreaming.

The closest dance path circling the fire is the Mercury track. It is the fleet footed inner ring of movement. Dancers in this orbit are generally quite energized and active, like Quicksilver, the planet Mercury's metallic match. Mercury represents a gas that rises and falls, and in addition, is also the mediator and messenger, related to clear communication, the fifth chakra, and the throat.

The Venus track is an intermediate path. This is an orbit of relationship in motion, with self and others. It is not uncommon for people engaging in this ring of planetary dance to be in light trance, attuned to the sensuality of movement, song and rhythm. The metal of Venus is Copper, which is dynamic and volatile. In our paradigm, Venus relates to the fourth chakra and the energies of the heart.

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The Earth track, demarcated by corn-meal or flour, is a slow and deliberate moving orbit, for those in deep trance, doing rattle work, or personal grounding.

Defined by the interior ring of torches, the Mars track is a place to witness and consciously contribute to the creation of the transformational container. People regularly stand in this area with small rattles, providing sonic guardianship and energetic support for others who are active within the inner orbits. The metal of Mars is iron, and the energetic correspondence is one of warrior energy, martial and protective. Disciplined will and third chakra are connected to Mars.

Between the two torch rings is the Jupiter track, an area for interactions with others that are not suited to take place within the ever-moving circles of dance. In contrast to participating in idle chatter, people here can be seen feeding or watering each other, breathing together, hugging or rubbing shoulders. Not really a "social" zone, it is rather a place for conscious encounters of a stationary nature. The metal of Jupiter is Tin, which is a malleable metal, related to blending and balancing of energies as well as to the second chakra.

The ring of Saturn is delineated by the internal perimeter of the circle, including the prayer flags on the outer torch ring, the woodpile, and, occasionally, altars or shrines. The metal of Saturn is Lead, representing "heavy," intense energy; power that needs to be purified, first chakra, survival instinct, and fight-or-flight response all connect here.

On the exterior side of the fire circle perimeter is the "comet's trail," a path for walking meditation which allows those individuals seeking solitude to stay engaged and involved in the energy of the fire circle if it is their will.

By conscientious consideration of this majestic cosmic dance, we can awaken into greater and greater awareness of the diverse elements and archetypes interacting within the vessel, and ultimately within the universe.

Inner Alchemy at the Fire Circle

At the Fire Circle as in life, we each carry around our own quandaries and calamities, material which often nurtures impediments or "blocks" that perpetuate unsavory patterns of stagnation. These internal obstructions can be visualized as literal blocks of salt, a substance that is not only alchemically symbolic, but also long recognized. This being said, on a more cerebral level, salt can be linked to the preservation of memories, while on the affective plain it is appropriately associated with the preservation of feelings. These languished memories and feelings, whether we are conscious of them or not, become a platform for the emergence, reappearance, recurrence, and re-enactment of dramas with analogous mythopoetic foundations. Thus salt is in fact a metonymy for that which sustains us in futile and ineffective cognitive and behavioral processes.

Enveloped in the pervasive intensity of the alchemical vessel, immersed in the inter-activity of drum, dance, chant, and creative play, absorbed in the profundity of trance, blocks get stimulated and dislodged organically. When a particular threshold is attained, the sulfur, or energetic heat released by the Fire, together with the fervor of drumming and movement, triggers a symbolic liquefaction of the salt within. This natural element of the alchemical progression is embodied through perspiration and tears, a corporeal expression of the mental and spiritual liberation it signifies. The emotional overflowing and experience of soul-stirring sensation that accompanies this literal brimming over of the personal vessel has consistently been referred to as "popping," but we render a perceptual distinction by considering it more incisively, as a release, which leads to real ease. Real ease in life is what truly empowers our connections to Spirit, to ourselves, and to each other to flourish and thrive.

By accepting the challenge of navigating through these processes and committing to the ordeal, we are inherently provided with the blueprint for illumination in the truest sense.... not guru-sitting-on-a-pillow illuminated, but shedding-new-light-on-our-lives illuminated.

The Fire Circle is a microcosm for the macrocosm of our aggregate existence, and, therefore, any core issue or challenge we encounter in our daily life will ineluctably be activated and echoed within the vessel.

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As we encounter and sometimes collide with these issues, it is our ability to negotiate the situation inside the Circle, while remaining engaged in the process that affords us the prospect and probability of returning to a daily life where these matters no longer activate us. The magic we co-create in the sacred container, through sustained engagement, ripples out exponentially into the rest of our lives, for the highest good. The mightier our ability to remain engaged in the Fire Circle process, the richer and fuller our experience becomes, a truth that is mirrored in the greater mystery of life. Though it can be challenging to stay fully committed to the creative process from midnight, or earlier, until after sunrise, it is specifically this kind of initiatory, inventive ordeal, virtually unheard of in our culture, that furnishes us with the utmost opportunity for personal and collective growth.

