

Aurum

Argentum

Ferrum

Cuprum

Magnesium  
carbonate

Phosphorus

Thuja

Lac caninum

In this series of masterclasses, I will be considering eight major remedies from a symbolic, mythological and homeopathic perspective to better penetrate the unique genius of each substance and reveal its emotional, psychological and spiritual healing power. Studying homeopathic remedies in this way opens the mind and heart to the mysteries of life and the cosmos and imprints the healing images at the deepest level. The use of the words he or she in these articles refers to the male or female principles present in all of us and is not related to gender. Certain remedies are more conveniently spoken of as male, for example Aurum, and others as female, for example Cuprum, however, when their characteristics match the picture of the patient, they are suitable for the treatment of either gender.

by David Lilley

# Phosphorus

## PHOSPHORUS – THE ELEMENT OF LUCIFER



Photo: Andrew Lambert Photography/Science Photo Library

### The Spirit of Night Light

On a historic Saturday night, the 15 September 1677, at the home of Robert Boyle in England, Johann Krafft of Dresden performed a unique experiment before members of the Royal Society. He demonstrated the luminescence and spontaneous combustion of a remarkable “new” element, which had been first prepared in 1669, from the residue of evaporated urine, by an alchemist, Henning Brand of Hamburg.

At the time, Boyle, himself a back-room alchemist, was already renowned for his pioneer work in the study of gases (Boyle’s Law). Intrigued by the unique properties of the substance, Boyle asked Krafft to leave a sample with him for further experimentation, or at least to explain its method of preparation. Not wishing to disclose this secret, which he had purchased from Brand, and upon

which his celebrity depended, Krafft declined both requests, but could not resist giving a cryptic clue to his eminent host: “It was,” he said, “somewhat that belonged to the body of man.” For a mind like Boyle’s, this was sufficient and in 1680 he produced a scientific paper on the isolation of the glowing material, which he called *aerial nocticula*: “the spirit of night light”.

### The light-bearer

It became known as Phosphorus, derived from the Greek, *phosphoros* – the light-bearer. The Latin equivalent is *Lucifer*. This extraordinary substance, which glowed in the dark from a source of light within itself and took fire spontaneously upon exposure to air, caught the imagination of the 17th century public. It seemed mysterious, magical and filled with wondrous possibilities. Some thought

it must be the *flammae vitae*: “the vital flame of life”.

It was soon noted by those coming in frequent contact with phosphorus that unusual sexual arousal was experienced. It acquired a reputation in the treatment of TB and very dilute preparations were found to increase mental power and physical energy. Not surprisingly, phosphorus was soon esteemed a powerful tonic and aphrodisiac.

Fear and respect for its extreme toxicity would only come later after many poisonings and many tragedies. For all its effulgent charisma, a diabolical energy lurks behind its seductive charm.

**The fall of Lucifer**

In Lucifer, Judeo-Christian myth conjures a vision of an archangel, the Prince of Light, who inflated with hubris, like the Morning Star, which at dawn outshines both Jupiter and Saturn, but dims to extinction as the Sun ascends, aspired to raise his throne above the stars of the Most High and was cast down from the heights into the depths of the Abyss, to become the Lord of Demons. In his fall, a sacred emerald fell from Lucifer’s brow and was lost in the infernal gloom.

The light that Lucifer bore was not the light of spiritual illumination and self-realisation, but the light of ego-based intellect, logic and reason, which becomes blinding when it shines with selfish pride and seeks only in itself for wisdom, becoming its own god, altar and focus. The emerald that was forfeit and lies forgotten in the shadows is the symbol of unconditional love, occult knowledge and the memory of our immortal, angelic state. It is the jewel of the fourth (love)



Photo: Bridgeman Art Library

chakra and thus links Phosphorus to Magnesium. The two have many clinical similarities and are paired productively in our physiology, providing energy and directing our functions, and consort destructively in our warfare (the bombing of Hamburg, 1943).

**Prometheus**

Prometheus, a Titan and a demigod, was the Lucifer of the Greeks, who, like his Biblical counterpart, suffered a terrible fate. In the War of the Titans, he and his brother Epimetheus supported Zeus and his brothers against their father Kronos. On his triumph, Zeus became the almighty God of Olympus and the sky, yet set great store by the cunning wisdom of his Titan henchman.

