



THE TRANSMUTATION OF THE SATURNINE NATURE OF RACISM

2020, The Year of Our Lord, COVID-19



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Dedicated to the Soul of the United States of America.

An Alchemical Maxim

“Read, read, reread, study, pray, work and thou shalt find.”

Introduction

Alchemy is the gateway to the meaning of life. It places all things into perspective and provides profound peace to those who discover it. Cloaked within the Emerald Tablet it has been hidden in full sight; sharing its jewels only with those who seek them. Where do mature Christians go to be fed when they are no longer “babes in Christ”? This was a thirty-years old personal question. It was through a recent view of life through the prism of Alchemy that the answer became less obscure. I came to know that I was already there and had arrived at that place 30 years ago. That place is the *inner self*. It was through the inner self that I was introduced to Alchemy.

All religions have a functional duty to introduce humans to both the material and the immaterial worlds. It serves as the outer court to all that is. It is a very safe place for the introductory lessons of the Universe. It is a place that is trusted because of its cultural context and its invitation is extended from generation to generation by those who love the invitee. When the work is done in this space, the next step is Alchemy. Stepping into this portal opens up “*the Glory of the Whole Universe*” and makes it obtainable. At this juncture in one’s life it becomes easier to see the “*Pattern*” and “*its many wonderful applications*” as one experiences life and interacts with the world around them. This treatise looks at the current and past conditions of a nation that has repeatedly found itself on the precipice of forming a “more perfect Union” while mired in the stronghold of saturnine racism.

In The year of Our Lord, COVID-19

Coronavirus is a family of viruses associated with causing viral respiratory illnesses. First discovered in humans in 1965, it was given the name Corona because of the virus' crown-like appearance (Bhargava, 2020). Corona is a very befitting kingly name for a virus that has been able to subdue the world and take on the god-like attribute of pure consciousness because it seemingly "overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates every solid thing".

In December of 2019 Novel Coronavirus-19, more commonly known as COVID-19 made its debut into the world. The medical community in Wuhan, capital city of Hubei Province in China, started to see an increased number of adult patients presenting to the hospital with pneumonia of unknown origin (Singh, 2020). The virus is known to originate in bats and cross over to humans through an intermediary host. The pangolin has been implicated as an intermediary host in Wuhan (Singh, 2020). After making its debut in Wuhan, COVID-19 tacitly moved across the planet in the manner of the rising and setting sun, leaving few countries unaffected in its wake. As of January 2, 2021, there have been 82.5 million cases and over 1.8 million deaths worldwide (WHO, 2021). In the United states alone there have been over 339,000 COVID-19 related deaths.

The Calcinating Avatar

Over the past twenty years, a growing number of world leaders began to embrace ideals that diametrically oppose the ideals of social justice, equality, liberty, respect, human rights, ethnic and racial tolerance, and individual freedom tempered by a healthy dose of individual responsibility. In many ways the planet seemed doomed to a path of self-destruction. Many nations turned to protectionism as many individuals retreated to their own islands of isolation,

primarily in the virtual world, both leaving the vulnerable more vulnerable. The religious community became complicit with the moral decline through their audible silence. Historically, in times like these, an avatar has been sent to facilitate a moral correction. The Cosmic Forces of the Universe were well aware that there was no human suited for this task. In the 65th Saying in the Book of Thomas, Jesus tells the parable of the Usurer who rented his land to farmers. When it was time for the harvest, he sent his servants to collect the produce that was due to him. Each time the servants were beaten and sent away with no produce. The Usurer then sent his son, thinking surely, they will not harm him. In the end the farmers killed the son because the son was the sole inheritor of the land. The Universe knew that no human could command the universal respect that COVID-19 has garnered across language, gender, race, ethnicity, class, and every other classification we use to create illusions of separation and superiority. A human avatar could easily be jailed, institutionally committed, rendered a non-entity or assassinated.

The effects of COVID-19 have been sobering. The American economy was totally upended. Over 30 million people lost their jobs within the first three months after COVID-19 found its way to the hallowed shores of the United States of America. Businesses and industries were shuttered. Schools and colleges closed their doors. Professional sports disappeared from all media platforms. Hollywood entertainment and movie theaters went dark. Government agencies dramatically reduced services. Disney Land and Disney World closed its kingdoms. Health care delivery systems were overwhelmed. The tenets of our very Republic were tested. It was as though COVID raised his hand and gently said “peace be still” and it was so.