Working with Prima Materia

When issues come up, friends often say, "What's the matter?" So, let us examine the "first matter," or *Prima Materia*, of alchemy, which is referred to interchangeably in alchemical texts and literature as darkness, chaos, excrement or lead. It is precisely this material, which many of us speciously dismiss as useless, insignificant, bothersome, and even infuriating, from whence the final golden product is derived. To transform lead into gold, or to spiritualize matter, alchemists, and likewise, we at the Fire, utilize the following formula: "Solve et Coagula," or "dissolve and recombine."

The initiation into the Great Work of Alchemy involves first the application of heat, and subsequently the addition of water to catalyze the dissolving, melting, and liquefying of the first matter. In his alchemical writings, Carl Jung characterized this period as "breaking down the boundaries of the ego, and allowing the chaotic material of the unconscious to pour forth where it can be inspected by consciousness." In this sense, the alchemical expression, "*Solve*," quite accurately describes the initial interactions with self and others that take place in the early hours of the Fire Circle—interactions that reflect the softening of personal and group boundaries, and the opening of hearts.

The second half of the alchemical idiom guiding the Fire Circle ritual is "*Coagula*," literally "coagulate," an expression that denotes a re-assimilation with self, others, and refined understanding. In terms of the alchemical process, this is the reunification that occurs after the purifying stage of distillation. In life, we can observe this corollary of the Work through our integration of the lessons and experiences we have had around the fire into our community relations and through our ability to further assimilate them into the orbit of our daily lives, in our much grander circle around the fire of the sun.

The Alchemical Process

During the course of an all-night fire, as well as a fire circle succession, time periods with distinct energetic signatures are clearly discernable; three comprehensive periods, along with their constituent components, are alchemically referenced as follows.

NIGREDO:

The Latin term for the first phase of the alchemical process is *Nigredo*, meaning "the blackening." In the laboratory, this is the phase where the "*Prima Materia*," or first matter, is placed into a container and burned to ash, then dissolved to produce a suspension. Within the fire circle, *Nigredo* is evidenced a vast expanse of chaotic, often frenetic activity—from the arrival and acclimation of celebrants to the excitement of the fire-lighting ceremony, to highly energized dancing. On a personal or transformational level, this is a time when we "burn away and dissolve" whatever stands between us and the Divine. The three stages of alchemy encompassed by the Nigredo phase are:

1. **Calcination** (*root chakra, Saturn, survival*): The issue or issues within the physical container are brought up and heated by the Fire of chanting, drumming, dancing, and other creative expression.

2. **Dissolution** (*sacral chakra, Jupiter, blending*): The issues are dissolved in the sea of personal and collective emotion. Through sweat and tears, salt is released from the physical body, as blocks begin to dissolve.

3. **Separation** (*solar plexus chakra, Mars, choosing*): In the alchemist's laboratory, this is the stage

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when the solution is broken up into its separate components. At the Fire Circle, people begin to sacrifice whatever Lead they've been carrying into the Fire to be transformed. A choice is made to separate or release from the "issue," (energetic discharge, more tears, or intense physical movement), and in so doing separate from the things which isolate our individual egos from others and Self. At this moment, there is a transition.

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ALBEDO:

The Albedo phase, which in more orthodox alchemy relates to the whitening process, is a time when the matter in the flask is softening and beginning to purify. Translated to the vernacular of the fire circle, this phase corresponds to a palpable lightening of the energy; perhaps the drumming grows quieter, or the songs and chants move to a place of more richness and depth, or the dancing becomes more lyrical. Coincidentally, this is often the time when the sky begins to grow light. The above and the below are united in the heart, resulting in a vibration of increased purity and strength. The three stages of the alchemical process that comprise the Albedo phase are:

4. Conjunction (heart chakra/Venus, joining together through love): *The shift to Albedo, the white, soft stage of the Work. This step represents the coming together of Self and ego, or the individual and the community. An important step; often it gives us a deeper understanding of our Higher Self in contrast to our ego. At the Fire Circle, deeper connections are forged between the person releasing and the other celebrants who witness, receive or catch the energy and assist gently through the process.*

5. Fermentation (throat chakra/Mercury, speaking): *In Alchemy, fermentation is the process of refining, skimming the crud that rises to the surface, to find a purer solution. We have had the experience of burning, dissolving, separating, and joining together. Now, we are speaking our truth and separating the subtle from the gross as we continue to refine.*

6. Distillation (third eye chakra, Moon, introspective visioning): *At this stage of the Work, we have a pure, refined "solution." We gain insight and understanding by "processing" our issues through the alchemical laboratory that is our body. By contemplating the past, while being engaged in the present, we can now make informed choices about how to move and interact at the Fire, and out in the world in the future.*

RUBEDO:

