

**A Magnificent and
Select Tract
on
Philosophical Water**

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Most beloved son, so that I might explain to you, and write as a memorial a concise understanding of the one, true philosopher's stone, and of how to proceed with its preparation, you must know that this stone is made of and born of two things, namely *ex corpore et spiritu*, of the male and female seeds, that is, of water of mercury and *corpore solis*. We can find enough proof of this in the many true writing of the philosophers, and so I will mention many of the writings they left behind. Then it will be seen how the purified *mercurius* is poured into and dissolved in a spiritual water. The philosophers call this the *prima materia* of metals. They also call it *lunae water*, *aqua vitae*, *Q. Essentia*, or a fiery and burning liquid liquor. The metals can be dissolved and freed from their hard, stiff bonds in this water, and so return to their first, their original nature, just as the water of mercury has done. This is why the philosophers wrote for us in their books the example of how frozen ice turns to water again when heated, for it was water before its coagulation too. They also say that whenever an object's origins or *principalis* might be, it can be returned to that original state in this way. It will become that which it was in the beginning. The philosophers also wrote on the following subject in their books; that the species of metal cannot be turned into gold or silver if they have not first been reduced and returned to their original material. Note carefully, my son, that this reincarnation of the metals is possible only if the *prima materia metallorum*, or water of mercury, is used. It is not possible, and never will be possible with any other substance in the world. For this water is closest to the nature of the metals, and so it can never be separated or parted from them when the two are mixed. The philosophers have also given us explanations of this water in the '*Turba*' and in other books in which they say the following: Nature enjoys its Nature, Nature contains Nature, improves Nature, reduces Nature, Nature is superior to Nature. This is how we can recognize this blessed water and its preparation: It is a heated, fiery, all-penetrating spiritus, the philosophical water and the hidden key to this art. For without it all alchemical works are useless and in vain. So, my son, you must understand and remember that the whole basis of the philosopher's stone is this: That we can bring about a rebirth of the perfect and whole *corpus solis*, through the *prima materia metallorum*, or water of mercury, so that it is reborn through the water and the spirit, just as Christ says: Unless a man has been reborn through the water and the spirit he can never see the Kingdom of God. And so it is with this art. I say to you, my son, unless the *corpus solis* is sown, it is useless and fruitless, just as Christ says. Unless the grain of wheat falls onto the earth and dies there and rots, then it will bear no fruit. In this way the *corpus solis* is reborn through the water and the spirit, and immediately a clearer, more astral, eternal and immortal body grows from it, which bears fruit and multiplies like the *vegetabilia*. On this subject the philosopher Rogerus Baco says: I assure you, thus will the *astrum*, give of itself to the body of gold which has been clarified in this way, so that it will never lose its riches and its strength until the day of the Last Judgment. For the body is perfect, purified of all other elements and it is beautiful. But unless it is reborn it will never become anything bigger, or clearer, or higher or better. Unless you know and recognize this rebirth from Nature and new birth of metals through the water and the spirit of the *prima materia*, it is futile to practice this art. For believe me, in all truth, without this all is false, a lie, and useless, and in vain. It is impossible for it to happen in any other way. Because of this the philosophers wrote wonderfully in their books and said that everything bears an image of itself and that man will reap what he sows, and

nothing else. In the same way the philosopher Angelicus said: Sow gold and silver so that they can bear fruit by Nature's means. For this reason, my son, you must search in your work for a corpus other than gold, for all other corpora are stinking and incomplete. And so the philosophers have chosen gold above all other bodies as the most complete thing in the world, as the substance which lights up all other corpora and which pours life into them, while it has a fixed nature, an unburnable nature and a constant root in the fire. Rogerius also says of the body of gold that its nobility and perfection can never be altered, and that gold is the culmination of all natural births, and that nothing in the world is more complete. The philosopher Isaacus Hollandus speaks of the same substance in this way: Our stone can be extracted from nothing other than a perfect corpore, yes, from the most complete one in the world. If it were not a perfect corpus, what sort of stone could we extract from it? The stone must have the power to give life to all dead corpora, to purify all that is impure, to make all that is hard and to make all that is hard soft, and it would be truly impossible to extract such a powerful stone from an incomplete and frail corpore, just as it is also impossible to extract a good and perfect thing from something imperfect and unclean. How many people deceive themselves that such an extraction is possible, but they are always mistaken, and in truth they are great fools. Therefore my son, take care that the red philosophical sulphur is in the gold, as Richardus proved and King Calid said. Our sulphur is no common sulphur, but is fixed from mercurial nature and does not flee the fire. All other philosophers also confirm that their red sulphur is gold.

