

The Transforming Cross



A Program in Rosicrucian Psychospiritual Alchemy

The Transforming Cross:

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Introduction

Many of us have a deeply intuitive sense that there is far more to our being than we are typically encouraged to consider. We may even feel a yearning, if not a compelling drive, to act on that intuition. Like the instinct of a caterpillar, it calls us to enter the chrysalis of transformation so that we might emerge, like butterflies, in the colorful fulfillment of our potentials. Yet, we often find that society at large does little to support us in actually penetrating the veils of ordinary existence, or in beginning to explore the mysteries of the soul and our intimate connections with Nature and God. The doctrines, dogmas, and methods of common religion do not entirely meet our needs in this regard, and so we may be drawn to learn about things like meditation, contemplation, metaphysics, and theurgy.¹ In the process, some of us have become powerfully attracted to the Rosicrucian tradition and its connection with the Great Work of transforming the soul and the world. If you feel this attraction, then the *Transforming Cross* might be a meaningful and productive way of engaging with that tradition.

In keeping with Rosicrucian tradition, the *Transforming Cross* combines concepts, symbols, and practices from mystical Christianity, alchemy, and Qabalah. It is designed to take the practitioner through a series of operations corresponding to the alchemical phases of nigredo (blackness), albedo (whiteness), citrinitas (yellowness), and rubedo (redness). These are the phases of the Great Work, through which the raw fragmented material of the elements of the soul are refined and reintegrated into the Universal Medicine represented by a rose and cross conjoined.



The *Transforming Cross* does not require adherence to Christian religion, but only a willingness to work with the concepts, language, and symbolism of Christian mysticism. It is helpful if you find some inspiration in the story of Jesus, the messages he preached and the qualities he exemplified, but personal freedom of interpretation is herein respected and affirmed.

The program is designed for complete novices as well as persons who already have a working familiarity with Qabalah, psychospiritual² alchemy, and Christian mysticism. In fact, completion of this program can serve as a form of self-initiation into the Rosicrucian tradition. However, you might encounter unfamiliar terms without much explanation. In such cases, you are encouraged to use the recommended reading and other resources to gain more information.

¹ *Theurgy* means “divine work.” It is the practice of ritual and prayer for invocation and evocation of spiritual beings, and has been called the “art of effective worship.”

² The term *psychospiritual* is used to emphasize that this work has both psychological and spiritual significance. While it can sometimes be helpful to distinguish between these two dimensions, they are always interwoven.

Anyone completing the *Transforming Cross* will see changes in themselves, and will also become more sensitive to and skilled with the elements and phases of the Great Work as repeatedly encountered throughout life. Even so, the fullest possible attainment of the Great Work cannot be guaranteed. Such advancement requires things that are beyond our personal awareness and control. By doing our part, we can make significant progress in preparing ourselves for the tests, trials, boons, and blessings that come from deep within us, the world around us, and, ultimately, from the infinite gracious Love of the Supreme Alchemist. In fact, so long as there is any soul in this world suffering in the Forest of Errors, there should never be a moment at which one would consider the Great Work complete, for all souls are interconnected in the great tapestry of creation.

You are encouraged to read through the entire program before beginning. It is important to have some idea of how it all fits together and what it will demand of you. If proceeding to do the work, then each stage of the program should be completed as prescribed before advancing to the next. Skipping or abbreviating any stage can result in diminished effectiveness of the program, and perhaps even more serious consequences. Conscientious engagement with the *Transforming Cross* should require a total of *at least* six months.

Finally, persons considering this program are cautioned that it can produce psychological stress, and thus it may not be appropriate for anyone struggling with psychosis or significant levels of depression, anxiety, or mania. Likewise, its operations and meditations are not to be performed while intoxicated with any mind/mood altering substance. Persons under the care of physicians or therapists for such issues should consider consulting with them about the program before beginning. In any case, routine consultations with a trusted mentor or friend are strongly advised.

Basic Preparations

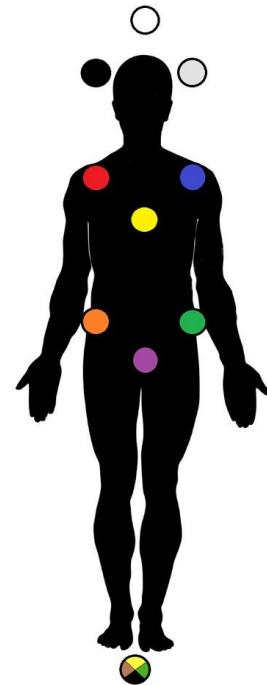
To successfully perform the *Transforming Cross*, one should be able to sit in a relatively quiet place, free from interruption for the time necessary to complete each operation. It is advisable to begin every session with a spontaneous prayer of invocation, and end each session with a prayer of thanks. While unnecessary, it can be pleasant and beneficial to have an altar or shrine in this space, perhaps with a candle and/or some incense.