The culminating phase of the alchemical process is called "Rubedo," meaning "the reddening," an expression which, within the confines of a conventional laboratory, indicates the material's conversion to a red tint, and presages its transformation to gold. In the tradition of Fire Circle Alchemy this can be equated with the sunrise itself. Of this mystery, few words can be said. The stage that corresponds with the rubedo is:

7. Coagulation (crown chakra, Sun, illuminating): *This begins the phase of Rubedo, the period in which our spiritual gold is realized. This is the stage of consciously connecting with Spirit, releasing the light within matter, and releasing the boundaries between inner and outer experience. We bring our fresh insights and knowledge into the world, moment by moment, remaining in the flow. We connect with our highest selves, connect with Divinity, and with the Earth. Also at this stage, we experience an accelerated rate of synchronicities.*

(For a more elaborate description of the phases and stages of the alchemical process, consult [The Emerald Tablet](#), by D.W. Hauck)

At this point in the alchemical work, we re-enter the fire of community, with our hearts connected, and our minds set free. As we continue the practice in the circle of life, new issues (will) inevitably arise within us, and the refining process begins again.

Both the physical laboratory of the alchemist and the virtual laboratory of the fire circle are very much like the laboratory of the body. Each is in a perpetual state of evolution: processing blocks, pushing boundaries, and, as the Hermetica states, "separating the subtle from the gross, gently and with great

ingenuity."

Fire Circle Alchemy is not inevitably bound by temporal or spatial constraints. This is to say that an Alchemical Fire Circle ritual is by no means obliged to persist until dawn, nor is it requisite that it manifest outdoors. A group of three or more friends gathered together with common intent can converge upon this application for a period of a few hours to generate a genuinely magical experience. In contrast, this ritual format has also proven exceedingly effective for groups of several hundred, drumming, singing and dancing all night long, until sunrise and beyond. We encourage you to experiment, for you are the alchemists!

Note #1

Circle Casting by Abbi Spinner McBride

Behold there is magic all around us (repeat x3)
Awaken, rejoice and sing! (chorus repeated after each verse:)

I am the Air around you
I am the breath of life within you
I am the wind blowing through you
I am all that I am
I am the Fire around you
I am the spark of life within you
I am the flame burning through you
I am all that I am
I am the Water around you
I am the pulse of life within you
I am the ocean flowing through you
I am all that I am
I am the Earth around you
I am the heartbeat within you
I am the ground below you
I am all that I am
I am Spirit around you
I am divinity within you
I am the light shining through you
I am all that I am

Note #2

From the songs Changing Woman, by Adele Getty, and She Changes Everything She Touches, by Starhawk,

Note #3

"Weavers" chant, written by Deirdre Pulgram Arthen

Note #4

Solar Adoration, by Katlyn Breene

The Sun rises
We lift our hands unto it
To be re-born, like the day

Golden rays pierce our hearts

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Like arrows of light,
dispelling illusion, releasing the night

Solar alchemy, filling each cell of our bodies
transforming, transmuting
Lead into purest Gold

As above, so below,
the Sun sees itself in the Fire
In each other,
we see God.

For more information on Fire Circle Alchemy, go to: <http://www.vegasvortex.com> or <http://www.vegasvortex.com/magicfirecircle/homepage.htm>

JEFF "MAGNUS" McBRIDE has been voted Magician of the Year by Hollywood's Magic Castle. He is a performance magician, alchemist and educator in ritual theater, known around the world for his extensive magical work with masks. Jeff has been seen on many TV specials, including: ABC's *Champions of Magic*, NBC's *Worlds Greatest Magic* and PBS's *The Art of Magic* and is featured in the newly released television documentary [A Magickal Life: Jeff McBride](#). He has also been seen on the Discovery Channel's *Mysteries of Magic*, where Jeff served as a consultant on shamanism and ritual magic. Jeff is also a founder of *The Mystery School of Magic*, the *McBride Magical Arts Center*, and the *Vegas Vortex*. He has been facilitating *Fire Circles* at festivals throughout the world for over a decade. "Magic is about transformation," Jeff says. "It reminds us that everything changes – including ourselves."

ABBI SPINNER McBRIDE is a renowned musician and teacher of alchemy, percussion, hand-drumming, dance and magic. She is a High Priestess of the Family of Fire, and a highly skilled firecircle facilitator. Her creative abilities in music, poetry, dance and choreography are much in demand at conferences across the country. For the past decade Abbi has worked with Jeff McBride, traveling through the United States, Europe, Asia, Indonesia, Africa, and South America as a dynamic part of his performance as live music director and lead assistant. Currently she is a vocalist and co-writer with Zingai, a top selling world fusion group operating out of Las Vegas. She also has released two CDs of original music, *Songs from the Center*, and *Enter the Center*, and will have her new CD, *Fire of Creation* available soon! For more information, visit www.McbrideMagic.com.