But, my son, the philosophers also say in their books that common gold or silver is not their gold or silver. While their gold and silver is alive, common gold and silver are dead, and as such cannot perfect other, incomplete corpora, nor impart their completeness to them. If they had to give away some of their perfection they would remain incomplete themselves, for they would have no more perfection. Now my son, the words of the philosophers are true and founded on fact, for it is impossible for common gold and silver to make other, complete corpora perfect, unless, as I said before, the *corpus Solis* and *Lunae*, is reborn through the water and spirit of the prima material and an enlightened spiritual, clarified, eternal, fixed and subtle, all penetrating body grows from this which will purify other perfect corpora and multiply. Therefore the philosophers have said of this: Such works are performed on their stone so that the tincture in it can be improved. This is why it is necessary for this stone to be treated better and more subtly than common gold and silver. The philosopher Berhardus writes on this subject in his book. He says: We take this body just as Nature created it. But it is necessary to make to make it even more perfect using this art (which must still follow the rules of nature) so that it, in its great perfection and with its many rays, can make the imperfect corpora and complete in weight, colour, substance, yes even its mineral origins and *principiis*. And if it had remained in the state in which Nature would normally have left it, if it had not been perfected or made superior, how would the period of ten and a half months served us then? Arnoldus speaks on this very subject in his Epistle: In our stone gold and silver are to be found more strongly, invisibly and more maturely in *potentia et virtute*, for if this were not so, neither gold nor silver in our stone are to be found in great strength and in their essence in their stone, but they are not as visible as common gold or silver. Euclides confirms this in his great '*Rosario*': Nothing can come from one perfect things, he says, for it is already perfect and complete, just as Nature created it. We find a similar example

in bread: When yeast-risen bread can be made from it. So it is too with gold, which is brought by nature over a long period of time to a complete end. It is therefore impossible to perfect other corpora with bad gold, unless the perfect corpus solis is dissolved again, so that it returns to its original substance, and it is turned into a true ferment and tincture through our work and art. On this subject the philosophers say that one can never achieve a good result until the gold and silver are joined together in one corpus. Now, my son, do not read the words literally, but understand the lumen metaphorice, for the philosophers say in their books that Luna is made of cold and wet Nature, and they also give this same definition to *mercurio*. So, for *Lunam*, we read *mercurius*, or water of mercury, or *prima materia* which is the philosophers *luna* or *Lunae* water, as can be read in the wonderful and profound book '*Clangor Buccinae*'.

And so, my son, you have had a short lesson that this art is useless unless we bring the perfecta corpora back to its original essence by the philosophical fire or by the water of mercury. This original essence is a sulphuric water and not *mercurius vivus* as the sophists believe. For the original *materia metallorum* is not *mercurius vivus*, but a sticky sulphuric steam and a viscous water in which the three *principia* Sal, Sulphur, and Mercurius are gathered. You must be able to recognize the true and blessed water of mercury or the heavenly supernatural fire in which the corpora are dissolved and melted. For this knowledge is the greatest secret of them all, and it is only found in the power of God, whom we must beg for the secret. Of this the philosopher Rogerius says: God the Almighty created man and set him above Nature and all the animals, although he is natural and nothing more than Nature, apart from the life which God breathed into him. And it is God who is and must be the judge of all the works and their nature. This godly spirit within man forms our feelings and thoughts, just as it does in its own head. The natural spirit found in the first beginnings of Nature many indications on which it could base and found these thoughts.

