



Lecture 05 Prima - third stage - purification

Delivered to learn_alchemy yahoo group 2004-05
Unedited version 1.0-200805
Copyright © 2004-05 rubaphilos
rubaphilos@yahoo.co.nz

The principal elements having been successfully separated, the one from the other, the next stage of the process requires their purification.

Each of the principals still has adhering to it the residue of the Earth, the Element of corruption. In order to remove this, each of the principals must be cleaned, separately.

The Mercury is cleaned by simply distilling it seven times, to remove all of its superfluous phlegm. Such pure Mercury (alcohol) is hygroscopic (it draws to itself moisture out of the air), and thus can be easily repolluted. So it must be stored in a clean, dry, air-tight jar.

The Sulphur is purified by calcination. This is best done by placing the sticky resin in a crucible and subjecting it to an intense heat. The resin will loose a lot of toxic smoke so this is best done in a well ventilated place (outside is the best choice I think.) Care must be taken not to inhale these fumes.

The Salt is purified in the same manner as the Sulphur, starting by burning the dried, extracted, herb-body to ash. Like the Sulphur the smoke is toxic (and smells badly) so it should be burnt outdoors.

The calcination of the Sulphur and Salt requires a bit of detailed explanation. When the Sulphur and Salt are calcined they follow the same path, after the initial ash of the first burn is obtained.

The Sulphur and Salt being treated separately ...

When the first burn is complete the ash will turn greyish, and no more visable smoke rises off the mass. (Further calcination, after this point is reached, can be done indoors.) Once the calcination has been carried to the point that the ash no longer changes colour (it stays grey), then it is cooled and it should be 'leached' with distilled water. This means the ash is put in water so that the water-soluable (pure) portion of the salt-mass can dissolve. The

insoluble (impure) portion will precipitate in the water in the form of a black salt.

This water is then filtered and the filtrate is evaporated until the soluble salts crystalize. It will be found that they are white. They should be placed in a clean/dry sealed jar.

The black salts should be re-calcined, until grey(ish) again, re-leached, filtered and the soluble separated from the insoluble again. This should be repeated on the black salts (each time) until the black mass no longer changes colour under calcination, but remains black. This is the damned earth - the caput mortuum or dead head. It can be discarded.

Now you have a collection of water soluble salts ... one lot from the calcined extracted herb-body, the other from the resin (Sulphur). (Sal Salis and Sal Sulphuris.)

These salts need to be heated well (and if necessary re-leached, filtered and dried) until bone dry, clean and snow-white, ground in a mortar into a fine talc. They are highly hygroscopic so they need to be stored in separate sealed, labelled, jars.

So now you have one jar labelled 'Mercury' - containing the pure vegetable alcohol, One jar labelled 'Sulphur' containing the pure fixed (salt) Sulphur of the herb. And one jar labelled 'Salt' containing the pure salt-body of the planet.

Calcining the sal salis and sal sulphuris to white is sufficient for this work. But it is quite possible and acceptable to continue the calcination till the salts turn yellow then red. This requires extreme temperatures, sturdy crucibles and a lot of salts to start with. (See description from 'Collectanea Chemica' in the files section.)

This is the close of the third stage - the purification of the three alchemic principals.

~rubaphilos

=====

(copyright © 2004 - rubaphilos)