Planetary Hours: Astrological Timing of Spells, Magical Operations and Rituals

By [Bob Makransky](#)

The most important method which we are employing here is known as the Planetary Hours, which has historically been the main astrological technique used in magical operations such as charging talismans;

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and also is the main astrological technique recommended by the spiritual guardians of astrological knowledge for electing propitious times to act or not act. It is based upon an ancient Chaldean system of astrology which supposedly antedates even the zodiac of signs. In using the Planetary Hours we are tuning into the ancient astrologer-magicians of Babylonia and the spirits who guided them. In alchemical work one employs a Planetary Hour whose symbolism is consonant with the metals or plants being used.

Let's look at the procedure step-by-step:

1) CHOOSING A PROPITIOUS DAY: First identify what it is you are visualizing with the relevant planet (see Table of Planetary Rulerships below). For example, if what you want is money, then you must look to the planet Jupiter. In an astrological ephemeris (most monthly astrology magazines include current ephemerides) scan ahead for a day when there is a good transiting aspect to Jupiter, and note the time when this aspect is exact. Don't forget to convert the time given in the ephemeris to clock time for your locality, taking Daylight Saving Time into account (if it's in effect). Or, you can check out upcoming transits which relate to what you are visualizing in my free monthly ezine *Magical Almanac* (subscribe from <http://www.dearbrutus.com>).

Optimally, the other planet involved in the aspect should also be relevant to what you want: if you want a steady income and a sense of security, then try to find a good aspect between Jupiter and Saturn (permanence); if what you want is money so you can afford some luxuries and enjoyment, then try to find a good aspect between Jupiter and Venus; if you want money so you can get ahead in life, then try to find an aspect between Jupiter and the sun. Most of the time, unless you're willing to wait for some months, you will be circumscribed in what choices are available, so in a pinch you can always go with aspects to the moon, which forms every possible aspect with every planet every month. Only favorable aspects should be used (conjunctions, sextiles, and trines); ignore unfavorable and minor aspects, and parallels of declination.

2) CHOOSING A PROPITIOUS HOUR: Once you have located a propitious day, scan the Tables of Planetary Hours for your latitude, and locate an hour ruled by the planet in question (Jupiter in our example). If you're not paying attention to the transits, then just choose a Jupiter hour which is convenient for you. Otherwise, if the transiting aspect does not involve the moon then you can use any of the Jupiter hours which fall within twenty-four hours before the exact time of the aspect; and if the transiting aspect does involve the moon then you must use that one Jupiter hour which falls just before the exact time of the transit. If the aspect becomes exact during a Jupiter hour, then use the space in time between the beginning of the Jupiter hour and the exact time of the transit.

To obtain a weekly table of Planetary Hours for your location, go to www.dearbrutus.com => Makransky Miscellany => Astrology Articles => Planetary Hours and download the free Excel worksheet. Because this worksheet contains macros you may have to lower your security option in Excel, and when it asks if you want to enable the macros click "Enable macros." [Click here for a copy of the Excel Planetary Hours Calculator](#) included with this article.

3) CHOOSING A PROPITIOUS MOMENT: You can just go with the transiting aspect and planetary hour, but if you like doing calculations you can refine the technique further by using a table of houses to see whether a natal or transiting planet (preferably the one which rules whatever it is you are praying for) crosses any of the four angles during the planetary hour in question. However, this isn't all that important, so if you don't know how to do these calculations, don't worry about it.

Now that you have found a propitious time to visualize, you must consider the form that your visualization will take. Write down ahead of time exactly what you want, so that you don't forget anything when the time comes. However, it's best not to be too specific in what you're asking for, such as to win the lottery, or to have such-and-such a person fall in love with you. It's best just to ask for wealth, or love from some unnamed person. Let the Spirit handle the details – it knows what it's doing.

If you have an accustomed mode of prayer or visualization, then just do what you usually do. If not, then you can adapt this formula to suit your own taste and needs: "Spirit – please bring me (whatever you are asking for), and please bring it to me *really soon!* Thank you!" It's important that you say "really soon", or else any contradictory subconscious agendas you may have will use this loophole to defeat the prayer. It's also important to say "thank you" at the end, as a reminder that the Spirit doesn't owe you (or anybody)

talismans; and also is the main astrological technique recommended by the spiritual guardians of astrological knowledge for electing propitious times to act or not act.

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anything. After all, the Spirit has given us life; after that anything else is gravy.

When the time draws near, prepare a little altar with something that symbolizes the Spirit above it (this can be a picture of Jesus if you're a Christian, or just a cut-out picture of an eye, or whatever symbolizes the Spirit for you). Put a stick of sweet-smelling incense on the altar, and a candle whose color symbolizes what you're asking for (green for money, pink for love, white for health or spiritual illumination, etc.). Also put on the altar objects which symbolize what you want (money if you want money; cut-out pictures of lovers if you want love; pictures of healthy, active people if you want health, etc.).