The Emerald Tablet provides universal lens in which to view these unprecedented events.

The seven alchemical operations at work are visible to those to whom obscurities have been made clear. Calcination is the first alchemical operation. During Calcination, a substance is subjected to extreme heat and is reduced to ashes (Hauck, 1999). This burning off is designed to reveal the core essence of the substance. On a societal level, COVID-19 like a supernatural vitriol, began to peel away all the facades of our existence, layer-by-layer. It did not take long for the United States to be stripped down to its bare essence, human beings. With so many of the frivolous distractions of life gone, many had the time to turn inward, however painful, and consider what is important, what to keep, and what to throw away.

As the death toll continued to rise, a well-documented finding surfaced, health and healthcare inequities among persons of color. Though persons of color have been sounding the sentinel about these inequities for more than a century, when a respected infectious disease physician at the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Anthony Fauci, told the world that the virus disproportionately affected people of color in both the number of cases and the rate of mortality, the world seemed to listen. This one statement penetrated the minds of people from lawmakers, to Wall Street, to educators, to farmers, to the people on Main Street. The minds of a people stripped of life's triviality gave way to a state of receptivity not seen in recent history. The COVID-19 pandemic was the Calcinating work of the Sun, preparing the rational mind for the work of the heart.

Dissolution: 8 Minutes and 46 Seconds

On May 30, 2020 George Floyd, an unarmed Black man was accused of presenting a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill to make a purchase at a store. The clerk notified the Minneapolis police. Mr. Floyd was apprehended by the police, handcuffed, and placed in a prone position on

the ground. What followed next stunned the world. A police officer pressed his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds, leaving him lifeless. Even as Mr. Floyd declared his inability to breathe, bystanders pleaded with the officer to provide relief, and other police officers stood by, the assault on Mr. Floyd continued for eight minutes and 46 seconds. Police brutality against persons of color is not new in the United States. It has always found protection in the all-too-often assertion by policemen that they "felt threaten". A video recording of the death shows Mr. Floyd presented no resistance and no threat to the officers during the eight minutes and 46 seconds. This death was piercing in a way that no other death had pierced. The officer had plenty of time to make another decision. Perhaps it was the weight of all the other deaths at the hands of police officers that preceded this death that caused the nation's house of cards to simply implode. With ears that refused to hear the cries of people of color, the nation had witnessed the merciless police killings of Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile, Eric Garner, Amadou Diallo, Walter Scott, Atatiana Jefferson and many others.

Because COVID-19 had so aptly exposed our universal essence, humanity, the nation finally had ears that could and would hear, eyes that could and would see, and a heart that could and would feel. Millions of people poured into the streets across the nation. People of all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, political parties, and economic strata joined forces to demand changes in policing. Many police officers joined the struggle, as well. In reverse planetary action we saw the outrage take on a global scale as the protests moved backwards from the western hemisphere to the eastern hemisphere. The people in Canada, South America, Central America, Europe, Africa, and Asia joined the call for social justice; not just for those in the United States but within all nations. The call for an end to police brutality against people of color was

extended to a call for totally social justice and equality. The protests were unrelenting for two months.

Dissolution is the second operation and involves water. Its work is to dissolve the ashes created during Calcination and work on the heart (Hauck, 1999). For many Americans, those eight minutes and 46 seconds not only awakened the heart, but they also crushed the heart. The nation was in emotional shambles; both those who stood with *Black Lives Matter* and those who stood with the police. The nation and the international community started to look inward and see through the artificial structures that have historically caused pain for people of color and have prevented the nation from understanding the depth and breadth of the pain that people of color experience on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis. The nation was forced to look the at the Saturnine temperament of racism and confront the hurtful history of slavery as the underlying cause of the systematic disenfranchisement and oppression of a people. This was the Dissolving work of the Moon; much pain and an ocean of tears. There we stood, as a nation, looking down on a horrifying reflection of our divided selves with our brains eternally seared by those eight minutes and 46 seconds.

Separation: A focus on What Remains

Gutted like a fish prepared for a feast, the nation struggled to restore meaning to the words so amply written by the founding fathers, “all men are created equal”. What does it mean? What does it look like? How can these words be operationalized? The media was dominated by coverage about the history of slavery, the Jim Crow era, lynching, segregation, implicit bias, institutionalized racism, and racial oppression. This information was new to many. These topics were not taught in schools of lower or higher learning. It was anathema to discuss

in work settings or other public forums. But for people of color these news stories were lived experiences that revived deeply repressed pain associated with old and new societal wounds.