You might also play music fitting for the given stage. In general, the most suitable options are instrumental pieces by Baroque or Classical composers, as well as instrumental works of Symbolist composers like Erik Satie or Claude Debussy. Gregorian chant or similar sacred music is also a fine option. Whatever the music might be, it should not be so loud as to become distracting during meditation. It can be helpful to play one or two pieces on a repeating loop.

Keeping a journal with at least a few brief notes on each instance of your work is *highly recommended*. This naturally reflective process often leads to more insight and understanding, and it helps you retain and recall what you have experienced.

Stage One: Growing the Alchemical Tree of Life

The Alchemical Tree of Life, or simply the Alchemical Tree (AT), is similar to the Qabalistic Cross popularized by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. However, this operation illuminates the whole Tree of Life within the aura, and makes use of the Rosicrucian acronym *INRI*. The acronym is first employed as a powerful set of sounds in itself, and then as a representation (not exact translation) of the four classical elements – water, fire, air, and earth – through four Hebrew words, which are, respectively, *lam*, *Nour*, *Ruach*, and *lebeschah*. This operation is the basis of the entire program, and continues to be performed in each stage.



Operation

1. Preferably facing east, stand with your hands in the prayer position at your chest, visualize a sphere of pure brilliant light above your head, which is Keter on the Tree of Life. To the left of your head, at the level of your brow, is a sphere of pearly white light (Chockmah), and to the right is a sphere of radiant blackness (Binah).
2. Take a deep breath, and with a high pitch intone *INRI* (een-ree), visualizing and feeling the EE vibrating in Keter. The EE slides into NN, vibrating in Chockmah, which slides into RR, vibrating in Binah, which slides into EE vibrating in Keter again. The intonation of *INRI* is done through a single long exhalation.
3. Touch your left shoulder, visualizing a blue sphere (Chesed) there and intone *lam* (yam) through a long exhalation as you move to touch above your right hip and visualize an orange sphere (Hod).
4. Touch your right shoulder to visualize a red sphere (Geburah) and intone *Nour* (noor) as you move to touch above your left hip and visualize a green sphere (Netzach).
5. Touch your brow, remembering the three spheres around your head, and intone *Ruach* (roo-ahkh³) as your hand moves to touch the center of your chest, visualizing a yellow sphere at your heart (Tipharet), and then down to touch your lower abdomen and visualizing a purple sphere (Yesod).
6. Point to your feet, visualizing a sphere of citrine, olive, russet, and black (Malkut) beneath them and intoning *lesbeschah* (yeh-beh-shah). Bring your hands together in the prayer position at your chest, and then intone *ARARITA* (ah-rah-ree-tah) with one breath, followed by *Amen* with another breath. *ARARITA* is a notarikon acronym for "Achad Rosh Achdotho Rosh Ichudo Temurato Achad", Hebrew words traditionally

³ The last consonant in this word is pronounced at the back of the palette, like the ch in the Scottish word *loch*.

understood to mean "One is His Beginning; One is His Individuality; His Permutation is One."

This operation can also be performed while sitting, in which case Malkut may be visualized beneath the coccyx. For privacy, intonations may also be performed silently.

Meditation

After completion of the sixth step, you may sit in meditation on the Tree and its various spheres and their meanings. To enter into meditation, close your eyes and begin with counting at least 10 complete cycles of slow, full, gentle breathing. The breathing should be gentle enough so as to not produce any additional noise in the nose, sinuses, or throat. As you breathe and count, scan your body to release any tension not required to remain in a healthy upright posture. Hereafter, we shall refer to this breathing exercise as *rhythmic breathing*. After completing at least 10 cycles, turn your mind to focused consideration of the sephirot, in whatever order you wish. A meditation of at least 15 minutes is advised.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be aware of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and experiences that correspond with the sephirot.

Recommended Reading

- *Rosicrucian Trilogy: Modern Translations of the Three Founding Documents*, by Joscelyn Godwin, Christopher McIntosh, & Donate Pahnke McIntosh
- *The Rosicrucians*, by Christopher McIntosh
- *The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians*, by Tobias Churton
- *A Practical Guide to Qabbalistic Symbolism*, by Gareth Knight
- *The Kabbalah Handbook: A Concise Encyclopedia of Terms and Concepts in Jewish Mysticism*, by Gabriela Samuel

To aid meditation and mindfulness, strive to memorize the traditional correspondences with each sephira, especially the Divine Name, spiritual experience, planet, virtue, and vice. Other correspondences can be meaningful, but these are most helpful for developing an experiential awareness and understanding of the sephirot. Among the founding documents of Rosicrucianism, both the *Fama Fraternitatis* and *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* provide stories of psychospiritual alchemical transformation that can serve as inspiration for taking the journey of this program.⁴

⁴ Translations of these two texts can easily be found online, but the recommended *Rosicrucian Trilogy* has recently updated and corrected English versions.