Through our work and through this spirit in us God-like Adam makes us ready for the destruction of the whole world. And from the lit, burning, fiery spirit of the breath of God, St Peter utters with quiet words that the elements will melt in the heat and the earth and all her works will burn in it, and a new world will be born, and it will be wonderful and precious and good, as is told in the *Apocalypsi*. And on this subject the philosopher concludes, saying, as we heard from St Peter, that a collapse of all the elements of the world shall occur in the heat of the fire. Take note that in this art too (which reflects nature) here too the fire must do this and perform these acts. Then, my son, turn your thoughts to the water which is burned, destroyed and melted with the *corpus solis*, which Rogerius confirms is a complete and created world. This too is no common fire, for common fire can neither burn nor destroy gold, but rather it is a supernatural, indestructible fire, the strongest of all fires, yes a hellish fire, the only one which has the power to burn gold, and to free it from its hard and stiff bonds. You must understand and know that this supernatural fire which has such power over gold and other metallic bodies, this fire alone is the spiritual, sulphuric, fiery water of mercury in which the corpus solis is melted and burned, and from this melted and destroyed substance a new world is created and born, a new world which is the heavenly Jerusalem, an eternal, purified, subtle, penetrating and fixed body which can penetrate all other corpora. That is why

Rogierus says: It would be like a supernatural fire which will break, dissolve and mix together all the elementa in the world, and then the new work will be reborn from the broken, transitory work of the melted elements and will become an eternal work. Thus has the Holy Trinity also shown us a supernatural fire in the heavenly stone. My son, the philosophers have hidden this supernatural fire in their books and have called it in parabolic speeches by innumerable names. Some of their special names for it are *Balneum Mariae*, damp horse dung, menstruum, urine, milk, blood, *aquam vitae*, and such like. Bernhardus says of this fire: Make a vaporous and constant fire which is not too powerful, but subtle, airy, clear and contained, indestructible, all-penetrating and eternal. And he goes on to say more on the subject. In truth, I have told you all about the wisdom of the fire, for this vaporous fire can do everything. For this reason he also says that one must consider his words about the fire often and deeply. A wise man will soon deduce that he must not take these words to mean a common fire, but rather a supernatural fire. Maria Prophetessa also indicates that the element of water melts the corpora and turns them white. Raymundus Lullius writes on the subject of this fire (which he calls menstrum) and its preparation in his '*Testamento noviss. in codice, in Anima metallorum, Luce Mercuriorum*' and in '*Libro mercuriorum*' in the book '*De Secretis Naturae f. de Q. Essentia*' and in the '*Elucidario Testamenti*' ch. 4, he says that it is not human, but rather angelic to reveal this heavenly fire, and that to know this is to know the greatest secret of all. He also says, in figurative expressions, that this fire of the wise is composed of horse dung and live calcium, I will explain what is represented by the live calcium elsewhere. I have already explained what is meant by the horse dung, namely that the horse dung is the water *prima materia*, for that too is warm and damp, just like horse dung, but it is no ordinary horse dung, as many ignorant people think. This is why the philosopher Alanus says: the philosophers have called the damp fire horse dung, in whose dampness the hidden warmth is contained, for it is a characteristic of the fire in a horse's stomach that it does not destroy the gold, but rather increases it for the sake of its dampness. Alchidonius says: Our medicine is to be hidden in the damp horse dung which is the fire of the wise. Alanus speaks in a similar way. Dear son, take great care with the decomposition or disintegration. The decomposition must occur in a gentle warmth, that is, in a damp horse dung. Similarly, Arnoldus de Villa Nova writes in the ninth chapter that the heat of horse dung should be in the fire. Alphidius too says: It must be cooked and buried in the heat of horse dung, Aristotle too: The earth or the corpus will gain no power unless it is sublimated in horse dung. For this reason Hermes says: cook and bake it in the warmth of a horse's stomach; and Morienus: if you do not find what you are looking for in the horse dung, then you can count your losses. Arnoldus agrees: You must search for no other fire than this, for this is the fire of the wise, the melting oven of the wise, their calcinating, sublimating, reverberating, dissolving, coagulating and figuring oven, for this water can dissolve and calcinate all metals and melts red and white with them. The '*Turba*' and '*Senior*' also speak of this: Our water is a fire and our water is stronger than all fires, for it makes a pure spirit from the *corpore* of gold which a natural fire cannot do, although natural fire also has something to do with it. For our fire enters into an earth or powder so that the gold burns more greatly than natural fire. Calid too says: In truth, it is a fire which burns and grinds all things.