Separation is the third operation and involves filtering the essences obtained during Dissolution (Hauck, 1999). In this operation we let go of the disingenuity and all self-deluding thoughts and behaviors. We get to sort through what remains and decide what to keep and what to throw away. As a nation, this was a very contentious period. Some called for disbanding the police department by defunding them. Others called for more law and order. Neither side had a clear vision of the steps to take to realize either stance. Some called for reparations for people of color, referencing the 40 acres and mule, frequently reported as a government promise to each freed slave that never materialized. Others called for more emphasis on patriotism, which some viewed as a veiled call for White nationalism. This is the work of Mars and the first coming together of our bifurcated selves. The isolated essences had been prepared for the marriage.

Conjunction: The Fragile Child

Conjunction is the fourth stage of alchemical transmutation and is the crowning operation in the Below. It signifies the common union (communion) or the marriage of the purified essences remaining after calcination and dissolution (Hauck, 1999). From this union comes the birth of the *Child Stone*. The completion of this work prepares us for the Great Work.

As a nation we are on the precipice of the Great Work that is required to actualize the ideal that “all men are created equal”. We are witnessing many wondrous spontaneous actions across the globe. In the past, many of them would have required some kind of legislative action to implement. Nike and FedEx threatened to fully sever its relationship with the Washington

Red Skins, a professional football team, forcing it to abandon a team name that was hurtful to the Native American community. McKenzie Scott Bezos donated 40 million dollars to Howard University. Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been overlooked as potential recipients of such large endowments. Confederate statutes and monuments were removed; some by protestors, some by municipalities. With conscious intention, many Whites took another look at black owned businesses and started to support them. Major financial institutions allocated funds to create business loans and home mortgage loans for people of color. Retailers evaluated their inclusivity policies and reached out to Black wholesalers and designers. The social justice work of Colin Kaepernick was embraced by the National Football League as it apologized for the position it had taken in the past. Healthcare workers, *White Coats for Black Lives*, pledged commitment to addressing health care inequities. The media solicited the intellectual contributions of more Black subject matter experts. Institutions of higher learning offered apologies for the past use of slaves to build and maintain its campuses; some offering restitution to slave descendants. The University of Mississippi was forced to remove its confederate flag after commercial sponsors threatened to cut off millions of dollars that supported their athletic programs. These are the easy first steps. The Great Work will require a deeper look into the causes and effects of racism and how these energies can be transmuted into gold.

The bringing together of the essences produced during Calcination, Dissolution and Separation in the same vessel does not always result in Conjunction. The essences must produce a new compound (Hauck, 2008). The essences must produce the *Child Stone*. Today our nation stands on the Conjunctive precipice. The child that has been produced is fragile, at

best. Can this fragile child be nurtured and prepared for the Great Work? The answer resides in the collective actions the nation elects to take in the immediate future and in the next three decades. Fermentation will be messy. Distillation will be iterative. Neither is for the faint of heart. Many social structures will have to be reimagined, dismantled, and rebuilt. As we seek new solutions to old problems, some will work, others may not. Some people may not have the patience to see this work to its end. Without this Great Work, we cannot expect any societal change to be permanent nor can we expect the quality of the lives of people of color to significantly improve.

An Alchemical Glimpse into the Future Via the Past

The Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 officially brought closure to the American Revolutionary War. A war that was fought to liberate the American Colonies from the British Empire. The treaty established territorial boundaries for the newly freed colonies and recognized each colony as a free and independent state. This treaty laid the foundation for *federalism* as we know it today. Federalism is a structure that allows for a centralized federation of states (Union) that divides its authority between the centralized government and the several states (Rocco, 2020). This structure alone is accountable for much of the human inequities and atrocities experienced by persons of color in the United States of America from its founding to this day.

When the founding fathers created and organized the doctrines to govern the original 13 colonies, the infamous “Negro Question” was present and accounted for. It is a loaded question. Are these people men? Are they more closely related to animals? If men, are they equal to White men? If animals, do they not need shepherding by men? Do they have

intelligence? Are they capable of learning? Are they capable of attaining Cosmic Consciousness? Are they property? Are they worthy of inclusion in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal”? These learned men, many of whom were mystics, toiled over the answers to these questions. These questions were answered differently by different states and different men who lived in these times. The words of Thomas Jefferson, a founding father, and a slave-owner himself, are inscribed on the ceiling of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. and offer insight into his beliefs about slavery.

