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Level 45: Quintessence (the fifth element)

Fire (spirit & energy)...

Air (intellect & communication)...

Water (emotion & nurturing)...

Earth (material things & security)...

These elements are considered to be the building blocks of existence at all levels, the universal forces upon which life depends. They are also known as the quadruplicities or modalities. The idea of the four elements was conceived by Empedocles in ancient Greece and identified as elements by Plato, they are easily observed in nature but have a subtle character. The astrological elements are expressions of spiritual energies, rather than blind forces.

We all have heard about the four elements forever but are you familiar with the fifth element? The fifth element is called **quintessence** (the fifth and highest element in ancient and medieval philosophy that permeates all nature and is the substance composing the celestial bodies). The scholars of the Middle Ages believed it to be the ether, the substance above the sphere of fire, and of which the human soul was made. For more esoteric alchemists the quintessence and *lapis philosophorum*, the *Stone of the Wise*, were closely associated and sometimes synonymous entities.

Quintessence is the underlying spiritual essence out of which the four material elements are precipitated. The idea of quintessence (spiritual ground) has been widespread in science since Aristotle. The quintessence, or aether, is central to spiritual development in many cultures. It is also known as the astral light or the collective unconscious and the akasha, a Sanskrit word meaning “shining”.



Hermetic Seal of Light (Quintessence)

This symbol, often referred to as the *synthesis of alchemy* or the **Hermetic Seal**, hearkens back to ancient Pythagorean philosophy, wherein the square, circle, the and the triangle are the emblems of the material body, the soul, and the spirit, the three elements believed to be necessary for alchemical transformation.

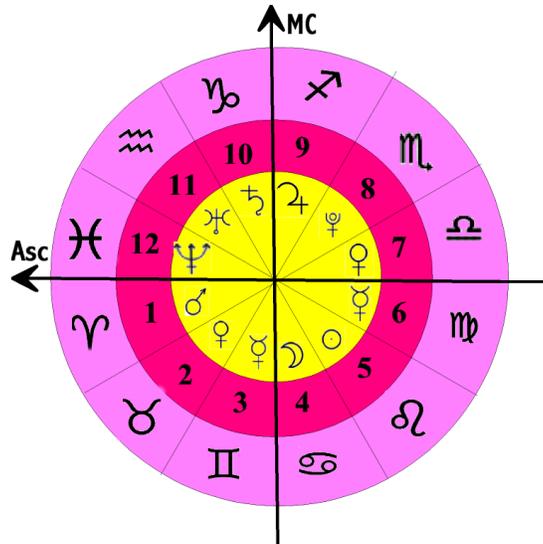
Alchemically, these are Mercury, Salt, and Sulfur. In *Atalanta Fugiens*, the alchemical text illustrated below, it is written, “Make of man and woman a circle; thence a square; thence a triangle; form a circle, and you will have the Philosopher’s Stone,” a hidden geometrical formula for creating an octave and a golden rectangle.



THE HERMETIC SEAL OF LIGHT



The **Seal of Solomon** is a symbol of the unification of Fire and Water, the unification of opposites, Above and Below, Male and Female. This represents Unity Consciousness. Fire, Water, Air and Earth are all contained in this symbol. The fifth element, or Quintessence, is hidden, or implied.



The Yellow in this illustration represents Quintessence, fifth element.

Aristotle's model of the natural world was becoming accepted. In terms of this model each element is a combination of two of the four opposites and everything in existence is a temporary compound of the four elements in different proportions, with the tension between opposites being the force that keeps things together.

By this time the elements are not immutable but are in a state of flux – one can change into another by an exchange of one of its qualities. The process of change is not random or progressive, but cyclic. The process is cyclic because one active quality (hot or cold) is always paired with one passive quality (wet or dry). Aristotle called this process *being and becoming*.

| Element | Being and Becoming | Quality |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| Air | WET becoming hot | wet & hot |
| Fire | HOT becoming dry | hot & dry |
| Earth | DRY becoming cold | dry & cold |
| Water | COLD becoming wet | cold & wet |

The process of being and becoming is readily adaptable to natural processes, like the cycle of day and night, and the cycle of the seasons in temperate climates:

| Time | Season | Being and Becoming |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Dawn | Spring | WET becoming hot |
| Midday | Summer | HOT becoming dry |
| Dusk | Autumn | DRY becoming cold |
| Midnight | Winter | COLD becoming wet |

All these ideas were an established part of Greek thinking before Astrology took hold in the Greek world. In other words Astrology fitted in very well with the cosmology and philosophy of an agrarian society that saw change as a process similar to the cycle of the seasons.