Just prior to the chosen time light the incense; and then, at the precise moment chosen for the visualization, light the candle. Then recite what you've written down. It's okay to read it, but you should do this with *feeling* – true longing for whatever it is that you want. Picture in your mind's eye your prayer coming true, and let yourself feel all the joy you would feel if your desire came true. Don't worry about whether you are doing it right; if you're doing it in good faith with true longing, then you're doing it right.

If you don't feel comfortable with all the ritual, you can dispense with it. The ritual is just for your own sake, to lend a sense of importance and ceremony to the occasion – not to impress the Spirit. The only things of importance are to feel true longing, at a propitious time.

When you finish, leave the area and let the incense and candle burn down, and then dismantle the altar and dispose of what's left of the candle and incense by burying them. Once a visualization has been launched there's no need to repeat it unless you feel your own resolve weakening and want to strengthen it.

Sometimes astrologically guided visualization works so fast that the results are startling. At other times, when there are powerful contradictory subconscious agendas in place, it takes a while to come true; but nonetheless you ought to be able to feel your visualization working right away in the sense of feeling your inner obstructions dissolving and your inner attitude changing. Be assured that visualization carried out in good faith *always* works, so don't waste it on anything frivolous, since then you're committed to it. Be sure you really want what you're visualizing. Good luck!

Table of Planetary Rulerships

Note that the planetary hours can be used to find propitious times for commencing all sorts of activities, not just visualizations; therefore the general uses of each planet are listed.

Sun Hours: General success and recognition; spiritual illumination; decisiveness, vitality; activities requiring courage or a mood of self-certainty – making big decisions, scheduling meetings for reaching decisions, giving speeches, launching new projects; seeking favors from father, husband, boss, authorities.

Venus Hours: Love; friendship; artistic and social success; enjoyable, sociable and aesthetic activities such as parties, social gatherings, recitals / exhibitions, weddings, visits, dating and seeking romance; planting ornamentals; buying gifts, clothing, luxuries; beauty treatments; seeking favors from women.

Mercury Hours: Success in studies / communications; children; making a good impression; routine activities and activities needing clear communications; teaching / learning; important business letters / phone calls; meetings to develop or communicate ideas; buying / selling; routine shopping, errands, travel; job applications / interviews; seeking favors from neighbors, co-workers.

Moon Hours: Health; home (buying home, moving); journeys / vacationing (time of leaving home or takeoff); activities remote in time or space – meditation, making reservations, finding lost objects or people; planting food crops; hiring employees; seeking favors from mother, wife, employees.

Saturn Hours: Discipline and patience; giving up bad habits; overcoming obstacles; success with difficult tasks or difficult people; projects of long duration – breaking ground, laying foundations; planting perennials; treating chronic illness; making repairs; seeking favors from older people (not relatives) or difficult people.

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Jupiter Hours: Wisdom, optimism; money (borrowing / lending/ investing / earning / winning); activities necessitating enthusiasm; buying lottery tickets; seeking advice / consultation; settling disputes; seeking favors from grandparents, aunts and uncles, advisors (doctors, lawyers, accountants, astrologers).

Mars Hours: Courage, adventure; enforcing your will; success with drastic action (lawsuits, conflicts, going to war, surgery); sports, exercises; risk-taking; making complaints; firing employees; seeking favors of husband or boyfriend.

Bob Makransky's articles are posted at www.dearbrutus.com. To subscribe to his free monthly ezine send an e-mail to: MagicalAlmanac-subscribe@yahoo.com.

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Four Poems from *liber xix:* *differentia liber*

By [Paul Hardacre](#)

Editor's Note: The last issue of the Alchemy Journal introduced readers to the work of Paul Hardacre through his poetry from this collection. His poems transmute some of the principles of alchemy into words of his art form. This issue includes four more.

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and of certain rivers

"Then she, seeing me gaze at her in wonder, and realising that my only delight was to feed upon her indescribable beauty, said, "Pilgrim, put those speculations aside, and follow me; if you wish to complete your voyage."

– The Nymph 'Royal Ordinary' to Giovanni Battista Nazari,
Three Dreams On the Transmutation of Metals

"The fruit which I have brought forth is the 'Sun.'"

– Isis

buried cross & flower skin she digs
the winds her styx a bushy love of
eyes the red dirt heart she sniffs for
sunset beauty coats of skin he fell
with mandrake soft & shaped a raven
none might hear a plate of hair her
meal of birds a swan & uptil night a

cock the year of iron veiled & salt the
central salt the wings a metal leaf his art
of starry robe a silent sun or snake behind
her head to rise she points to paths to stars
& wheaten breasts & helpless under foot
adores the cup the trickling spear or face &
in each curl the locks & into worlds a lion
rampant deer with lights he groans by line
& circle earth on spiny leaves & water filled
with burrs & burning enters it to die her shell-
like mouth a fruit with dolphin handles beaked an
ancient ship or gilded tongue inside her fluted niche

shadow apple south

"Perhaps this was meant to be
Such is the game of existence.
Take me home, mother
Night falls
I am tired."