God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of the nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are a gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Establish the law for educating the common people. This it is the business of the state to effect and on a general plan.

The federalist structure gave room for the tolerance of different interpretation and application of federal rules and laws in differing states, as well as the creation of state laws that were not supported by the federal government. It allowed for some laws to have applicability at the federal level but not at the state level and visa versa. As James Madison so amply stated, as long as men are fallible, there will be differences in opinions (Madison, 1787). And so it was, and the institution of slavery continued after the American Revolutionary War. The Three-Fifth Compromise that followed in 1787 gave slaves no legal standing as human beings. It only

provided a standard calculation when considering the number of representatives that should be apportioned to each state based on its total population (Dubois, 2007). The Calcinating event of the declaration of independence from the mother country, the Dissoluting impact of the American Revolutionary War (1765-1783), the Separation embodied in the Treaty of 1787, and the Conjunctive formation of the Union through the establishment of a new government and the U.S. Constitution (1789), at best, produced a *Child Stone* that was *miscarried*. From 1789 to 1860 the “Negro Question” did not die. It remained central to the very growth of the nation and begged an answer in our pursuit of a “more perfect union”.

By 1860 the United States found itself at the crossroads of industrialization impeded by use of slave labor in the South (Foner, 1961; Du Bois, 2007; Fogel & Engerman, 1974; National Park Service, 2011). Abraham Lincoln’s foray into the presidency was built on a platform that supported no further expansion of slavery as new lands opened west of the Mississippi. There was never a plan to abolish slavery, only to limit its expansion in new territories. The South viewed this position as a threat to the continued existence of slave labor. Following Lincoln’s election in November 1860, South Carolina passed its ordinance of secession on December 20, 1860; shortly thereafter, followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas (National Park Service, 2011). This string of secessions became the Calcinating event of its era to move the nation toward a “more perfect union”.

The Dissoluting effect of the Civil War (1861 -1865) cannot be understated. A nation torn apart, shattered economies in the north and south, and the loss of over 600,000 lives. The issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 came after the organic freeing of the slaves as the Union Army advanced southward. The war itself freed the slaves as planters fled their

estates and Union soldiers established martial law. General Sherman found himself in the midst of over 18,000 slaves who were no longer bound to slaveowners (Foner, 1961; Du Bois, 2007). Facing the ubiquitous “Negro Question”, General Sherman was prompted to issue his infamous Field Order Number 15 which led to the distribution of land to Freedmen on the Sea Islands and 30 miles inland off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia (Foner, 1961; Du Bois, 2007). However, Sherman did not have the authority to distribute the land. Subsequently U. S. Circular 13 (1865) and U. S. Circular 15 (1865) nullified Field Order Number 15 causing most of the freed slaves to be dispossessed from those lands. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was a military strategy to further weaken the South by disrupting the southern economy (Du Bois, 2007). The South used its slave labor to supply subsistence for the conscripted confederate soldiers. The slave labor allowed the South to send more soldiers to battle, unlike the North who needed free laborers to support the Union army. Knowing that he did not have the civil authority to impose this proclamation on the states, Lincoln used the War Powers Act (National Park Service, 2011). As such, the Emancipation Proclamation had applicability only in states that were at war with the Union. Therefore, slavery was left intact in the so-called border states of Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky (National Park Service, 2011).

In April of 1865 General Robert E. Lee surrendered to the Union army, officially ending the Civil War. This began the period of Separation. As a war-wearied nation sorted through what remained, again it was faced with the “Negro Question”. The North imposed very rigid requirements on the South for reacceptance into the Union. Initially, only southerners who were loyal to the Union and Freedmen were granted the right to vote. Confederate sympathizers and loyalist were disfranchised and barred from elected office. Another

requirement was the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in all states and U.S. territories (Foner, 1961, Du Bois, 2007, National Park Service, 2011). By December 6, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in the United States was ratified in all states (National Archive, 2020).

The Reconstruction Years (1865 – 1877) were very complexed and represent an incomplete Conjunction. The essence of the “Negro Question” while central, somehow got lost amidst the many competing post-war national priorities and a nation fatigued by war. Additionally, the nation was dealing with wide-scale crop failure, the push for industrialization, the construction of the rail system and its collapse, Carl Marx and the labor movement, and an economic depression. With Lincoln’s assassination just days after the South’s surrender the future of the Freedmen became uncertain.