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A plain, uncolored candle
- A personally preferred incense
- An image of the Tree of Life⁵

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The AT with meditation should be done at least four days a week, mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before proceeding to Stage Two. However, one may advance as soon as it is possible to (1) smoothly perform the AT and (2) easily recall the essential correspondences of each sephira.

⁵ It can be meaningful to personally create this image and those of subsequent stages, but already available images are suitable.

Stage Two: The Black Cross



Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to come after me, they must give themselves up, and pick up their cross, and follow me. Yes: if someone wants to save their life, they must lose it; and if anyone loses their life for my sake, they will find it. What use will it be, otherwise, if you win the whole world but forfeit your true life? What will you give to get your life back?'⁶

In this stage of the *Transforming Cross*, you begin the alchemical phase of nigredo, which is here performed as a voluntary penetration of the veils of your assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes about reality, including the Divine, Nature, other beings, and yourself. Just the thought of doing so should raise a sense of caution, which should not be avoided or lightly passed over. This work is largely about confronting deep layers of doubt, uncertainty, and ignorance. Most of us are accustomed to glossing over these uncomfortable realities with habits of thought and behavior we have acquired from our own inherent predispositions, our upbringing and cultural experiences, and from calculated decisions we have made. These habits can be so thoroughly entrenched as to happen with little or no conscious awareness on our parts. Our aim is to part the veils of such habits and learn to exist in openness to the doubts, uncertainties, and ignorance we all naturally have in the face of life's many mysteries. Perhaps chief among these habits is evading the reality of death, especially our own – it could come at any moment. More fully facing that reality and its finality is therefore central to this stage.

In facing the reality of our doubts, uncertainties, and ignorance, it may be tempting to berate ourselves for them, for the natural feelings of fear, sadness, and anxiety that go with them, or for the ways we have tried to avoid and deny any of it. However, keep in mind that negativity

⁶ Matthew 16:24-26, NTE

toward ourselves about such things does no good at all. The greatest good comes with nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance of these very common and perfectly understandable part of being human.

Operation

1. Perform the six steps of the AT.
2. Release the imagery of the AT and sit down.
3. Perform at least 10 cycles of rhythmic breathing.
4. Visualize a black cross within your body. The vertical axis extends between your brow and the coccyx, and the horizontal from shoulder to shoulder.
5. After a deep inhalation, begin to repeatedly intone *In Neci Renascor Integer* (een-neh-see-reh-nah-skor-een-teh-gehr [g as in “go”]). This version of INRI means “In death, one is reborn, intact and pure.” This is an invitation for awareness of our mortality and for ego-death, both of which are universally regarded as fundamental to spiritual illumination. With each exhalation, visualize and feel the black cross generating a dense, heavy, cloud of black smoke.
6. After several repetitions, the black smoke should be experienced as penetrating and enveloping your entire body. At this point, you may stop the intonations and visualizations to continue into meditation.
7. After meditation, complete the AT once more.

Meditation

Sit in meditation on the heavy black cloud and the themes of death, impermanence, and your deepest doubts, uncertainties, ignorance, and fears. Question everything you think you know, believe, or hope. Do not allow yourself to accept any idea that is a mask or bandage over anything uncomfortable. The natural emotional responses of discomfort, fear, sadness, and anxiety should be welcomed and embraced. Weeping should not be resisted. While it is vital to allow such thoughts and feelings to arise and be courageously accepted, it is not advisable to try to exaggerate or amplify them.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be as aware as possible of all instances, signs, symbols, and allusions of death, impermanence, uncertainty, doubt, ignorance, anxiety, sadness, and fear. Be sensitive to such things within you, and in Nature around you, including the thoughts and feelings of other beings.

Recommended Reading

- *The Cloud of Unknowing*, by Anonymous
- *Dark Night of the Soul*, by St. John of the Cross
- *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition*, by Deirdre Carabine

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A black candle
- A memento mori, such as an image of a skull
- Myrrh incense, due to its association with embalming, and thus with death, and with Binah and its planetary correspondence of Saturn

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The full operation should be done at least four days a week, mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before proceeding to Stage Three. You are welcome to make adjustments, so that the duration is a little longer if it was not possible to maintain the recommended frequency.

Stage Three: The Ashen Cross



Here you turn up the psychospiritual and neurophysiological heat, beginning to proceed from nigredo toward albedo. Having rent so many veils between you and your most honest and authentic awareness of being, you are better prepared to face the ways in which you create much suffering for yourself and others. In alchemical terms, you will try to identify and burn away as much psychospiritual dross in your life as you are able. What you confront in yourself at this time is everything you think or do, or neglect or fail to think or do, which creates guilt, shame, remorse, regret, disappointment, frustration or distrust with yourself, or unnecessarily contributes to feelings of pain, anger, disappointment, and distrust in others. While we are not always fully responsible for the feelings of others, it is nonetheless true that we do not always think and act with genuine understanding, compassion, and good faith. Similarly, our own feelings of guilt or shame are not always actually fitting; they may instead be parts of self-defeating patterns in our lives. So, this stage is not about wallowing in the mud of self-loathing and self-punishment, but about bravely confronting our vices. As with the previous stage, the greatest good comes with nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance of these very common and perfectly understandable parts of being human.

