



**FRIAR BACON, HIS
DISCOVERY OF THE
MIRACLES OF ART,
NATURE, AND MAGICK**

ROGER BACON

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HIS DISCOVERY OF THE
MIRACLES OF ART, NATURE, AND
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BY
ROGER BACON

FAITHFULLY TRANSLATED OUT OF DR DEE'S OWN COPY,
BY T.M. AND NEVER BEFORE IN ENGLISH.

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This edition was created and published by Global Grey

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CHAPTER 8. OF OBSCURING THE MYSTERIES OF ART AND NATURE

After an enumeration of some few examples concerning the prevalence of Nature and Art (that by these few we may gather many,) by these parts the whole; and so from particulars, universals, which will demonstrate the unnecessary aspiring to Magick, since both Nature and Art afford such sufficiencies. I shall now endeavour a methodical procedure in singulars, laying open both the causes and wayes in particular: and yet I will call to mind how as Secrets (of * Nature) {* Deest in alio.} are not committed to Goats-skins and Sheeps-pelts, that every clown may understand them, if we follow *Socrates* or *Aristotle*. For the latter in his *Secreta Secretarum* affirms, *He breaketh the Heavenly Seal, who communicateth the Secrets of Nature and Art; the disclosing of Secrets and Mysteries, producing many inconveniences*. In this case *Aulus Gellius* in *Noct. Atti. de Collatione Sapientum*, sayes, *It's but folly to profer Lettices to an Asse, since hee's content With his Thistles. Et in lib. lapidum, The divulging of Mysteries is the diminution of their Majesty, nor indeed continues that to be a Secret, of which the whole fry of men is conscious.*

For that which all men, which wise, and the more noted men affirme is truth. That therefore which is held by the multitude, as a multitude, must be false ; I mean of that multitude, which is distinct from knowing men. The multitude, it's true, agree with wise men in the more vulgar conceptions of their mind; but when they ascend to the proper principles and conclusions of Sciences and Arts, they much dissent (striving to get onely the appearancies in Sophismes and subtilties which wise men altogether reject.) {Al. Vacans sophisinatibus & inutilibus.} And this their ignorance of the properties and Secrets, makes the division from knowing men. Though the common conception of the mind, have all one Rule and Agreement with knowing men. Yet as for common things, they are of small value, nor enquirable for themselves, but rather for particular and proper ends.

The Reason then, why wise men have obscured their Mysteries from the multitude, was, because of their deriding and flighting wise mens Secrets of wisdom, being also ignorant to make a right use of such excellent matters. For if an accident help them to the knowledge of a worthy Mystery, they wrest and abuse it to the manifold inconvenience of persons and communities. Hee's then not discreet, who writes and Secrets, unlesse he conceal it from the vulgar, and make the more intelligent pay some labour and sweat before they understand it. In this stream the whole fleet of wise men have failed from the beginning of all, obscuring many wayes the abstruser parts of wisdom from the capacity of the penerality. Some by Characters and Verses have delivered many Secrets. Others by ænigmatical and figurative words, as *Aristotle* sayes, (*in lib. Secret, O Alexander, I shall disclose to you the greatest of Secrets, which it becomes you by divine Assistance to keep secret, and perfect the thing proposed. Take then then the Stone, which is no Stone, which is in every man, and in every place, and in all times; and it shall be called the Philosophers Egge, and the Terminus Ovi.* And thus we find multitudes of things obscured in the Writings and Sciences of men, which no man without his Teacher can unvail.

Thirdly, They have obscured their Secrets by their manner of Writing, as by Consonants without Vowels, none knowing how to read them, unlesse he know the signification of those words. {Significata.} Thus the *Hebrews, Caldees, Arabians*, nay the *major* part of men do most an end write their Secrets, which causeth a great obscurity amongst them, especially amongst the *Hebrewes*. For as *Aristotle* sayes in his fore-recited Book, *God gave them all manner of Wisdom long before they were Philosophers: And all Nations had their Originals of Philosophy from the Hebrewes, as Albumazar in lib. Introductorii Majoris; and other Philosophers, with Josephus lib.I. & lib.8. Antiquit.* makes it evident.

Fourthly, This obscuring is occasioned by the mixture of several sorts of Letters, for so the *Ethnick* Astronomer hid his knowledge, writing it in *Hebrew, Greek and Latine* Letters altogether. {Ethicus Astronomus fortasse. N. deest ergo Anglice dedi Ethnick.}

Fifthly, This obscuring was by their inventing other letters, then those which were in use in their own, or any other Nation, being framed

meerly by the pattern of their own fancy, which surely is the greatest impediment; yet this was the practice of *Artesius in lib. de Secretis Naturæ*.

Sixthly, They used not the Characters of Letters, but other Geometrical Characters, which have the power of Letters according to the several Position of Points, and Markes. And these he likewise made use of.

Seventhly, There is a greater Art of obscuring, which is called *Ars Notoria*, which is the Art of Noting and Writing, with what brevity, and in what manner we desire. This way the *Latines* have delivered many things. I held it necessary to touche at these obscurings, because it may fall out, I shall thorow the magnitude of our Secrets discourse this way, that I may help you so farre as I may.