But how this philosophical water or fire, which is *aqua mercurii*, is prepared has been hidden by the philosophers, as Raymundus Lullus writes mysteriously in his works. It is first necessary for the mercury to be purified of its outer dampness and earthliness, but this must not be done with harmful and destructive things which would destroy its noble, fruitful, green and fertile nature. Avicenna, Arnoldus, Geber, Raymundus in codicillo and other philosophers state that mercury is best purified through the sublimation of commonly prepared salt. The sublimate is dried and mixed with Sal Tartari, is ground per retortam, then cut up. This must be done several times. In this way the *mercurius* will be rid of its outer dampness and foecibus. This purgation, says Bernhardus at the end of his epistle, does not harm the *mercurius* because the hot water and the salt do not penetrate it. But you must understand my son, that while the *mercurius* is a uniform and inseparable substance and essence, we cannot completely purify its outer whiteness, for its earthy impurity lies hidden in its innermost depths and it cannot be separated from it by any method of sublimation, how ever many ignorant people have the audacity to suggest this. For this reason the following method must be used. The *mercurium vivum purgatum* must be freed from the bonds with which Nature ties it so securely to the earth. These bonds must be loosed and it must be returned to its very first essence, namely a sulphuric, spiritual water, without the addition of any foreign bodies in the world, as Rogerius Bacon testifies to under the title '*De Mercurio*', and as Raymundus also says in the '*Theorica*' of his testament: Unless it is putrified in this way and dissolved, the menstruum will not be worth a fig. But when the living mercury, purified of all foreign bodies, has been freed of its bonds, and returned to its original water, then we can purify it inwardly and separate the *spiritum* from the water and its earthliness by distillation. The philosophers have spoken in secret words about the separation, in a way that a hard-headed man would not easily understand. They have written of it mysteriously and in a figurative manner in their description of the distillation of wine that the spirit of wine is mixed with a great deal of water and worldly earthiness. But the dry *spiritum*, or spirit of wine, can be separated from all phlegmatic moisture and worldly earthliness by artificial distillation. In other words, the whole *spiritum* is separated from the water of the wine, and the water from the earth. And so the yeast, through whose calcinations its own white salt is extracted, remains. This is married again with the spiritu and distilled again several times until all the sal nitri has then gone into the lid of the distilling vessel with the *spiritu*. In this way the power of the *spiritus* is greatly strengthened and heightened by the sal. Truly, the philosophers have given us a remarkable figurative description, which we should also follow in the description of the water of mercury.

For when the latter has been dissolved, we should do exactly as was done to the wine: By the sublimation of the water (or phlegma) from the *spiritu*, the *spiritum* is separated from the earth, the earth is rectified and married again to the *spiritu*, and they are distilled again and again until both substances are to be found in the lid of the distilling vessel. Of all the philosophers, none has written better and more clearly on this subject than Raymundus Lullius, in his '*Testamento Novissimo*' and also in his first testament '*In Libro Mercuriorum, libro Q. Essentia*' in which he explains clearly and at length that after the putrefaction, separation and distillation of the philosophical spirit of wine, the spiritual water is mixed and distilled again with its earth, and they are both put over the alembic together. He also explains that this philosophical wine or mentruum is