The application of the system of elemental qualities has two major consequences. First, it provides us with a deep symbolic understanding of the elements, which helps us to better understand the nature of the signs. Second, by including the elemental qualities of the seasons as an important component of the meaning of the signs, the system explains why there are differences in expression between signs of the same element.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AIR | Wet – create bonds, communal, creative, flexible |
| | Hot – expend energy, dynamic, excitable, enthusiastic, extroverted |
| FIRE | Hot – expend energy, dynamic, excitable, enthusiastic, extroverted |
| | Dry – break bonds, singular, analytical, tense |
| EARTH | Dry – break bonds, singular, analytical, tense |
| | Cold – conserve energy, static, controlled, dispassionate, introverted |
| WATER | Cold – conserve energy, static, controlled, dispassionate, introverted |
| | Wet – create bonds, communal, creative, flexible |

Using the elemental qualities shows us that a crucial relationship is established between the elemental qualities of the season and the signs. Moreover, it is this that accounts for the differences in expression between signs of the same element. An example, the fire sign, Aries, is inherently hot and dry, but it falls in the hot and wet season of Spring, so Aries is hot and slightly wet.

| Sign | Element | Elemental Qualities | Season: North | Season: South |
|-------------|---------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Aries | Fire | Hot & Dry | Hot & Wet | Cold & Dry |
| Taurus | Earth | Cold & Dry | Hot & Wet | Cold & Dry |
| Gemini | Air | Hot & Wet | Hot & Wet | Cold & Dry |
| Cancer | Water | Cold & Wet | Hot & Dry | Cold & Wet |
| Leo | Fire | Hot & Dry | Hot & Dry | Cold & Wet |
| Virgo | Earth | Cold & Dry | Hot & Dry | Cold & Wet |
| Libra | Air | Hot & Wet | Cold & Dry | Hot & Wet |
| Scorpio | Water | Cold & Wet | Cold & Dry | Hot & Wet |
| Sagittarius | Fire | Hot & Dry | Cold & Dry | Hot & Wet |
| Capricorn | Earth | Cold & Dry | Cold & Wet | Hot & Dry |
| Aquarius | Air | Hot & Wet | Cold & Wet | Hot & Dry |
| Pisces | Water | Cold & Wet | Cold & Wet | Hot & Dry |

(In the Southern Hemisphere the seasonal cycle is reversed.)

We are born under one sign. We have always stated that we have lived other life-times in all of the astrology signs. We need to be in balance astrologically as we learn to expand beyond our physicality. As we learn to balance the elements, Earth, Water, Fire and Air, the fifth element called *quintessence* is activated. This is a vital force of energy that we need at this time. The seat of the fifth element is the heart. When this element is activated, a drumming sound will beat throughout the universes. We need to learn how to make our movements more fluid (vital force) much like the way our body fluids are circulating in the physical body. It is almost like when you introduce this concept to your psyche; you bring SPIRIT back into the equation of your well being.

Humoral physiology, when properly understood, are just as valid today as they have been for thousands of years. The concepts of the humours were originally developed by the Greek physician Hippocrates (c460-377BC). He was trained in the Asclepiad tradition of medicine. Asclepius was the Greek god of medicine and a mythological healer strongly connected to the

Solar cult of Apollo. Hygeia is the feminine consort of Asclepius, while Panacea is the universal medicine (or vital force) generated by the Sun. The objective of humoral physiology is to understand how the patient's vital force or spirit is manifesting by the way the body fluids are circulating in the body.

The word **humour** derives from the Latin humor meaning "fluid or liquid". The term encompasses not only the body fluids, such as blood, bile and lymph, but also the "Waters" of the psyche. Humour as expressed in comedy is also included in the term. Jokes by invoking incongruent images in the mind cause a sudden release of emotional energy that truly reflects the spirit of the person. Such is the power of the emotional release that it can generate Water physiological responses.

The four humours and temperament are perceived within the blood using each of the four elements in turn.

- The melancholic humour (melanchole = black bile) corresponds to Earth.
- The phlegmatic humour (phlegm = phlegm) corresponds to Water.
- The choleric humour (chole = bile) corresponds to Fire.
- The sanguine humour (sanguineous = bloody) corresponds to Air.