Following Lincoln’s assassination, Vice President Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency. Andrew Johnson was no Abraham Lincoln. His allegiance to the Civil War was motivated by his desire to change the plight of poor Whites, not the plight of the slaves (Foner, 1961, Du Bois, 2007). Legislators like Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips and Thaddeus Stevens worked tirelessly to advocate for the Freedmen by seeking their full protection under the law, the right to vote and the provision of land. They earnestly believed freedom was not freedom without land, education, and the vote (Foner, 1961: Dubois, 2007). After much political debate and resistance, Amendments Fourteen and Fifteen were passed. Amendment XIV (July 1868) granted full protection under the law to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. It also required that persons count as a whole person when establishing the apportionment for the House of Representatives for each state. Amendment XV (February 1870) granted voting

rights to all citizens irrespective of race, color, or prior condition of servitude.

The laws that should have aided in giving life to the Conjunctive *Child Stone* were rendered useless by the Black Codes implemented by states in the South. Federalism is a strong defender of state rights (Rocco, 2020). The Black Codes were state laws that gave structure and power to the attitudes and beliefs of Whites who could not accept the Freedmen as members of the human race. The severity of the laws varied between and within states. But they all had a common goal to ensure that the Freedmen would never be fully assimilated into the American life and prosperity (Du Bois, 2007). Some states required Freedmen to enter into annual labor contracts with former slaveowners. Freedmen not in possession of a contract could be arrested and sentenced to prison labor. Some forbade Freedmen from fishing, hunting, owning livestock, or any other activity that would contribute to their ability to sustain themselves independently of Whites. Some refused Freedmen from residing within city limits. There were curfew and vagrancy laws. There were state laws that prohibited Freedmen from immigrating to that state. In some states, any White person could arrest any Freedman. In many ways the Black Codes were simply a rebranding of the institution of slavery. At the same time racist terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan (1865), the Red Shirts of Mississippi (1875) and the White League (1874) inflicted a murderous reign of terror on Freedman, Republicans, and Union sympathizers in the South (Foner, 1961).

Following the presidential election of 1876 the United States fresh out of a civil war, found itself on the brink of another civil war. The election is reported to have been fraught with fraud and intimidation in the South. There were four states where the election was contested. To circumvent another civil war, a 15-member Electoral Commission composed of members

from the legislative and judicial branches of government was formed. It was charged with the review of the ballots in the four disputed states (Schafer, 2020). By a vote of eight to seven all four states were awarded to Hayes. The Electoral College then awarded 185 votes to Rutherford B. Hayes (R) and 184 votes to Samuel J. Tilden (D). Tilden won the popular vote by approximately 250,000 votes. There was also an agreement, known as the Compromise of 1877, that facilitated the immediate withdrawal of federal troops from the South (Foner, 1961; Schafer, 2020). The federal troop withdrawal paved the way for Jim Crow laws and the segregated South, as we know it. No longer could the Freedmen look forward to creating the sanctity of family, just payment for work, education, or freedom from corporeal punishment. Sadly, the Conjunctive *Child Stone* of this era was *stillborn*. Freedom without land, education, and the right to vote is no freedom (Foner, 1961).

As 2020, the Year of Our Lord, COVID-19 has come to an end and we enter 2021, the “Negro Question” still begs an answer. W. E. B. Du Bois’ social theory of “double consciousness” provides some insight into the paradoxical state of the collective consciousness of Blacks who themselves have internalized racist conceptions of themselves. Double consciousness results when people of color are forced to view themselves through the racist lens of the dominant race while at the same time trying to reconcile those racist views with their own self-view (Dubois, 2020). Dubois postulates that the freedom and peace that people of color pursue will remain elusive until they are able to reconcile that there is no contradiction in being both Black and American.

There is a yet another different, but kindred dichotomous consciousness that resides in the collective consciousness of the dominate race and prevents the acceptance of people of

color as full and equal participants in humanity. I submit that until the dominant race in American can reconcile in its collective consciousness that ALL people are equal participants in humanity and simultaneously release all vestiges of race superiority, the Great Work of transmuting Saturnine racism into gold will forever stall at Conjunction. This Great Work will require the hearts, minds, and energies of the enlightened of the world to complete the final steps of Fermentation, Distillation, and the Coagulation. It is then and only then that the *Great Stone* can be born into a “more perfect union”, where truly “all men are created equal”.

The struggle continues.

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