A dispute arose amongst the inhabitants of Sicyon over which portions of a sacrificial bull would be the most pleasing to the gods. Prometheus was invited to act as arbiter. His loyalty was always first towards mankind, especially if it permitted him to outwit the Olympians. His nature was full of mischief, trickery and opportunism. He forthwith sacrificed two bulls and filled their skins, one with all the bones artfully hidden beneath a rich layer of fat, and the other with all the flesh, but concealed beneath the stomach and other organs, which he knew to be least tempting to the divine palate. He then asked the Father of the Gods which of the two skins he would accept as an offering.

Trusting him, Zeus became the dupe of his artifice and chose the bones. In his anger at the deceit, Zeus, knowing of Prometheus’ sympathies, exacted punishment by withholding fire from mankind. “Let them eat their flesh raw!” he cried out. To this day, the only remedy appearing in the homeopathic repertory of symptoms under the rubric – “desire for raw meat” – is Phosphorus!

**The theft of fire**

Then, Prometheus took pity on mankind. With the assistance of the goddess Athene, he gained access to Olympus, the dwelling place of the gods, and lit a torch at the fiery chariot of the Sun. He broke off a fragment of the burning charcoal and enclosed it within a stalk of giant fennel. Thus concealed, he conveyed the brand to mankind and furthermore committed himself to teaching them all the arts, crafts and skills necessary to enrich their civilisation.

Zeus was enraged at this flagrant transgression and swore vengeance. He caused Hephaistos, the divine artisan and God of the Forge, to fabricate from

clay the most beautiful woman ever created, the Four Winds to breath life into her, and each of the gods and goddesses to endow her with irresistible qualities, but only after he had charged Hermes, the God of Guile and Trickery, to give her a selfish, fickle, shameless mind, filled with vanity and an idle, acquisitive, deceitful nature.

**Pandora’s box**

Zeus named her Pandora, *every-gift*, and entrusted to her care a beautiful box that she was ordered to give to the man who married her. With Hermes as guide, Zeus sent her down to Prometheus – a gift from the gods! Prometheus, whose name means *forethought*, was sensible of the deceit, and without allowing himself to be captivated by her charms, sent her away.

His brother Epimetheus, whose name means *afterthought*, was not possessed of the same prudence and sagacity. Soon, besotted by her beauty and deaf to his brother’s entreaties, he married Pandora. Fearing the worst, Prometheus made him vow to keep the box sealed, but it was not long before Pandora bewitched him into satisfying her cat-like curiosity by opening the forbidden box. Out flew the malicious Spites – Lust, Vice, Passion, Sickness, Strife, Insanity, Travail and Senility – which stung the foolish pair on every part of their bodies and then dispersed all over the world to beset the entire race of mortals. Only delusive Hope remained behind, able to ease the labours of humanity and to render the troubles and sorrows of life less painful.

**An immortal liver**

Thwarted in his revenge against the crafty and rebellious Prometheus, Zeus now took direct action against him and ordered Hermes to carry him to Mt Caucasus and there, with the help of Hephaistos, bind him with cruel chains to the rocks where he would be exposed to the eternal torment of having his liver devoured each day by a long-winged eagle. Each night his liver would regenerate, so that his anguish was without end. It is said that where the blood from his terrible wound soaked the ground the poisonous herb Aconitum sprang to life.

After 30 years had passed, the hero, Herakles, freed him from his torments by breaking his chains and killing the eagle with an arrow. The wise centaur, Cheiron, finally brought reconciliation between Zeus and the Titan and later, longing for death to put an end to his trials, he bequeathed his own immortality to Prometheus, who was thus able to take his place among the gods.



Photo: Bridgeman Art Library

These interlinking myths reveal profound concepts laid down as patterns in the collective unconscious and require interpretation for us to be able to grasp their deeper meaning. In both the nature of Prometheus and Pandora and in the contents of the box, emotional and clinical characteristics of the Phosphorus archetype are revealed. On a purely physical level, an ancient and remarkable intuitive knowledge becomes evident. The toxicity of both Phosphorus and Magnesium impacts especially upon the liver and Aconitum is *the* first remedy for hepatitis and the onset of jaundice.