Each humour has its own temperament in terms of hot, cold, wet and dry, and is traditionally ruled by different Planets, according to their sympathetic natures. For example, Jupiter is associated with the hot and moist, muggy atmosphere before a thunderstorm, so therefore rules the hot and moist sanguine humour. Remember, scientific medicine, is following a chemical definition of an element as a unit of material composition, has lost all sight of what is described by these symbols. The humoral physiology is based upon the active perception by the physician of the Elemental symbols within the body's physiology; this materialistic definition of an element effectively blocked the perception of the humours. The subsequent, exclusive pursuit of a purely physical basis to the body's physiology (explaining changes solely in terms of biochemistry), effectively caused an abrupt decline in humoral knowledge in Western medicine. Medical propaganda has proclaimed this change as a triumph of science over the mumbo-jumbo of the past. However, since the basis of humoral physiology is essentially one of perception, there is absolutely no reason why humoral ideas cannot be considered alongside biochemical physiology. In fact, when the two disciplines are juxtaposed, further fascinating insights into both are generated which essentially puts the spirit back into medicine. This knowledge can train physicians and therapists to be more sympathetic to patients' needs and shows how mental and emotional experience affects their diseases. It offers solutions to treating illness other than the purely physical. It helps patients to regain responsibility for their own health and illness. Humoral physiology may at the outset seem very naïve and simplistic; however, deriving from a

two thousand year tradition, it has a depth and subtlety linking mind to body that modern biochemical medicine is desperately in need of.

Hippocrates pioneered a natural approach to medicine based upon the natural cycle of the seasons, created by the relationship of the Earth to the Sun during its orbit of 365 days. Each season leads to a preponderance of a particular humour in the body, in turn leading to a preponderance of particular diseases at certain times in the year.

The seasons were conceived as a sequence of the four Elements through the course of a year. Spring is linked to the Air Element; summer is linked to the Fire Element; autumn is linked to the Earth Element and winter is linked to the Water Element, this sequence of change being brought about by the alteration of the primary qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry.

- In the spring, the coldness and moisture of **water** is transformed into the heat and moisture of the **air** element by the increasing power of the Sun.
- In the summer, the heat and moisture of **air** is transformed into the heat and dryness of the **fire** element by the Sun at its most powerful.
- In the autumn, the heat and dryness of the **fire** is transformed into the coldness and dryness of the **earth** element, due to the decreasing power of the Sun.
- In the winter, the coldness and dryness of the **earth** is transformed into the coldness and moisture of the **water** element, due to the Sun being at its weakest.

The seasonal transformation of the Elements Hippocrates identified as being echoed in the strength of the constituent humours within the blood.

The *sanguine humour* was seen to be most powerful at the vernal equinox, corresponding to the heat and moisture of the spring. By contrast, the sanguine humour was seen to be weakest at the autumnal equinox, corresponding to the coldness and dryness of the autumn.

Next the *choleric humour* was seen to be most powerful at the summer solstice, corresponding to the heat and dryness of the summer. By contrast the choleric humour was seen to be weakest at the winter solstice, corresponding to the coldness and moisture of the winter.

Subsequently the *melancholic humour* was seen to be most powerful at the autumnal equinox, corresponding to the coldness and dryness of the autumn. By contrast the melancholic humour

was seen to be weakest at the vernal equinox, corresponding to the heat and dryness of the summer.

Finally, the phlegmatic humour was seen to be most powerful at the winter solstice, corresponding to the coldness and moisture of the winter. By contrast the phlegmatic humour was seen to be weakest at the summer solstice corresponding to the heat and dryness of the summer.

All time is measured out by motion and that the original of all motion is the heavens. For it is the motion of the Sun which causes Day and Night, Summer, Winter, Spring and Fall from which conversion of times and years, all changes proceed, both heat and cold, dryness and moisture, by which our is caused life and death, generation and putrefaction, increase and decrease of elementary things.

The particular humoral composition of a person was called **temperament** (to mingle or mix in due proportion). In health, the balance or temper of the humours allows the vital force to flow freely through the body. *This harmonious flow of the vital force is accompanied by an inner clarity, peace and harmony.*

In disease this harmonious temper is lost. When a particular humour predominates over the others it causes a characteristic distemper. The humour is identified by the symptoms produced, whether they were hot or cold, dry or moist. The common cold is classically a phlegmatic condition, which should more accurately be diagnosed as a cold and moist!

The therapeutic objective is to counteract the predominating humour and restore temper. To illustrate this point, imagine a fever. Fever is classically a hot and dry condition. From the various symptoms it can be visualized as a fire burning within the patient. The medical term for fever is pyrexia, coming from the Greek pyr meaning “fire”. The increase in metabolic rate causes a dramatic increase in body temperature and subsequent water loss through perspiration clearly demonstrating its hot and dry nature. The heart, linked with choleric humour, markedly increases in rate. Like surging flames, the body is restless and the mind delirious. The skin may develop red rashes or spots. To counter act this fiery choleric condition, medicines of a cooling, moistening and watery nature are needed. One such herb with an ancient reputation for dealing with fever is willow.

