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Helium by Jeremy Sherr

Helium, being the second element after hydrogen, is located at the apex of the periodic table. In the world of homeopathic similes Hydrogen has to do with separation from God, while Helium is about the next developmental stage, the soul's incarnation into a physical body. Investigating such a unique element allows one to delve into the most interesting questions we face – how have we arrived here and for what purpose.

Helium is a noble gas, an element that neither seeks nor needs any interaction with the other elements. Being solitary, Helium, along with the other noble gases, provides us with a uniquely well-defined picture that is not only fascinating on its own, but can also shed light on the other elements around it. The book is the first in a series of books that Sherr is writing about the noble gases.

The foundation for the book are various provings conducted by Sherr in different countries. The collated proving is extraordinarily rich, though most of the symptoms used in the book were reported by one prover, Silvie Gowan, who, says Sherr, has “amazing ability to listen to whispers”. When one reads *Helium*, it seems that Sherr has built a matrix using his own words, and then proceeded to fill the voids with the proving symptoms. But the actual process was quite the reverse: Sherr sorted and re-sorted thousands of symptoms in order to group the symptoms in a meaningful way that would shed a light on the remedy. It is akin to arranging a random collection of stained glass fragments and then adding the lead to hold them together, creating a clear, colourful and intriguing picture. One cannot but marvel at the amount of work and commitment that went into this rather short text; it is clearly a labour of love.

The book is divided into sections of ascending potency, describing the different possible ways to understand the remedy, from substance to spirit. In the first few chapters Sherr is on solid ground. The symptoms first speak the language of reality and then the language of our hopes, fears and dreams. But at the later stages, especially the MM part, we are moving into the unknown, the realm of the

Gods. Sherr tries to use the symptoms to crack no less than the magic of creation: if Helium is about incarnation, and if one is armed with a whisper-listener who can connect to the true essence of the substance, then surely these truths will reveal themselves to the keen observer.

You can actually feel the joy and excitement that Sherr must have experienced through the process of writing. Kabala fits perfectly with genetics, Tao with the big bang and, pervading all, the proving of Helium illuminates the map of creation. The four particles at helium's core are compared to yin, yang, male and female, to the four gametes (sperm or ovum), and to much more besides.

Intriguing stuff, but not without its problems. The higher Sherr climbs up the potency ladder the less he relies on clear logical deductions based on the proving; the reasoning often shifts to “it looks similar, so it must be similar”. Consequently, sometimes it seems that in his desire to see all the components marching along to the same tune Sherr turns a blind eye to a few strugglers here and there – there are a few statements that are not convincing, sometimes even puzzling. It was disappointing to see the issues of homosexuality and gender treated very clumsily, and to watch Sherr embracing the romantic, almost naive view of ‘boy meets girl’: he says that a man is destined to always seek his soul-mate, a woman that would be his perfect match – if only she could be found. There's a disconcerting sense of certainty – black is black, white is white, man is Man and woman a Woman.

This certainty comes, perhaps, from Sherr's choice to concentrate his discussion on the nucleolus, which is the positive, yang, component of helium – while disregarding the soft, yielding electrons. The result is a yang-biased, positivistic hypothesis, not as dynamic and inclusive as it could have been.

But these are small remarks about one chapter that, by Sherr's own admission, is exploratory and tentative. It seems to me that the following allegory is a fair representation: imagine Icarus trying to get as close as possible to the sun (Helios). However, this time round he is much more careful and does manage a safe landing, though not without some scorched feathers. Reading the book you must admire the audacity, indeed the hubris that Sherr summoned in flying so close to the sun. A few scorched feathers? What the hell!

Reviewed by Noam Bar

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