heightened and strengthened with its own salt. And also you must also understand that this water, menstruum or philosophical spirit of wine dissolves its own corpus or living *mercurium* into the original essence or water, and is then multiplied ceaselessly through the putrefaction and the distillation. What is said of the extract of this water is confirmed by Arnoldus de Villa Nova when he says: It is a substance full of foul smelling vapours and which contains a gross moisture. From this substance the artist separates the philosophical moisture which is easy to work with and which is as clear as tears. The *Q. Essentia* lives in its metallic form in this substance. It causes no discomfort to the metals, and the tincture of the whole metal can be gathered in it. For it contains Nature's *Argenti Vivi*, and the nature of *sulphuris*. On the subject of the distillation of this menstruum or water '*Rosarius Philosophorum*' says that you should take great care that the dishes in which you wish to purify your spirit are made of glass, so that the spirit can find no place to escape through, for it often slips quickly through the holes in dishes. And once the red spirit has escaped all the artist's work is in vain. The red spirit is what the philosophers call blood and menstruum. So take care with your dishes and with any cracks in your dishes, so that you can catch the dry spirit with its blood in a receptacle, without letting its power escape. Store it carefully until you begin to work on it. But seeing the distillation is more important than reading about it, and none can become a Master without having first been a pupil. For this reason take great care over your work. Using a receptacle distill the element at first over a gentle fire, and when it has been distilled off, put it aside and replace it with another receptacle. Make sure all the cracks are tightly sealed so that the spirit cannot escape. Make the fire a little stronger. A dry yellow *spiritus* will rise into the lid of the distilling vessel. Keep the fire burning steadily for as long as the spirit is yellow. Then, when the alembic begins to turn red, make the fire a little stronger, and keep it at this temperature until the red spirit and the blood have been completely distilled off and are floating in the lid of the distilling vessel like clouds in the sky. As soon as the red spirit is distilled off, the lid will turn white. Stop as soon as this happens. You now have the two elements air and water in the receptacle, and you have separated the right matter.

As you will see, you now have the *primam materiam metallorum* in which corpora can be reduced. For all metals have their origin in water, and water is the root of all metals. That is why they are reduced to water, just as frozen ice becomes water again in the warmth, for it used to be water, before it was frozen. So do not be surprised, for all things on the earth are like this, they all have their origins in water. Oh there are so many of them! But you must not think about their origins. You must work on. This is the key to the whole work, the key which dissolves the corpora at the beginning, it is father and mother, it opens and locks them, and reduces them to that which they were in the beginning. It dissolves the corpora and coagulates with them, the spirit is led to the water, that is, the power of the spirit is seen there taking effect, and this happens when the corpus is placed in the water. On this subject the philosopher says: There is something which everyone recognizes, and whoever does not recognize it will rarely, perhaps never find it. The wise man will keep it and the fool will throw it away, and the reduction comes easily to the man who knows it. But, my son, the greatest secret of all is how to free the stone or *mercurium vivum* from the natural bonds with which it is bound to the laws of Nature, that is, how to dissolve it and return it to its original water. For if this did

not happen, all our work would be in vain, for we could not separate and extract the true spirit or liquid essence which dissolves all *corpora*. And all the philosophers have kept this dissolution secret, and God the Almighty in His Power has ordered them to do this, and they have cursed and damned the men who have revealed it. For this reason they have spoken only briefly and subtly of the return of this raw body to its original essence, so that it can remain hidden to the ignorant. But you, my son, must understand that this dissolving of the living *mercurii* to its original state is difficult without knowledge of certain methods, but no sophistic methods can be used, as are used by many coarse ignorant and unknowing fools, who change the *mercurium* into water using many marvelous arts and believe that it is the true water. They sublimate the *mercurium* by *corrosiva* with all sorts of salts and vitriols, whereby the sublimated *mercurius* draws the spirit of the salts into itself. Then they dissolve the sublimate in water in Balneo or in the cellar or in various other ways. Then they turn it into water using salmiac and herbs, salves or *aqua fort*, using peculiar apparatus and many sophistic rules, but all of this is mere fantasy, nonsense, useless and in vain. Some of them also think that they can separate certain things from the water of mercury and that it will become the true water which the philosophers desire. The reason for this is simply that they do not heed the words of the philosophers which say quite clearly that it should be mixed with no foreign object on earth. And Bernhardus says in his 'Epistle': As soon as the *mercurius* has been dried out by the salts, alum and *aqua fort*, it will no longer dissolve. But take note, my dear son, of what I am about to tell you, and of how the philosophers have left an account for those who understand their books, namely, that this water cannot be prepared using strange methods in the world, but rather, it can only be prepared using natural means; together with Nature and from nature. These words are bright and clear to those who understand, so this time I will not explain it openly, but I will write it down in a special little tract, but as a memorial I will add here the following verses:

Take one that is fresh, pure, living, white and clear,
Tie its hands and feet well
With the strongest rope you can find
So that it dries and is choked
In the House of Putrefaction,
As Nature has shown us.
By this same harmonious Nature
It will be dissolved and it will rise to the original essence.
It is a living, spiritual spring
Which flows clearly and brightly from Heaven.
It eats its own flesh and blood
In order to multiply.