Operation

1. Perform the AT.
2. Release the imagery of the AT and sit down.
3. Perform at least 10 cycles of rhythmic breathing.
4. Visualize a black cross within your body.

5. After a deep inhalation, begin to repeatedly intone *Igne Natura Renovatur Integra* (eeg-nay-nah-too-rah-reh-noh-vah-toor-eeen-teh-grah) [g as in “go”]). This version of INRI means “Nature is completely renewed by fire.” This is an invitation for the raw, primal fire of life itself to rise up from your deepest instinctive reserves and burn away all remaining illusions about yourself. Each inhalation should be quick and deep, visualizing a bolt of white lightning striking straight down through the top of your head, down the vertical axis of the black cross in your body, and into the earth. Then, with each long passionate intonation, visualize and feel a tornadic swirl of flames spinning up clockwise around the black cross within you, gradually turning its surface to an ashy gray color.
6. After several repetitions, the cross should be experienced as gray and warmer, if not hot, like an ember completely concealing the glow within. At this point you may stop the intonations and visualizations to continue into meditation.
7. After meditation, complete the AT once more.

Meditation

Sit in meditation on the hot ashen cross and the vices of the sephirot on the Tree of Life. Try to identify specific memories and current ways of thinking and acting that have produced or are now leading you to feel guilt, shame, remorse, regret, disappointment, frustration, fear, pain, or anger with yourself. Question all your motives, intentions, and means for everything you have done and are doing. Do not allow yourself to accept any idea that is an excuse or hollow justification for acting in ways that you know were or are less than genuinely virtuous, understanding, compassionate, and honorable. Be especially vigilant for willful ignorance. This vice is the avoidance or denial of information that would make it too hard to wash your hands of responsibility and accountability for the suffering you create or enable. While it is vital to allow all the noted thoughts and feelings to arise and be courageously accepted, it is not advisable to try exaggerate or amplify them. As with the previous stage, the best benefit comes with nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance of our humanity.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be as aware as possible of all instances, signs, symbols, and allusions of the vices on the Tree of Life, and the self-deceptions that go with them. Be sensitive to the harm such things do within you, in Nature around you, including the thoughts and feelings of other beings.

Recommended Reading

- *Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche*, by Robert A. Johnson
- *Ordinary Vices*, by Judith N. Shklar
- *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature*, by Connie Zweig, et al

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A gray or silver candle
- An image of a fiery dragon or serpent
- Dragon's Blood incense, due to its association with Geburah, Severity, a fire sephira

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The full operation should be done at least four days a week, mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before proceeding to Stage Four. You are welcome to make adjustments, so that the duration is a little longer if it was not possible to maintain the recommended frequency.

Stage Four: The White Cross



Having reduced so many of your illusions to ash, it is now time to wash away that residue and reveal the enduring goodness within you. In this operation, an important intention is to realize that, despite your ignorance, vices, and mixed motives and intentions (and often interwoven with them), there has always been a part of you that genuinely desires and hopes for truth, beauty, and goodness to prevail, that wants to serve those ends by thinking and acting virtuously, for others as well as yourself. There is a guiding moral sense within you, a spiritual conscience that is not the superego, that Freudian inner critic keeping tally on an inherited list of dos and don'ts. Instead, the deeper and more authentically loving voice is rooted in the mystery of your being itself, a voice wordlessly, intuitively, urging you toward virtue. Many of us have learned to ignore that voice to some degree, but this stage includes more fully reawakening to it.

But what is virtue, really? According to Plato and Aristotle, virtue is a way of being that seeks and supports the most attainable good for all, including oneself. Where vice is an irrational and destructive extreme, virtue is a moderated and rational way of thinking and acting. For example, the virtue of true courage contrasts with the extremes of rashness at one end, and cowardice at the other. The more we respond to circumstances, and envision and act on our dreams, with reason and moderation guided by genuine concern for the mutual good, then the more virtue grows in our life.

Practicing the spiritual discipline of virtue can be very challenging. Both internal and external resistances and temptations are bound to arise, and we are going to miss the mark. It is vitally important that you contemplate and recognize that some form of ignorance is almost always lurking behind every failure to strike a suitable balance of virtue. Perhaps you did not fully recognize or adequately assess all the relevant factors in a given situation. It may be that you

did not foresee the possible consequences as well as you might have done. Or, as addressed in the previous stage, perhaps it was that sneaky willful ignorance providing you with an excuse to take what seemed to be an easier, more comfortable path. But even willful ignorance itself is based on a deeper ignorance, a failure to more fully appreciate how much suffering it creates or enables for oneself and others.