For thousands of years the willow has been connected to the **Moon**. The willow's lunar nature becomes obvious when the tree is seen growing next to streams, rivers and lakes, particularly with its branches leaning into the **water**. Additionally the underside of the leaves have a silvery luster, silver being the color and the metal traditionally associated with the moon.

The Moon is a cold and moist Planet with a particular affinity with the **water** element. In humoral terms, this Lunar tree has an affinity with the cold, moist phlegmatic humour in the body. The herb can be seen to be antipathetic to the hot and dry choleric humour; hence its particular reputation for dealing with fevers. These symbolic ideas are confirmed by the willow being a source of salicylates, which in a slight different form is found as the drug Aspirin. Amongst a range of pharmacological actions, salicylates dramatically counteract fever by increasing perspiration. Heat is lost from the body in the evaporation of sweat from the skin, sweat being one aspect of the phlegmatic humour. By stimulating the phlegmatic humour, the **fire** of the fever is extinguished, restoring balance to the humours so that health returns.

The principles upon which humoral physiology are based are thus highly relevant to the perceptive skill of a physician or therapist. They put the diagnostic skill back into the hands of the healer, rather making a patient rely on the results of tests. The modern histopathological classification of disease is predominantly materialistic in its approach and may actually prevent the healing of the patient, since it inherently denies how the subjective state of the patient has anything to do with the disease.

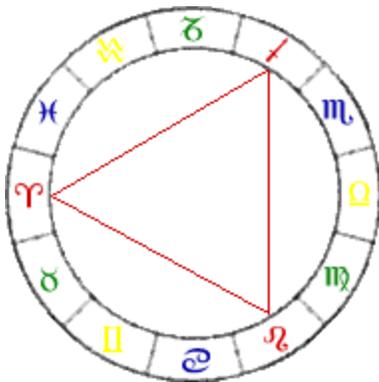
Humoral physiology, by training the physician to look at illness in terms of manifestation of the vital force and seeking what is needed to restore the flow of vital force, is much more likely to restore a patient to health, even if the exact pathology is unable to be ascertained. Where more and more the diagnosis of patients is delegated to laboratory tests, leaving doctors in a sort of therapeutic vacuum – where they are unable to do anything to help the patient till the results are known- the use of humoral physiology once again may considerably enhance their rapport with patients, their therapeutic potential and restore patients confidence in them as healers. When the principles of humoral physiology are correctly understood, they are never out of date. There is absolutely no reason why humoral ideas cannot be utilized alongside biochemical ideas. Indeed the therapeutic potential from a marriage between the two is enormous.

The Four Elements and the Signs

The fact that the astrological signs are associated with certain astronomical constellations has led to much confusion amongst astrologers and non-astrologers. Basically, our zodiac and the signs are no more than a circular measure, a 360-degree scale. Each of the twelve sections of this circular measure has certain characteristics, based on qualities associated with the elements.

Tradition sees the entire universe as consisting of the elements fire, air, water and earth. When we apply this system to personalities, the elements represent certain basic traits and give a certain “temperament”. This varies according to the emphasis of the elements in the horoscope. Any placement of planets or personal points in a sign constitutes an emphasis.

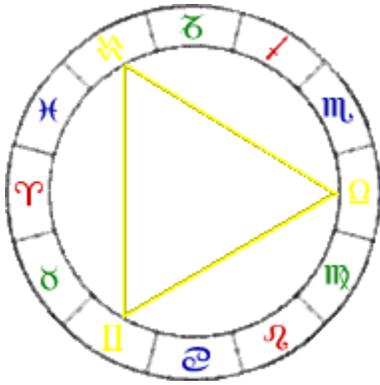
The four elements can be regarded as four basic principles of life. These can be applied to all sorts of things through the principles of similarity and analogy. C.G. Jung has opened the door to a modern understanding of these categories by developing a system of types, in which the elements correspond to four basic functions of the psyche. The emphasis or non-emphasis of the elements in the individual horoscope reveals fundamental aspects of the personality.



Fire

People with a strong emphasis of the fire element are spontaneous and impulsive, they apply their energies wholeheartedly. Their emotional response is quick and they have a lively imagination.

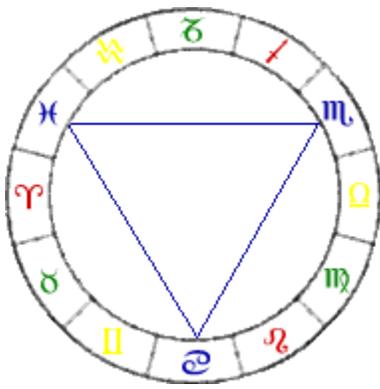
Fire signs: Aries, Leo and Sagittarius



Air

Airy people are quick and animated. They apply their energies in very diverse ways. They tend to intellectualize their feelings and expectations.