Whoever succeeds, with God's help, in attaining this blessed water should thank God, for he has in his hands the key which will open the closed locks of all metal chests, and can take gold, silver, precious stones, honour, power and good health. This blessed water is called the daughter of Pluto by the philosophers, it has strength and power over all reassures. It is also called the white, pure, tender and unspoiled maid of Beja and without it no birth or blending can occur. For this reason the philosophers have married this

tender and pure maid to Gabrico, so that they bear fruit, and when she was joined with Gabricus, he died. Beja swallowed and consumed him in her great love, as Arisleus tells in his '*Practica*': The spring or Fontina is like a mother to the king, for she draws him to her and kills him. But through her the king is resurrected again and he joins himself fast to her, so that no man can harm him. This is why the philosopher says that Gabricus is more precious and worthy and dear to the world than Beja, but he can bear no fruit alone. The philosophers have called this maid and blessed water by many thousands of different names in their books. They call it heaven, a heavenly water, a heavenly rain, a heavenly thaw, a May thaw, water of Paradise, an aqua fortis and an *aquam Regis*, a corrosive aquafort, a sharp vinegar and liquor, also *Quintam essentiam vini*, a waxy green juice, waxy *mercurium*, green water and *Leonem viridis*, quicksilver, menstruum or blood. They also call it urine and horse piss, milk and virgin's milk, water of arsenic, silver, Luna or Lunae water, woman, a female seed, a sulphuric steam and smoke, a fiery, burning spirit, a deathly all-penetrating poison, a dragon, a scorpion which eats its young, a hellish fire of horse dung, a sharp salt, sal armoniacum, a common salt, a lye, a viscous oil, the stomach of an ostrich which eats and digests all things, an eagle, a vulture and hermetic bird, a vessel and *Sigillum Hermetis*, a melting and calcinating oven, and innumerable other names of animals, birds, plants, waters, juices, milks and blood, etc. They have used all these names and written of it figuratively in their books. They have suggested that such a water is made of these things, with the result that all ignorant people who have searched for it in these things, have not found the desired water. You must also know, my son, that it can be made only from *mercurio vivo* and from no other thing on earth, and the philosophers have given it so many names that ignorant people cannot recognize it. And with that, I end this little tract, written in order that you might understand and learn that without this fire, all work in the world is in vain, all chemical processes are a lie, useless and false. The great '*Rosarius*' says that there is no more than one recipe, and with this one lock all the books of the philosophers are locked, just as if they were surrounded by a strong wall, and unless you know of, or have the key in your hands, you will never open the lock, or achieve anything fruitful. For the only key to the metal walls and gardens is this water. And this water is the strong aquafort which Isaacus refers to in his own work. He dissolves the corpora with it and uses it to make it spiritual. So note carefully that without this water all is false, all is a lie, in metals and minerals as well as vegetalibus and animalibus. You can dissolve, sublimate, distill, calcinate, extract, mix and compose what you will, you can dissolve it in the cellar, in Balneo, in dung, in aqua fortis and in any amount of strong waters which the alchemical processes teach, or which you can think up yourself, you can make oil or water or chalk or powder black, white, yellow and red. You can burn it, pour it in any way and teach the alchemical recipes, you can claim that you can make gold and silver with them. But it is all false, a stinking lie from beginning to end (without the water). For I myself --- with my own hands, or I should never have believed it --- I myself have learned this through error and misfortune. Be warned, my son, protect yourself from such sophists in Alchemy and the bragging of all deceitful people, just as you would protect yourself from the tiresome devil and from a terrible, impure and burning fire or poison. For through the sophistry of such cunning and false alchemy a man can bring about the death of his body and soul, his honour and goodness. Such deceit is truly more evil than the devil himself, even if one were to turn a whole principality against such people, everything would still be destroyed

and still the lasting truth would not be found. It is for this reason that you must open your eyes, know and recognize the only key, flee all falsehood, for it is impossible to achieve anything true and useful in any way, other than the way I have described in this little book.