Because ignorance is so pervasive, patience, tolerance, and forgiveness of self and others are essential to this stage of the *Transforming Cross*. Patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and optimism are indispensable because they keep the door open for learning and growth, for picking up the pieces of a broken opportunity and turning them into another opportunity for insight and the development of virtue. There may be no more moving example of forgiveness than when Jesus, having already experienced betrayal, indignity, injustice, and torture, is hanging on the cross, about to die a death he did not want, and prays to God, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁷

Above the head of Jesus was written INRI. In this stage of the work, the acronym represents *Igne Nitrum Roris Invenitur* (eeg-nay-nee-troom-ror-ris-eeen-wen-ee-toor). These words are traditionally interpreted as "the nitre of dew is found by fire," or "the baptism or cleansing power of dew is only discovered by fire." INRI thus becomes a summary for the meaning of this passage from the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismagistus*⁸:

The Sun is its father,
the moon its mother,
the wind hath carried it in its belly,
the earth is its nurse.
The father of all perfection in the whole world is here.
Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.

Separate thou the earth from the fire,
the subtle from the gross
sweetly with great industry.
It ascends from the earth to the heaven
and again it descends to the earth
and receives the force of things superior and inferior.

By this means you shall have the glory of the whole world
and thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.

You have been refined by fire, deepened awareness of your own innate desire for the mutual good, equipped with a practical understanding of what virtue is and how it works, and prepared

⁷ Luke 23:34, KJV

⁸ Translations of this text can easily be found online.

to meet ignorance and failure with the grace of patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and optimism. Now you are ready to engage in the psychospiritual alchemy of albedo by refining and consolidating the virtues of the sephirot in your life. As you do so, keep in mind that science is amassing a growing body of evidence and understanding about how positivity actually produces long-lasting beneficial changes in your neurochemistry and neural pathways. You are literally doing chemical alchemy in your own body! (And you have been all along.)

Operation

1. Perform the AT.
2. Release the imagery of the AT and sit down.
3. Perform at least 10 cycles of rhythmic breathing.
4. Visualize the ashen cross within your body.
5. After a deep inhalation, begin to repeatedly intone *Igne Niturm Roris Invenitur* (eeg-nay-nee-troom-ror-ris-eeen-wen-ee-toor). Each inhalation should be slow, smooth and full, visualizing a column of white light rising up to the top of your head. Then, with each long peaceful intonation, visualize and feel the light gushing up and out of your head like a fountain to rain back down, around and through your body. Experience it as a cool refreshing rain, gradually washing away the surface ashes to reveal a solid, spotless, white cross underneath.
6. After several repetitions, the cross should be experienced as clean and bright white. At this point, you may stop the intonations and visualizations to continue into meditation.
7. After meditation, complete the AT once more.

Meditation

Sit in meditation on the bright white cross and all the virtues of the sephirot on the Tree of Life. Try to identify specific memories and current ways of thinking and acting that are examples of you practicing each of those virtues. Consider how each virtue can serve the mutual good when appropriately applied, and imagine yourself exercising them in different scenarios. It is vital to welcome and embrace all the positive feelings that arise from virtuous thought and action.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be as aware as possible of all instances, signs, symbols, and allusions of the virtues on the Tree of Life, and the mutual good resulting from them. Be aware to the need for patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and optimism to encourage the development of greater virtue within you, the Nature around you, including in other beings. Practice sensitivity to and nurturance of your own deep desire to think and act for the mutual good. Enjoy the positive feelings that go with working for and participating in the mutual good.

Recommended Reading

- *Bliss Brain: The Neuroscience of Remodeling Your Brain for Resilience, Creativity, and Joy*, by Dawson Church
- *Virtue: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, by Olli-Pekka Vainio
- *The Nicomachean Ethics*, by Aristotle

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A white candle
- An image of a fountain
- Cedar incense, due to its association with Chesed, Loving Kindness, a water sephira

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The full operation should be done at least four days a week, mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before proceeding to Stage Five. You are welcome to make adjustments, so that the duration is a little longer if it was not possible to maintain the recommended frequency.

Stage Five: The Golden Cross



In your prior work, you have engaged the sephirot on the Tree of Life in various ways. In this stage, you are challenged to realize that the sephirot represent not only aspects of the natural world, including human qualities and experiences, but also the divine attributes that give rise to those things. This is *citrintas*, the dawning of a splendor that in time might fully illuminate your conscious awareness and actions.