### The price of intellectual arrogance

Prometheus was a Titan and, like his entire race, imbued with the spirit of revolt and rebellion. Both he and Lucifer transgressed against the godhead by stealing the divine fire of reason and intellect from heaven and giving this awareness and understanding to humanity. In both myths, the consciousness that is bestowed does not represent spiritual understanding, which employs this spark from the divine fire as a torch to light the way to spiritual attainment; it represents the arrogance of the egotistic intellect, which exults in its own cleverness, and uses the spark for its own self-gratification and exaltation.

The light of materialistic reasoning, scientific rationalism, arouses man from the childlike, unconscious innocence of paradise and releases him from servitude to the instinctive, animal will but also liberates him from obedience to natural

law. The price is the eternal torment of Prometheus. His liver, a third chakra organ, is the target of the devouring intellect personified by the eagle. During the day, when the intellect holds sway, it is destroyed; during the night when the intuitive powers surface, it is restored.

### Cold-light

The very essence of Phosphorus is light – a light that reveals itself through luminescence. Luminescence is the process by which certain substances emit light while at low temperature without the production of heat. Luminescence emission is therefore cold-light in contrast with the incandescence emission from very hot materials.

Every mineral, plant or animal is a symbol of something deeper, something timeless, something sacred. When unravelling the hidden wisdom of myth, we need to peer beyond the obscuring veil of appearances and scrutinise the essence. To understand Phosphorus, we must ponder the significance of cold-light. It evokes an image of shining and attracting without feeling, without empathy, without warmth and without love. It is a superficial or shallow light, selfish and seductive, that shines for its own gratification and glory, and to enchant, entice and ensnare. It is the alluring light of Pandora. Cold-light exposes the secret of Phosphorus: that deep to the vivacious, enchanting, captivating effervescence that bubbles so seductively on the surface, lie energies which pertain to its namesake – Lucifer!

### The perversity of white

Phosphorus occurs in three major forms: white, red and, rarely, black. The white, so unstable that it reddens in light, is the form that glows in the dark. It is highly toxic and ignites spontaneously to form dense, white fumes. In warfare it is used in incendiary bombs and for the generation of smoke screens. In this we see a destructive trait and sense a propensity for the clandestine and hidden. In combination with sulphur it was used to produce the first matches. Sulphur provided the fuel, while phosphorus provided the flame. These “strike anywhere” matches were aptly called Lucifers. Workers in the match factories, mostly women and teenage girls, were at great risk and many developed a condition known as “phossy jaw”: an agonising, destructive process which ate into the jaw bones producing a honeycomb effect, with loosening and loss of teeth and a discharge of loathsome, putrid matter.

Red phosphorus is the stable form

and reveals a relationship with the blood, spleen and haemorrhages, while emotionally it indicates intensity, passion and an excitable, animated disposition.

Black phosphorus, the rarest form, shows the affinity of the remedy for plumbing the depths of the personal abyss, the Shadow, releasing the effects of grave trauma and defusing the perverted promptings of a very disturbed unconscious mind. In Phosphorus, as in Belladonna, it is the light of the ego or false-self that proves toxic; redemption lies in the murk of the repressed Shadow-self.

### “Mirror, mirror on the wall!”

The Olympians repeat the miracle of Pandora whenever a Phosphorus child is born. In health they are exquisitely beautiful, whether girl or boy. We witness how each of the divinities contributed to the perfection of their creation, from the lustrous glory of their hair, to their delicately fashioned feet. Above all, their eyes are a source of fascination: huge, limpid and sparkling, expressive and confiding, framed by long, sweeping eyelashes, artfully used to captivate and beguile.

Even the very young are precociously aware of their impact on admiring adults and of the power and influence this affords them. No child can pout and simmer more provocatively. They are conscious of their looks and love to observe themselves in a mirror even when having a tantrum, which characteristically soon passes. Like a cat, they are sensual creatures, loving physical contact and very responsive to caress and comforting. They are affectionate and loving, bright and alert, curious and communicative. They love the limelight and very soon show aptitude for drama and art, or music and dancing, being naturally graceful and rhythmic. Though gifted, their academic achievements do not always reflect their true potential because play is what they love most, often in a dream-world far richer than reality.

With maturity, the Phosphorus features retain their beauty, becoming refined, sculptured and aristocratic, in keeping with their elegant deportment and graceful manners. Their talents will often have blossomed, enriching society, possibly through one of the arts or crafts. Each one is a Prometheus, lighting up the world with fire stolen from heaven. But there is often a dark side, and this we need to consider.

