

THE ALCHEMY OF LIFE: AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

Hugo Casas, FRC

Grand Master of the Spanish Grand Lodge for Europe, Africa, and Australia

Frater Hugo Casas was born on July 8, 1962 in Barcelona, Spain. He and his wife, Isabel, have a twenty-six year old daughter, Tania. Early in his life, Frater Casas became interested in mysticism and esoterism, which he later shared with his wife. They joined the Rosicrucian Order in 1992. Since that time, they have worked closely with the Administration of their jurisdiction.

Frater Casas, a professional computer scientist, was in charge of setting up the computer system for the Spanish Grand Lodge when it began as an independent Administration.

In 2002, Frater Casas became the Pronaos Master and the following year, Lodge Master, positions that he held at the same time as he held the positions of Treasurer of the Grand Lodge and Grand Councilor for the Catalonia and Aragón Regions.

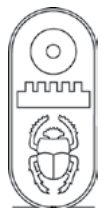
In October 2005, the Board of Directors of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC chose Frater Casas to become the next Grand Master of the Spanish Language Jurisdiction for Europe, Africa, and Australasia. On June 10, 2006 he was ritualistically installed in office in Castelldefels near Barcelona, by the Most Venerable Imperator, Frater Christian Bernard.

In the summer of 2010, Imperator Christian Bernard appointed him as interim Grand Master of the Spanish Grand Lodge for the Americas until the installation of the current Grand Master, Frater Roland Brisson. Frater Casas then became President of the Board Directors for this Jurisdiction in November 2011.



Human beings have always searched for their own perfection, and the knowledge of the world that surrounds them. When they realize their limitations, they attempt, by all means, to transcend them, and to approach the eternal, the absolute, and the unity of all creation. For this reason, throughout the centuries, alchemy has been one of the most intense, profound, and complete methodologies that humankind has used. The practice of alchemy does not refer exclusively to the material elements, but rather to a series of internal and spiritual changes that the seeker experiences within.

Ultimately, it is the art of achieving perfection, both internal and external, through participating in the Great Work, for which the adept seeks to improve





structures in a small town, we can learn an approximation of how these mechanisms operate in state government; similarly, by knowing the laws that operate within the human being, we can unravel the laws of the universe. This is why we find

with each step and with each experiment she completes, until she comes to the realization that each instant, every single instant in her life, is inherently perfect, without any excess or lack of anything. Our progress consists only in being aware, and participating in this absolute and profound truth that **every instant has its own perfection.**

The god Thoth, also known as Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice Great, was the initiator of alchemy in Egypt. One of the texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistus is *The Emerald Tablet*, whose first affirmation is: "It is true, certain, and without falsehood, that whatever is below is like that which is above; and that which is above is like that which is below; to accomplish the one wonderful work."

"As Above, SO Below." To understand the significance of the "SO" is of vital importance, since this does not imply identity, but rather a symmetrical and harmonious relationship between the above and the below, the large and the small, the microcosm represented by humankind and the macrocosm which is the universe that surrounds us. This way we can reach an understanding of the performance of an area we don't know, by applying the knowledge of another similar area of a different magnitude; for example: if we know the functioning of the power

an inscription with the adage: "Know Thyself" in the Pronaos at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi.

One of the methods of learning, of special relevance, is playing games. In the end, games are a simplification of what happens around us, conceptualized in a way to present a challenge for the player. Nowadays, we frequently see individuals who play video games. They immerse themselves and are totally absorbed by the game, and dedicate, in some cases, much of their spare time to them. If we watch the player, we find that he is focused, and even passionate, in his desire to obtain a good result. In the game, you begin by playing from an initial situation, and then you have to reach a desired objective, for which the player takes actions or furnishes answers which conduct him, if all goes well, to the desired objective; and, he must follow the rules and the limitations of time and other factors presented. Sometimes adverse situations can happen to the participant, and he must overcome them or avoid them. During the game, the player will experience the pleasure of confronting challenges that he must overcome, and the joy, if he achieves it, of being the winner, or of successfully finishing the trials in which he participated. In any case, what usually happens is that the level of proficiency of the player improves with practice. At the appropriate time, the game will have accomplished its

mission, and will have nothing else to teach the participant, so the player will lose interest in playing and will substitute this game with another one that will provide him with new thrills and challenges. If we proceed to evaluate each of the aspects



we've considered, we can gain important life lessons that apply the principle of "as above, so below," since this life is for each of us our Great Game.

Interest. Everything begins with being interested, with feeling attracted to, and with the desire to enjoy the selected game. When we choose amongst the myriad choices at our disposal, we will select the one that adjusts best to our interests and desires, and bottom line, the one that will be the most rewarding. In parallel, our life, in this incarnation, is a mosaic of differing circumstances which makes each of us unique as human beings. It is our soul-personality who chooses amongst a series of possibilities to determine the one that best corresponds to our level of development, and to the lessons we must learn on our evolutionary path, and therefore the one we are most attracted to. This point of view leads us to consider that when we evaluate ourselves, and the circumstances in which we were born, educated, and raised, we should think that these conditions are the ones that will provide us with the best learning opportunity—and not others which could be considered "better."

