



## Alchemy – The Soul of Astrology

Clare Martin

(Swanage UK: The Wessex Astrologer, 2020)

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In *Alchemy: The Soul of Astrology*, Clare Martin offers us a vision of profound insight into the workings of alchemy and astrology, operating together to enrich our understanding of the path to personal transformation.

She opens with a breakdown of the essential components of the ancient art of alchemy, the process by which we attain illumination, arrive at the seat of the Self or in a more modern Jungian parlance, Individuation. The stages of the *magnus opus* (the Great Work) are explained, showing how alchemical symbolism parallels that of astrological symbolism and how the four elements and the individual planets each represent an element of, or stage along the path, to self-realisation.

Illustrated throughout with classic alchemical images and accompanied by a very useful glossary at the front of the book, we are led gently into the strange world of the alchemical process where each obscure mystical image is broken down, explained, and explored in modern psychological language which is enlightening and easy to digest.

In chapter four, *Alchemy, Astrology and the Soul*, Clare draws upon the work of Carl Jung and lays out the process of alchemy as it pertains to the perfecting of the human Soul, before examining in more depth the relationship between Saturn (*coagulatio*), Uranus (*sublimatio*), Pluto (*calcinatio*) and Neptune (*solutio*), which describe the main processes in the alchemical *opus*, or work.

In each of these subsequent chapters she explores the nature of these planets according to alchemical principles, and gives some short, truly insightful, real-life client examples showing how opportunities for personal growth express themselves during moments of crisis and depression under significant outer planet transits. These examples really under-line the powerful observation that the “alchemical processes can only proceed under the right astrological conditions” and to think of these planetary cycles as life ‘process’ is vital to unravelling the intelligent plan of the soul. Transits represent so much more than a series of detached, randomly occurring events, and the alchemical/astrological relationships presented by Clare Martin offer deep insight into ‘soul process,’ giving us a refreshed perspective on the outer planets as indicative of a soulful communion rather than a waiting-for-the-next-dreadful-event-to-befall.

This is not a large tome, nor is it replete with the usual occult esoteric language and undecipherable imagery, but it is an invaluable and fascinating book to help astrologers understand the larger and inner forces at work that shaped the understanding of the alchemists of old. It firmly places the significance of the process of personal development related to major planetary transits from the perspective of much deeper ongoing life processes and in writing it, Clare Martin has given us a profound map, and a context, to help others navigate life’s difficult moments. [PG].