– Ramprasad Sen

"As the past meets the future, it gets clearer,
that it all boils down to love."

– Badly Drawn Boy, *One Plus One Is One*

puts off shoes he must & in a box
a room her bells & flames / is black
like rain her skull-topped staff her eyes
of precious water ink & goats the river
makes with matted hair or moon he stole
the beast the ghost who followed magic
in her dream she came as swans the shade
of apples fell like endless pearls of sky all
red her palms & offered sweets she leaves
the house & tattooed rides a dog a newborn
corpse her earring (happy shadow) feeds
on what she kills or swallows ages sings a
cave of ice & drums & one last monster:
rest here eat here live here always (place
of swamps her face on banks no more than
stones her tongue a secret smeared in ash
or pox & rashes forest curd & lemon / trees
a key of life restored with fangs & blood-
shot eyes & unbound milk her lake of hair

hieros gamos

"Heaven above, Heaven below
Stars above, Stars below
All that is above, Also is below
Grasp this, And rejoice."

– Athanasius Kircher, *Prodromus coptus sive aegyptiacus*

"Cover your heads and throw the bones
of your mother behind you."

– Zeus to Deucalion and Pyrrha, after the flood

red earth taste of young or nascent gold
& death into the world the tree he cried

"Poetry has been
my gateway to
alchemy, as has
the death of my
solar and lunar
progenitors. It
hasn't been an
easy path, but I am
happy with what I
have seen and
learnt and felt
along the way, and
where my path
seems to be
heading in the
future. And why
not? As Waite put
it, 'The possession
of the spirit of
poetry is ... an
indispensable
condition of
achievement; it is
the agent of
transfiguration; it is
the philosophic
stone which
transmutes the
world and man.'"

- Paul Hardacre

the yellow river fruits & flowers in her
skirt & bones the rising source of sighs
against the night the cold star rays & ages
dark its rays are dark & formed of blood
she stored her maw-like womb she clawed
the sky & nothing to the east no moon or
poisoned milk & all was water wide & had
no shores or birds the fire is secret equal to
itself he bridges rain with fronds & creepers
dons the crawling lion in her hand a sun &
then her eyes she feeds the stone her hair or
hidden beauty in the caverns in the after-
darkness light a kind of metal earth she
quickness many-eyed & royal red to black-
ness sick with love the art of not-hot fire
a crest of fish fins occult dryness from the
edge the shape of egg whose shell was night

of the stars, and two

“If you recite the first spell, you will enchant the sky,
the earth, the world of the night, the mountains and
the waters. You will understand the language of all the
birds in the sky and all the reptiles in the earth . . . If
you read the second one, even though you may be
dead in the tomb, you will regain the form you had on
earth.”

– Nenerkephthah (dead, risen & disguised as a noble lord)
to Satin-Kharma (the son of Ramses II)

“I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked
brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky.”

– XCIII = 418 to DCLXVI, *The Book of the Law*

calls down birds down sky &
arched for love her back of sun
at night a drum of gifts of gemmed
azure she bends the earth to black
or she a moon & hunts a book of
skin with horns her lidded heart &
curls the inky mouth & waters scared
to wake as bornless lake of dirt or
love he walks he speaks is dead &
sleeps with dust her mandrake dance
a feather in the scale in painted wood
her bloody hips her hole is winged or
framed by war & girt with sword her
secret house of red her leavings soften
trees or hang as meat or birds the lovely
bones of stars her crown or coat of light
a charcoal skull salute or golden kiss a feast
for life & greater beasts her hands upon the
hiding air the hiding too deep too much air

"soi 3 modern poets" imprint. And he is a published poet. The nineteen nineteen-line poems of his latest work, *liber xix: differentia liber*, took one and a half years to complete and explore the mysteries, hermetic and alchemical cosmology, cabala and the 'green language', occult and devotional systems, the reconciliation of opposites, and death - both familial and mythological. With his long-time partner, artist and graphic designer Marissa Newell, he currently divides his time between Brisbane, Australia, and Chiang Mai, Thailand.

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FEATURES

New Releases

Another Instrument for the Alchemist's Laboratory:

A Review of the 2007 Edition of The Alchemy Bibliography

By Duane Saari



An alchemist's laboratory contains many tools, instruments and secret devices. Many of the alchemists' drawings give us some idea of what the physical space of an alchemist laboratory may have looked like centuries ago. Another instrument has recently become available. Alan Pritchard's "Alchemy: A Bibliography of English-Language Writings" is an indispensable addition to any laboratory.

Pritchard developed the first edition of the bibliography in 1980 as a university thesis. His passion for alchemy led him to expand it over the ensuing years as a personal project of passion into a resource of more than 11,370 entries. The second edition of the bibliography available now on CD from his site: <http://www.alchemy-bibliography.co.uk/bibliog.shtml>

is arguably the largest online resource for written works about alchemy in the English language. To give you some idea of its scope, the first two major bibliographies of alchemy and related subjects published in the 20th Century by Ferguson and Duveen contained about 1,500 and 2,000 entries respectively.