Among Qabalists, all the divine principles, powers, and processes of creation are summarized in the Tetragrammaton, the most sacred four-letter name of God, *I-H-V-H*. Thus, in this stage the application of INRI includes the Tetragrammaton – *In Nobis Regnum I-H-V-H*. Because the proper pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is unknown, and out of reverence for the incomprehensible mystery and majesty of everything it represents, it is not spoken as a single word, but is instead pronounced by its Hebrew letters.

In this version of INRI, the Tetragrammaton is acknowledged to be the presence of the Living Word of God, the Logos, within each us, whether we recognize it or not. It is always there, waiting to be rediscovered and more fully known. Unfortunately, many people have been led to believe that the Divine is in some remote heaven, so removed as to be out of reach, if not totally separate from us. In this stage of the *Transforming Cross*, it is hoped you will more fully come to know that such separation is an illusion, and one of the biggest barriers to our health, happiness, and wellbeing. You are created in the image of God; thus, all the divine powers, principles, and processes are within you; they are the framework of your soul. Each sephira represents a way in which you are in direct communion with the Supreme Alchemist.

Therefore, the *Transforming Cross* at this stage involves a constancy of opening to, seeking, remembering, and reflecting upon the presence of God within you, around you, in others, in all

of Nature. In philosophical terms, this perspective on the relationship between God and creation is known as *panentheism*. In practice, it is enactment of St. Paul the Apostle's exhortations, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing"⁹ and "be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."¹⁰ Furthermore, if we give due regard to God as being the *One* in whom "we live and move and have our being,"¹¹ then we will come to see how every soul is connected to "form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."¹²

While all of these active ways of relating to God are important and fruitful, you must also know they do not offer the deepest contemplation of the Divine. In Isaiah 46:10, God is reported as saying, "Be still and know that I am God." We are therefore called to practice the prayer of silence, the contemplative process of releasing all our thoughts, perceptions, and emotions to open ourselves to the vast, still, mysterious silence of the Holy Spirit, that ever-present field through which all thoughts, feelings, and perceptions come and go, from which and within which every form of consciousness emerges and disappears. In this context, we can appreciate the motto Christian Rosenkreuz chose for himself at the end of the *Chemical Wedding*, which was *Summa Scientia Nihil Scire*, "the highest knowledge is to know nothing."

Operation

1. Perform the AT.
2. Release the imagery of the AT and sit down.
3. Perform at least 10 cycles of rhythmic breathing.
4. Visualize the white cross within your body.
5. After a deep inhalation, begin to repeatedly intone *In Nobis Regnum I-H-V-H* (een-noh-bees-reg-noom-yud-hey-vav-hey). Each inhalation should be slow, smooth and full, visualizing the drawing golden light into the white cross from the atmosphere around you. Then, with each joyful intonation, visualize and feel the light radiating out into the universe. Experience the golden light as a warm, pleasant, and healing, gradually transforming the cross to gold.
6. After several repetitions, the cross should be experienced as solid radiant gold. At this point, you may stop the intonations and visualizations to continue into meditation.
7. After meditation, complete the AT once more.

Meditation

Sit in meditation on the glorious golden cross and all the Divine Names of the sephirot on the Tree of Life. Consider how each sephira represents a way of directly communing with God, both internally and in your interactions with other people and all of Nature. Welcome and embrace

⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17, ESV

¹⁰ Romans 12:2, ESV

¹¹ Acts 17:28, ESV

¹² Romans 12:5, NIV

the genuine humility and gratitude arising from knowing that you owe everything to the presence of the Divine within and around you, and dwell on the thoughts and feelings of your interconnectedness with everything. At the same time, remember the unfathomable mysteries and meet them with a genuine sense of awe and excitement about the blessing of being a conscious participant, a co-creator, in the artistic revelation of God's infinite potentials. Most importantly, practice the prayer of silence, sitting in openness to the infinite, ineffable No-Thing that makes all things possible. Extending the minimum meditation time to 20 minutes is recommended in order to allow for more time in the prayer of silence.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be as aware as possible of all instances, signs, symbols, and allusions of the sephiroth and thus the Divine Names and active presence of God within you and in Nature around you. Remind yourself of the mysteries interwoven with all things, responding with wonder and enthusiasm for the gift of having a part in the unfolding of God's unbounded artistry. Allow yourself moments of stillness and silence to simply be present in nonjudgmental acceptance and awareness of what is.

Recommended Reading

- *Practical Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill
- *Nature Mysticism*, by John Edward Mercer
- *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, by Cynthia Bourgeault
- *Panentheism Across the World's Traditions*, by Loriliai Biernacki and Philip Clayton

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A gold or yellow candle
- An image of sunrise
- Frankincense incense, due to its association with the sephira Tiphareth, Beauty, where the Divine Name is *I-H-V-H aloa ve Daat*, meaning "God manifest in the mind."

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The AT with meditation, including the prayer of silence, should be done at least four days a week. Mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before proceeding to the next stage. You are welcome to make adjustments, so that the duration is a little longer if it was not possible to maintain the recommended frequency.