CHAPTER 9. IN ALIIS ADVERG. OF THE MANNER TO MAKE THE PHILOSOPHERS EGGE

NOw I shall methodically handle those things I promised above, the dissolving the Philosophers Egge, and finding out the parts thereof; a work which will give beginning to other enterprises. {These are ænigmatical.} Make a diligent purification of the *Calx* with the waters of the *Alkali*, and other acute waters, grind it by several contrition with the salts, and * burn it {* Al. Contermina.} with many assations, that the earth may be perfectly separated from other elements, which I hold worthy the * longitude of my stature. {* Al. Melancholia staturæ.} Understand it if you can. For without doubt there will be a composition of Elements, and so it will be part of that Stone which is no Stone, which is in every man, and in every place of man; and you may find this this in all the seasons of the year in its place. Then take oyl after the form of a Saffron-cheese, and so viscouous first (as not to be smitten asunder by a stroak) {Al. Insensibile.} divide the whole fiery virtue, and separate it by dissolution, and let it be dissolved in acute water, of a temperate acutenesse, with a slight fire, and let it be boyled till his ‡ fatnesse, {‡ Al. Terrestreitas.} as the fatnesse of flesh be separated by distillation, that nothing of the unctiousnesse may issue forth; and let this fiery virtue be distilled in the water of Urine. Afterwards boil it in Vinegar, until the least part, which is the cause of adustion be dried up, and the fiery virtue may be had; but if there be no regard of it, † again let it be made. {† Al. Tum fac.} Mind and search what I say: for the speech is difficult. The Oyl is dissolved in acute waters, or in common Oil which works more expresly, † or in acute Oyl of Almonds upon the fire; {† Al. Ut.} so as the Oyl be seperated, and the spirit remain occult, in the parts of living creatures, Sulphur and Arsnick. For the stones, in which the Oyl of humidity overflows, have their *terminus* in the union of its parts: for there is no vehement union, but one may be dissolved from another by the nature of water, which is the subject of liquefaction in the spirit, which is the *Medium* betwixt the dry parts and the Oyl.

The dissolution being made there will remain in the spirit, a pure humidity, vehemently mixed with dry parts, which are moved in it, when

the fire resolves it, which is sometimes called of the Philosophers, *Sulphur fusibile*, sometimes Oyl, other while an aery humour, sometime a conjunctive substance, which the fire separates not, sometimes *Camphore*: and if you please, this is the Philosophers Egge, or rather the *Terminus* and end of the Egge; and it came to us from these Oyls, and may be esteemed amongst the subtilities, when it is purged and separated from the water and oyl in which it is. Further, the Oyl is corrupted by grinding it with deficeating things, as with salt or *Atrimentum*, and by assation, because there is a passion arising from the contrary; and afterwards it is to be sublimated, until it be deprived of † its oleagineity, {† Al. Olio suo.} and because its as Sulphur or Arsnick amongst Minerals, it may be prepared, even as it is. Yet it's better to boil it in waters, that are temperate in acuity, until it be purged and whitened. Which wholsom exaltation is made either in hot or moist fire: The distilation must be re-iterated, that it may sufficiently receive its goodnesse, until it be rectified, the signs of its last rectification are candor and crystalline serenity: And when other things grow black, by fire, this grows white, is cleansed, shines with clearnesse and admirable splendour. From this water and its earth comes *Argentum vivum* in Minerals, and * when the matter hath waxed white, {Al. Quandoque in salem Aru.oniacum.} this way it is congealed; the Stone of *Aristotle*, which is no Stone, it's set in a Pyramid a hot place, or (if you please) in the belly of an Horse or Ox, and it imitateth an acute Feavor. For from seven to fourteen, and from that it sometimes proceeds to one and twenty, that the Fecis of the Elements may be dissolved in its water, before it be separate: The dissolution and distillation is to be iterated, until it be rectified. And here is the end of this intention. Yet know that when you have consummated your work, you are then to begin.

Another Secret I shall shew you, you must prepare *Argentum vivum* by mortifying it with the vapour of Tin for Pearls, and with the vapour of Lead for the Stone *Iberus*; then let it be ground with desiccating things, and *Attramentis*, and the like, as is said, and let there be an assation: Then let there be a sublimation * if for Pearles twelve times; {* Al. Septies.} if for rednesse one and twenty times, until the humidity within it be totally corrupted. Nor is it possible, that its humidity be separated by vapour, as the fore-said oyl; because its vehemently mixed with its dry parts; nor doth it constitute, as in the foresaid metals. In this Chapter you

may be deceived, unlesse you distinguish of the signification of the words. It's now high time I involve the third Chapter: that you acquire the Calx, the * Calx of the body, {* Al. Clavem operis.} which you intend, the body is calcined, when it is appodiated, *i.e.* that the humour in it may be corrupted by salt, and with salt Armoniack and vinegar, and sometimes with burning things, and with Sulphur and Arsnick: and sometimes bodies are fed with *Argentum vivum*, and sublimated from them, until they remain putred. The claves of the Art are congelation, resolution, inceration, proportion; and another way purification, distillation, separation, calcination and fixation, and then you may acquiesce. {* Remaneant putris, ni fallor male imprimitur aut debet esse pura aut putres.}