Among the entries in Pritchard's resource are works that you would expect in any alchemical bibliography: writings of Lull, Dee and Hermes. At the same time, this intriguing resource contains translations of French, German, Greek, Chinese and Islamic texts. Pritchard also included a large selection of books, artwork, poems and fiction from fields influenced by or related to alchemy such as Botticelli paintings and poems by Browning. Pritchard even included seven other bibliographies. The richness of material available to the reader makes his Bibliography an invaluable tool as well as a delightful source to leisurely explore for topics of interest and surprising treasures.

In addition to the individual entries, the second edition (Edition 2-01) CD of the Bibliography contains a wealth of information. An Introduction to the new edition presents Pritchard's view of alchemy and the reason for his interest in the subject which is both an intellectual and spiritual one. The Introduction to the first edition is also included and provides useful, interesting information including: Pritchard's view of the history and significance of alchemy, a description of the arrangement and layout of the Bibliography and an

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Appendix that lists the more than 150 sources used to locate and identify the entries. The Bibliography Notes is a chronological listing of the major steps in the development of the resource. Using the Bibliography is another item included on the CD and represents an invaluable aid to making the most use of the information it contains. Of particular interest are the two primary ways to search the Bibliography: using the Index to the Subject Classification – also on the CD – and the ability to use your browser “find” capability in the Bibliography itself.

Two challenges to using the Bibliography do face the first time user. One is that it was created and organized in a classification structure, much like the way your local library develops its card catalog or online listings. Pritchard used the Master Bibliographic and Textual Database Manager software to develop his Bibliography and while the usefulness of its organizing approach becomes dramatically evident, it does take the user some experimentation and practice to realize and get the maximum effectiveness from the listing of entries. This is also a bibliographic resource only and does not contain information on how to locate that necessary or favorite item you have been able to find by using it. To his credit, Pritchard states on his web site mentioned above that he will gladly respond to questions and comments from users sent to him at: Alan.Pritchard@gmail.com My test of his offer received an immediate and friendly response. Among his responses to a number of questions and requests, for example, he told me that the most direct way for users of the Bibliography to locate entries they have identified is to use WorldCat at: www.worldcat.org After searching for your favorite item, you can enter your location and get a list of libraries that have it in their collection.

After using the CD and putting it to the test of my idiosyncratic interests and needs, I quickly found Pritchard's Bibliography to be an invaluable tool in my desire to learn more about alchemy. Undeniably, it is an important resource in doing research into the Art and even to finding answers to specific questions. Beyond this however, it is very quickly evident that the Bibliography itself contains a view of the scope and influence of alchemy on many fields that impact our daily lives. Practicing alchemists as well as those interested in this Art will find this listing of source documents invaluable to furthering their work and interests.

Follow up articles on some of the specific entries and information in the Bibliography and how to use it efficiently and effectively are planned for future issues of the Alchemy Journal.

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From the Fire by [Dennis William Hauck](#)

We are just a month away from the International Alchemy Conference in Las Vegas. This event brings together nearly every tradition of alchemy and participants from twelve countries. There will be free door prizes and raffles, and attendees under 18 receive a free bag of alchemical goodies. There will even be an indoor Fire Dance as described so wonderfully in the lead article in this issue.

Duane Saari and I will both be there and look forward to meeting our fellow alchemists and students of alchemy. For complete information, go to www.AlchemyConference.com . Here is the current list of presenters (click on name for complete bio and links to lecturer's websites):

- [Robert Allen Bartlett](#) - Practicing alchemist, author, chief chemist of Albertus' Paracelsus Research Institute. New book is [Real Alchemy](#).
- [Paul Bartscher](#) and [Micah Nilsson](#) - Practicing alchemists and plant spagyricists.
- [Dr. Thom Cavalli](#) - Jungian psychologist, writer, artist and teacher. Member of Alchemical Guild and the Hermetic Society. Author of [Alchemical Psychology: Old Recipes for Living in the New World](#).
- [Daniel Coaten](#) - Practicing alchemist, medical herbalist, clinical aromatherapist, and lecturer who has a passion for herbal extraction research and botanical alchemy.
- [Dr. Bruce Fisher](#) - Hermeticist, spiritual alchemist, and author of over 20 books on alchemy.
- [John Michael Greer](#) - Hermetic scholar and author of over a dozen books on the Western esoteric

tradition.