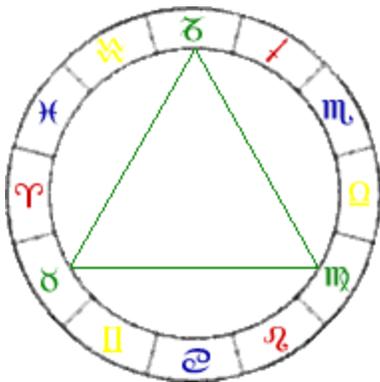
Air signs: Libra, Aquarius, Gemini



Water

People with a strongly emphasized water element are feeling types and are very sensitive. Their imaginative and emotional lives are deep and rich.

Water signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces



Earth

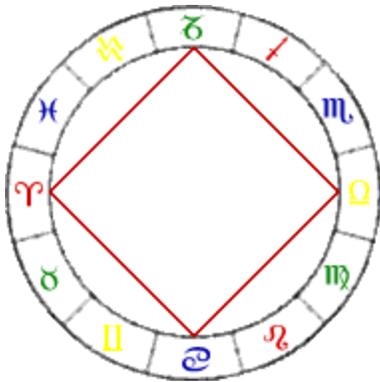
Earthy people react quietly and slowly. They apply themselves with endurance. Emotionally they are deeply rooted and slow to change.

Earth signs: Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo

Western traditional sources also take into account a fifth element, the 'quinta essentia'. This very simply describes the soul or the spiritual being of a person. It stands apart from the other four elements and is not depicted in the horoscope. This is why it is frequently overlooked. It takes us beyond the doctrine of the four elements and their application in the field of astrology. It hints at the freedom of man and reminds us of the great mystery of the eternal.

Elementary states or Qualities

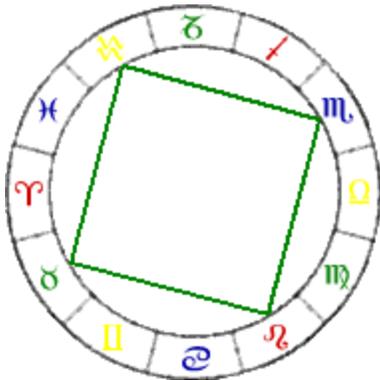
Each of the four elements occurs in three states or qualities, respectively named the cardinal, fixed and mutable or common states. We can consider the physical properties of water as an analogy: Here too, chemical elements can occur in various states. Water, for example, is liquid in its usual, real state. Seen astrologically this would be the cardinal state. When frozen it takes on a solid form, astrologically this would correspond with the fixed state. When heated, it becomes vaporous steam - comparable to the mutable state in astrology. In the individual horoscope, the placement of planets in cardinal, fixed or mutable signs also reveal basic traits of their personality.



Cardinal

People with an emphasis on cardinal signs have an urge to take the lead and to shape things. They are initiators and act according to their aims and goals.

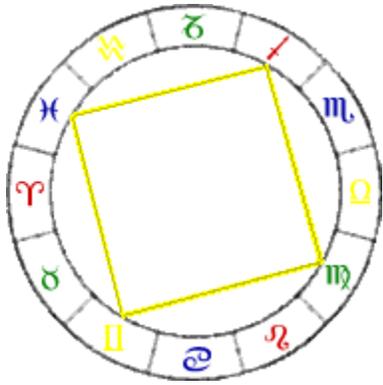
Cardinal signs: Aries, Libra, Cancer, Capricorn



Fixed

People with an emphasis on the fixed signs have a desire to build on what is already there and to organize it more efficiently. They tend to preserve a "status quo" and act in response to given circumstances.

Fixed signs: Leo, Aquarius, Scorpio, Taurus



Mutable

People with an emphasis on the mutable or common signs tend to seek change and renewal. They can easily replace one thing with another and align their actions with unfolding processes.

Mutable signs: Sagittarius, Gemini, Pisces, Virgo

We in the Western world were born into the various signs of astrology and placed no value on the various elements. We are taking our power back from the medical community and looking more at the elements and how they can influence our health. This level balances the elements of EARTH, WATER, AIR AND FIRE to the point of Quintessence making it no longer hidden or implied. By taking this power back, we are told you may have the ability to diagnose and heal yourself more naturally. In order to do this we have to go back through all of your past lifetimes reclaiming the elements from those lifetimes. Cost \$810.00