Stage Six: The Rose Cross



The work of this stage is focused on *rubedo*, the fullest possible conjunction and harmonious integration of the elements of your being with a consciousness of God in Nature, including you and all other beings. If your efforts are effective, then the heart of your individuality is more completely filling with the ever-present and eternally renewing life force and the mysterious transcendent illumination of Spirit. This union is the meeting of the Divine Word and Divine Wisdom within you to flower as a unique manifestation of Divine Love. And, just as it is the nature of a blooming rose to freely and selflessly share the loveliness of its appearance, fragrance, and nectar, so do you more graciously share the beauties of Love itself, loving the Divine with all that you are and others as yourself, just as Jesus directed.

It is important to realize that your love and the Divine Love are intimately linked. “What we are seeking is what is seeking.”¹³ It is the Divine within us that stirs us to know the Divine. It is your love of the Divine Word that makes a larger place for it in your conscious awareness, your love of Divine Wisdom that beckons its inspirations to descend into your heart. Your love brings them together, and their union within you in turn magnifies your connection with Divine Love.

Divine Love deserves the loftiest concept of it that we can manage. St. Paul tells us it is greater than all other things, even faith and hope, and that without it everything else is meaningless.¹⁴ So, you are now urged to consider that if there is a divine dimension to human love, or beyond that, if God *is* Love, as attested in the First Epistle of John, then Love must ultimately surpass all the dualistic ways in which we typically relate to it. Divine Love cannot merely be the feelings of attraction and affection that are opposed by feelings of repulsion and dislike. Nor is it simply a courageous and compassionate attitude that can be hindered by fear and selfishness. Likewise,

¹³ This quote is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

¹⁴ See 1 Corinthians 1:13

Love is not limited to caring ways of thinking and acting that can succumb to hatred or apathy. So, for the most mystical knowledge of and participation in Love, you must be at least genuinely open to the possibility that Divine Love, and thus the root of human love, is both an ineffably transcendent mystery and an immediately present reality. You are always experiencing and expressing Divine Love in limited forms, within and around you, whether you are aware of it or not.

Given that Divine Love is beyond all opposition, you can begin to see how Love is the Great Reconciler and Redeemer, the quintessence of what Rosicrucian alchemists call the Universal Medicine. On the fifth day of the *Chemical Wedding*, a circle of nymphs sweetly sings of the power of the Universal Medicine with this song:

I

There is nothing better here below,
Than beauteous, noble, Love;
Whereby we like to God do grow,
And none to grief do move.
Wherefore let's chant it to the King,
That all the sea thereof may ring.
We question; answer you.

II

What was it that at first us made
It was Love.
And what hath Grace afresh conveyed?
It is Love.
Whence wasn't (pray tell us) we were born?
Of Love
How came we then again forlorn?
Sans Love.

III

Who was it (say) that us conceived?
It was Love.
Who Suckled, Nursed, and Relieved?
It was Love.
What is it we to our parents owe?
It is Love.
What do they us such kindness show?
Of Love.

IV

Who gathers in the Victory?
It is Love.
Can Love by search obtained be?
By Love.
How may a Man good works perform?
Through Love.
Who into one can two transform?
It is Love.

V

Then let our Song sound,
Until it's Echo rebound.
To Loves honor and praise,
Which may ever increase
With our noble Princes, the King,
and the Queen,
The Soul is departed,
Their bodies are within.

VI

And as long as we live,
God graciously give;
That as great love and Amity,
They bear each other mightily;
So we likewise, by Loves own Flame,
May reconjoin them once again.

VII

Then this annoy
Into great Joy
(If many thousand younglings deign)
Shall change, and ever so remain.

The question now is about the extent to which you intentionally seek to be a more aware and active instrument of the Universal Medicine, and thus serve to reconjoin the King of the Divine

Word and the Queen of Divine Wisdom¹⁵ in your life and the world around you. Will you more earnestly pursue a love affair with Love?

If so, then one tool now available to you is the Pentagrammaton, which is a five-lettered esoteric name for the Divine Word, derived from the Tetragrammaton (I-H-V-H). The Pentagrammaton is formed by placing the Hebrew letter Shin in the middle of the Tetragrammaton to produce *I-H-Sh-V-H*. Whereas the Tetragrammaton is regarded as the ineffable Word, the Pentagrammaton is regarded as the Word actually spoken and heard. Rather fittingly, this name can be pronounced in various ways, but *Yeshuah* (yeh-shoo-ah) has been selected for this program.

In the following operation, the Pentagrammaton is incorporated in this version of the INRI acronym, *Ieshuah Nascente Rosa Innovatur*, which means, "Yeshuah ascending renews the rose." After its application, you will also make use of the compound name, *Christo-Sophia*, which represents the marriage of the Word and Wisdom in Love.