- [Gudni Gudnason](#) - Spiritual alchemist who studied with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in England and other mystery schools. Teaches at spiritual centers around the world, including Tibet, India, Japan, Europe, and the United States.
- [Dr. Stanton Marlan](#) - Author of [The Black Sun: Alchemy and the Art of Darkness](#) and other works on alchemy, as well as editor of [Salt and the Alchemical Soul](#) and [Fire in the Stone](#). Jungian psychoanalyst and alchemy researcher.
- [Jeff McBride](#) – Practicing Hermeticist and world renowned performance Magician.
- [Dr. Werner Nawrocki](#) - Medical doctor and alchemist from Frankfurt, Germany. Initiated into alchemy by Frater Albertus in 1979. Author of [Transformation: Secret of the World](#).
- [Paul Rendak](#) - Practicing alchemist and spagyricist. Former student of Frater Albertus.
- [Nicki Scully](#) - Alchemical healer and explorer of Egyptian and shamanic alchemy. Author of [Alchemical Healing](#).
- [Gary Stadler](#) - Alchemical lab equipment developer. Artist.
- [Tamara Stadler](#) - Homeopathic alchemist and Hermetic musician.
- [Timothy Wilkerson](#) is a former student of Frater Albertus who attended Paracelsus College in Salt Lake City and graduated Prima in 1984.

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Announcements

- The **Alchemy Forum** has been moved to a more secure site at www.AlchemyCode.com/Alchemy_Forum . The discussion board has sections for students in the Alchemy Home Study Program, the International Alchemy Guild, and other topics of interest to beginning and advanced practitioners. Former members are invited to return to this forum, which is going into its fifth year of operation.
- **Writers Wanted!** The Alchemy Journal is always looking for articles on any aspect of alchemy, including biographies, historical material, practical laboratory work, spagyric recipes, philosophical pieces, poetry, experiences in personal transformation, spiritual insights, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, book reviews, film and video reviews, website reviews, artwork, etc. Please submit your material or queries via email to our editor Duane Saari at alchemyeditor@yahoo.com.

Send your announcements to the [Alchemy Journal](#).

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Lectures & Conferences

October 5-7, 2007. International Alchemy Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The International Alchemy Guild (IAG) is currently organizing what looks to be the largest gathering of alchemists and alchemical practitioners in 500 years. The goal is to represent all aspects of alchemy, including the practical and spiritual paths, East and West, and modern perspectives such as transpersonal psychology. The event is scheduled to take place over the Columbus Day weekend, October 5-7, 2007, in Las Vegas. Complete information can be found at www.AlchemyConference.com .

For a complete listing of other current lectures and workshops on alchemical topics, please go to www.AlchemyConference.com/lectures.htm .

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EDITORIAL

From the Editor (by [Duane Saari](#))

As each quarterly issue of the Journal takes shape, it helps to keep the bigger picture in front of me. Using images and metaphors makes the direction of the Journal, which has a life - and therefore - an urge of its own, clearer. Often, the phrase: views, tools and applications resonates with what I hope readers take away from each issue. This one is no exception.

The work of Paul Hardacre enlarges our view of the influences of alchemy through poetic visions. Bob Maransky's article on the timing of planetary movement and Alan Pritchard's alchemical bibliography are handy tools to help practitioners extend their laboratory work. Jeff Magnus McBride and Abigail Spinner McBride's presentation of Fire Circle Alchemy shows us one way to apply the principles of alchemy in our lives. Read and discover what is meaningful or useful for you.

This quarter of the Fall Equinox, however, heralds a unique event, a culmination of recent activities in the world of alchemy. On October 5, 6 and 7, what is expected to be the largest gathering of alchemists in hundreds of years will take place in a hotel in Las Vegas in the middle of the western US desert – an appropriate place for the art of alchemy that places the heat and imagery of the sun at the core of its practice. Two other alchemy conferences took place recently. One in Philadelphia explored the history of alchemy and was attended primarily by people interested in this facet of the Art. The other, held in Prague, focused on western esotericism and alchemy's place in this tradition.

The International Alchemy Conference in Las Vegas next month will bring together alchemists from around the world to meet with people who are using alchemy in some form in their work or who want to discover more about the practice. It is an unusual opportunity to experience some of the secrets as well as the magic of the Art that is thousands of years in the making. If you have not already seen what will be available, go to the conference web site at: <http://www.alchemyconference.com/>

I hope to see your there!

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Submissions

Submit your articles on any aspect of alchemy. We are looking for biographies, historical articles, practical laboratory work, spagyric recipes, philosophical pieces, experiences in personal transformation, spiritual insights, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, book reviews, film and video reviews, website reviews, artwork, etc. Please submit your material or queries via email to AlchemyEditor@yahoo.com.

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The *Alchemy Journal* is published quarterly at the annual solstices and equinoxes. Issues are posted at the Alchemy Lab website on the journal archives page at www.AlchemyLab.com/journal.htm. This page also contains a [Directory of Past Issues](#) and an [Index of Articles](#). To subscribe to the journal, simply send a blank email to AlchemyJournal-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

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- **Alchemy Website** (Original Alchemy Texts) www.levity.com/alchemy/
- **Alchemergy** (Modern Alchemy) www.Alchemergy.com
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