Initial Situation. In general, the beginning of a game provides us with multiple possibilities and available options, and a considerable amount of time to use

them—this not being the most important factor—since what becomes relevant is what we do with those initial possibilities and how we decide to use them, especially when we consider that we have chosen this game and this beginning situation because it was the one that we liked the most of the available options. If we apply the principle of "as below, so above" to what we just mentioned, we observe that there are individuals who, when evaluating their lives, complain about the circumstances they ended up having to live in, and in many cases they spend much time and many thoughts dwelling on this idea. By having this point of view, what happens is that the opportunities our soul-personality chose for our evolution are missed, and also there is great suffering since the person feels they have been treated unjustly. If this person changes her vision of what life is offering her, and dedicates her time and potentialities to take advantage of what the Cosmic gives her, she will surely have a fulfilling life filled with personal accomplishments.

Objective. All games have a final goal, an objective to achieve, e.g., to gain the most points, or to complete certain tests within the least possible time. Reaching these objectives is what moves the player to make an effort and to use his abilities. Similarly, most people go to great lengths to achieve their desired goals in life, and





often their only concern is how far they are from their target, when the most important thing is to realize that during this process what matters are the abilities and capacities we are developing, the expansiveness with which we are able to observe the world around us, and the knowledge of the laws that guide the process. All of this leads us to the enjoyment of every instant of our life, since day by day we recognize that our job is just like the job of the alchemist—who by observing the transmutations produced on matter by the fire of the Athanor, also experienced an internal change, an advance in his evolution.

Rules. All games have a series of rules that participants must follow, and if they don't, they risk some type of penalty. These rules force the player to strive, and they create a level playing field when rating her performance to that of others. Without these, she would soon lose interest in the game. In life, we find endless rules in all aspects, and some individuals feel that a world without rules to follow would be better. This point of view does not allow her to benefit from each situation she experiences, since the person is so busy ranting against the rules she feels obligated to follow, instead of striving to reap the benefits from the point of view of evolution. Likewise, she is missing

the point that rules and laws, which can be as rich and varied as the experience of life itself, exist to create an ideal space for the soul-personality to develop all of its potential, perfect itself, and become conscious of its true nature. A universe without laws would simply not exist. It is worth noting that in a game, the guiding rules are few, limiting themselves to some very concrete aspects. Nevertheless, these limited rules provide us with lessons of extraordinary validity, since they prepare us in concrete and specific aspects that will help us to be ready to confront situations that we will experience in our daily life, outside of the game.

Possibility of action and playing. In all games, the player can make decisions or act as he deems appropriate, as his capacity and the situation allows it; otherwise, there is no game, one is only a passive spectator of what occurs. We can observe that there are people who make a huge amount of decisions in their life, and that interact enormously with all that surrounds them; while others limit themselves to being passive guests of what life offers them. The soul-personality congratulates itself and attempts to display all its potential; if we become aware of this fact, and we ask ourselves what are the potentialities we can use, we would live a fuller life, and with all certainty, we would receive very valuable answers.

Skill and knowledge. In games, skill is gained through practice, knowledge, and the development of capabilities inherent to the game itself. If we carefully observe the differences there are between a new player and an advanced player, we will realize that the advanced player has been developing skills that allow her to achieve the desired results. Likewise, she is capable of observing those aspects or areas that are truly important in the game, eliminating those that do not have any significance.

Something similar occurs to us through the learning experiences of life; we start realizing that at the beginning we paid much attention and valued enormously some aspects that we later found to be insignificant, and that truly have no value, and slowly we start learning that the truly transcendental happens totally invisibly to our eyes. But we also realize that all of the erroneous assessing that we have done helped us to arrive at the evolutionary level we are in, and therefore, they have been necessary, and we must warmly welcome them because they are the ones that have contributed to our growth.

Level of play. There are different levels in all games, being that what's most important to a beginner will be to learn the rules of the game and how to interact when playing. When this stage is completed, it will be more relevant to improve specific skills and capacities. The level of demands must harmonize with the capacity of the participant, being that a level of difficulty that is too low will not require any effort, and the gratification of being a winner would be practically non-existent, or even embarrassing. Likewise, if the level of difficulty is too great, and it cannot be overcome, it would be a game in which no one would like to participate since the possibility of winning is so distant, it would inhibit any wish for self-improvement or progress. If we apply this evaluation to life, we would conclude that we should evaluate our level of difficulty so as to not ask too much or too little of ourselves, and therefore, not be too demanding with the goals and challenges we ask of ourselves, being that they could be too far from our possibilities, and we would obtain nothing but frustration. On the other hand, if we are too relaxed in our stated objectives, we will not achieve any improvement, because we are putting down our own capabilities. Finally, it is recommended that we find a middle point in the level of demands

we place on ourselves, so that we can continue challenging ourselves reasonably, and learning, without exceeding the limits of our abilities. This is the golden rule of all evolution.

New Level. In games, once we have completed a certain level successfully, what is natural is to go to the next level, or if the game has nothing else to offer, to change to a different game. Similarly in our lives, some times daily situations don't contribute gratifying experiences or helpful learning, so it may be the time to change, to choose to have new experiences in a new environment where we can continue our endless spiral of self-improvement. All this, knowing that every moment has its perfection, and that we must be able to realize it, to seek it, and to find it; to participate in the joy that is experienced when we are conscious of the role that we play in the universe, and of the majesty of the evolutionary plan of creation. Finally, we observe that when we apply the alchemical principle of "as above, so below," we realize that the reflections observed in games can be readily applied to our daily lives, and that when we see someone immersed in a game, this will remind us that each of us plays in a much more grand and extraordinary game, namely creation, which serves as the platform and the enjoyment that helps us to deepen our understanding of the great mysteries of the Cosmic.