Lunar Queen & Solar King, from Salomon Trismosin's 'Splendor Solis'

¹⁵ Divine Wisdom is frequently personified in female form, such as in the book of Proverbs. Among Rosicrucians and in Orthodox Christianity she is often addressed as *Sophia*, the Greek word for wisdom. You can learn more by reading *Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom, Bride of God*, by Caitlin Matthews.

Operation

1. Perform the AT.
2. Release the imagery of the AT and sit down.
3. Perform at least 10 cycles of rhythmic breathing.
4. Visualize the gold cross within your body.
5. With a first slow, smooth full, inhalation, visualize a green leafy stem growing up from the base of the cross and spiraling clockwise around it all the way to the top at your brow, where it sprouts three leaves. Then, with the first exhalation, intone *Ieshuah Nascente Rosa Innovatur* (yeh-shoo-ah-nah-sken-teh-roh-sah-een-noh-wah-toor), and visualize and feel a large, beautiful, dewy red rose blooming around your heart at the crux. With each subsequent inhalation, draw a pulse of green light all the way up the spiraling stem to the three leaves at the level of your brow. With each subsequent intonation, visualize the rose and your heart sparkling with dew and radiating a lovely red glow. After several repetitions, the imagery should be well established, and you may stop the intonations and continue to the next step.
6. Recall Keter above your head. With a first inhalation, visualize a dove of white light descending from Keter straight down the cross to merge with your rose-heart and form a white-winged, dewy, rose-framed heart at the center of the golden cross. Then, intone *Christo-Sophia* (kree-stoh-soh-fee-ah), seeing and feeling your winged, dewy rose-heart radiating a pink of aura of Divine Love. With each subsequent inhalation, visualize and feel a pulse of white light descending from Keter into your winged, dewy rose-heart. With each subsequent intonation, see and feel your winged, dewy rose-heart glowing with the pink light of Divine Love. After several repetitions, the imagery should be well established, and you may stop the intonations and continue to the next step.
7. After meditation, complete the AT once more.

Meditation

Sit in meditation on your beautiful, dewy, winged rose-heart at the center of the golden cross. Reflect on the Divine Names of Yeshuah and Christo-Sophia. Consider the conjunction of the Divine Word and Divine Wisdom in your communion with God and Nature, including other beings. Welcome and embrace every hint of and reaction to Divine Love within you and others. Contemplate the mysterious transcendent mystery of Divine Love, beyond all duality and opposition, as well as the immediately knowable presence of its limited forms in this world.

Mindfulness

During your ordinary activities and in your dreams, try to be as aware as possible of all instances, signs, symbols, and allusions to the Divine Names, Ieshuah and Christo-Sophia. Strive to be sensitive to the Divine Word, the Divine Wisdom, and their union in Divine Love within you and in Nature. Remind yourself of the mysterious transcendence of Love as the essence of all the limited ways beings experience and express it in this world.

Recommended Reading

- *Conscious Love: Insights from Mystical Christianity*, by Richard Smoley
- *Breathing Love*, by Jennie Lee
- *Mindful Loving: 10 Practices for Creating Deeper Connections*, by Henry Grayson
- *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions, Vol.s 1 & 2*, edited by Yudit Kornberg Greenberg

Optional Symbolic Elements

- A red candle
- A combined image, or separate images, of a red rose, heart, and white dove
- Rose incense

Frequency

Daily performance of the AT is recommended. The full operation should be done at least four days a week. Mindfulness is ideally practiced every day to become somewhat habitual, and reading done as needed.

Duration

A minimum of one month with the recommended frequency is advised before concluding the program. You are welcome to make adjustments, so that the duration is a little longer if it was not possible to maintain the recommended frequency.

Conclusion

If you have conscientiously completed the *Transforming Cross*, then no matter what the results might have been, you are to be congratulated. Such work is not easy, and it requires deep devotion and perseverance. If nothing else, you have strengthened your own faculties of self-awareness and self-discipline, which are of inestimable value. Hopefully, and to some degree most assuredly, you now have deeper appreciation of the mysteries of your soul, reality, and God. Perhaps along the way you have had one or two moments of true awakening to your oneness with others, with Nature, and with God. In one way or another, you should know that you are not the same person who started the *Transforming Cross*, that you have indeed experienced a meaningful transformation.

What now?

As was noted in the introduction to the *Transforming Cross*, this work is never finished. You will find yourself facing future challenges and going through changes that reflect the stages of this program. Now you are better prepared to meet them. The operations you have learned are now part of your psychospiritual tool kit, and you are free to continue using them as you see fit. You are also encouraged to remember that others are seeking just as you have done, and you are now better qualified to serve as an understanding companion, perhaps even a worthy mentor.

Finally, any actionable answers about your next steps in psychospiritual transformation must come from the deepest voice of your own soul, from the Word and Wisdom united in Love within you.

Listen to your winged heart!