CHAPTER 10. FORTE.620. OF THE SAME SUBJECT ANOTHER WAY

IN the 602. *Arabian* year you intreated me for some Secrets. Take then the Stone, and calcine it with a light assation and strong contrition, or with acute things. But in the end mingle it a little with sweet water, and compound a Laxative Medicine of seven things (if you will) or of six, or of five, or as many as you please; but my mind rests in two things, whose proportion is better than the other fixt proportion, or thereabouts, as experience will teach you. Resolve notwithstanding the gold at the fire, and tried it better; {Al. Mollius caleseant.} but if you will credit me, take one thing that is the Secret of Secrets of Nature, able to do Miracles. Let it be mixed from two or more, or a Phoenix, which is a singular creature † at the fire, {† Al. Adjunge.} and incorporate by a strong motion: to which if hot liquor four or five times be applied, you have the composition. Yet afterwards the coelestial nature is deliberated, if you infuse hot water three or four times. Divide therefore the week from the strong in several vessels, if you believe me: Let that which is good be evacuated. Again, use the pouders, and the water which remains, carefully expresse: For of a certain, it will produce the parts of the pouders, not incorporated: therefore take the water by it self; because the pouders exiccated from it hath power to be incorporated into the Laxative Medicine. Work therefore as formerly, until you distinguish the strong from the weak, and apply the pouders three, four, five times or oftener, and work alwayes the way: And if you cannot work with with hot waters, do it with water of *Alkali*, and by such acute things you make the violence of the Medicine. But if by reason of the acuity and softnesse of the Medicine it be broken, the pouders, being applied, apply very carefully more of the hard and soft. But if it be by reason of the abundance of the pouders apply more of the Medicine; if it be by reason of the strength of the water, water it with pistils; {Pistillo.} and congregate the matter, as you can, and separate the water by little and little, and it will return to its state, which water you must exiccate: for it contains both pouders and water of the Medicine, which are to be incorporated, as the principle pouders. Here you may not sleep, because here is contained a very great

and profitable Secret. If you rightly order in a right series of things, the parts of the Shrub or Willow, they will keep natural union : and do not deliver this to oblivion, for it is profitable for many things. You must mingle Pearls with the made union: {Unione facta.} as I think there will arise some thing like the Stone *Iberus*: and without doubt it mortifies that which is to be mortified by the vapour of Lead. You shall find Lead, if you expresse the living from the dead; and the dead you must bury in *Olibanum* and *Sarcocolla*. Keep this Secret, for it is of some profit, and so must you do with the vapour of Pearls, and the Stone *Tagus*, and you must (as I have said) bury the dead.

CHAPTER 11. FORTE.603. OF THE SAME SUBJECT ANOTHER WAY

TO your desire in the *Arabian* year 630. I return this Answer. You must have the Medicine which may be dissolved in the thing liquified and steeped in it, and penetrate its interiour parts, and may be mingled with it; and it may not be a fugitive servant, but transmute it. Let it be mingled by reason of the spirit, and let it be fixed by the Calx of the metal; it is to be thought that fixation is prepared, when the body and spirit are set in its place, and the spirit is made a body. Take then of the bones of *Adam*, and of the Calx the same weight; let there be six to the Stone *Tagi*, and five to the stone of Pearl; let them be ground with *Aqua vitae*, whose property it is to dissolve all other things, so as in it they are dissolved and assated, until it be incerate, *i.e.* let the parts be united, as the parts in wax. The sign of inceration is, that the Medicine liquifies upon iron very hot.

Then let it be put in the same water in some hot and moist place, or let it hang in the vapour of waters made very hot: after that dissolve and congeal them against the Sunne, Afterwards take Saltpeter, and *argentum vivum* shall be converted into lead : And again, wash the lead with it, and mundifie it, that it may be the next to silver, and then work as a pious man, and also the whole weight must be 30. But yet of Saltpeter *L U R U V O P O Vir Can Utriet Sulphuris* : and so you may make Thunder and Lightning, if you understand the Artifice : but you must observe, whether I speak ænigmatically, or according to the truth. Some men have supposed otherwise:

For it is told me, that you must resolve all into its first matter, of which you have *Aristotle* speaking in vulgar and known places, which makes me silent herein.

When you have this, you have pure, simple and equal Elements. And this you may do by contrary thing and various operations, which formerly I have called the Claves of the Art. And *Aristotle* says, *That the equality of potencies excludes action, and passion, and corruption.* And these things *Averrho's* affirms, reproving *Galen*. And this Medicine is

esteemed the more pure and simple which may be found, which is prevalent against Feavers, passions of the mind and body.
Farewell. *Whoever unlocks these, hath a key which opens and no man shutts: and when he hath shut no man opens.*

In this Translation, I followed Dr *Dees* Edition, Printed at *Hamburg*, 1618.

FINIS.