### A leaf in the wind

Phosphorus has to be kept immersed in water to prevent it igniting and vapor-

Photo: Roberto De Guglielmo/Science Photo Library



*Emerald – the lost gem of universal love*

ising into a nebulous, imponderable state. Its tendency is towards levitation and expansion, dissipating its energy with unrestrained abandon until wasted and spent. Its passion and intensity are transient and easily lapse into indifference, ennui and apathy.

The first researchers were not mistaken in linking Phosphorus to the tubercular constitution. The consciousness of the tubercular subject reaches out into the rarefied realms of imagination, fantasy and psychic perception. Phosphorus lacks boundaries; its identity is poorly formed: a wafting leaf helplessly at the mercy of every gust from outer influences or inner emotions. It is impressionable, inquisitive, ingenuous, gullible and easily persuaded.

Therefore, imprinting and conditioning from environment, situations and significant role models have a powerful and often disastrous effect. For good, bad or indifferent, their identity may be fashioned by the beliefs, opinions and actions of others.

**The budding narcissist**

Generally, Phosphorus children are above average in intelligence, looks and talents. Their gifts may develop precociously, and are proudly paraded by dotting parents, grandparents and teachers. Their environment may be dominated by indiscriminate love and adoration. The child is pampered and made to feel unique and exceptional. If an only child this special treatment may be even more intensely focused. Some, while certainly given to high drama and temperamental outbursts, appear relatively unspoilt by this excessive adulation and remain essentially, though often ephemerally, grateful, loving and sympathetic.

Unfortunately, deep and sustained empathy is not intrinsic to the Phosphorus nature. A sense of superiority and entitlement develops, shaped and fostered by flattery, overindulgence and favouritism. They are dependent on the constant flow of indiscriminate love, praise and even worship and therefore become demanding, envious and jealous, capable of resentment and even vindictive hatred when they are not the focus of attention. She can be the little ballerina who must always have the lead role; he can be the young pianist who must hold centre stage. Often looming behind them is a pushy, ambitious and exacting Arsenicum mother.

Such children and teenagers develop the unrealistic and arrogant expectation that there will always be others to provide for their emotional and physical wants. They have an exalted opinion of themselves and are self-absorbed, self-indulgent and insensitive to the needs and plights of others. When their sense of entitlement is not rewarded, contempt and rage will follow. [“When annoyed, fall into furious anger and malignancy” – Hering]. Always anticipating and needing praise, they develop a vulnerability to criticism, to being ignored, rejected, or in any way ridiculed.

**Dire imprinting**

Lack of parental nurturing and especially emotional deprivation by an indifferent and spiteful mother figure are critical during the formative years. Paradoxically, many a Phosphorus survives by a remarkable, compensatory strategy: by experiencing themselves as different and special. The real self splits off from their consciousness and shelters behind a delusion of superiority and entitlement. Within the real self, unconscious feelings of abandonment, neglect, fear, hatred and rage are harboured.

When both parents are implicated and the child is also abused, the worst emotional disturbances may emerge. This is especially so when the abuse is sexual and the child is forced into perverse, degrading and humiliating acts. The child is powerless to escape the clutches of those who torment her: tragically, so often those who should be protecting her. The child’s feelings and identity are utterly crushed and in order to survive she splits herself off from the humiliating experience and creates a superior being behind which she can

hide, who is special, stronger and more noble than those who torment her.

When she is older this “superior personality” may seek and express power through sexuality. She will manipulate others sexually and pursue revenge through sexual dominance. By flaunting her beauty and sensuality she will ensnare an entranced male, use him and then callously cast him aside. In others, a terrible rage and hatred is leashed within, which years later may explode through inexplicable acts of physical or sexual violence and murderous impulses and deeds. It is the victim who often becomes the perpetrator. Phosphorus can be both predator and prey.

**The spider and the fly**

“Come into my parlour,” said the Spider (Lucifer/Phosphorus) to the Fly (Pandora/Phosphorus). Nursery rhymes, like dreams and myths, often have hidden, sometimes disturbing meanings. These beautiful children may attract the attention of sexually predatory adults. Phosphorus appears in one of the most sinister and ominous of all rubrics in the materia medica: “lewdness, obscene; man searching for little girls (or boys)”. Even at a young age, the perverted mind perceives in them a provocative, sexual allure, which invites abuse. In addition to their looks there is often a precocious sensuality, a lack of inhibition and absence of tactile defensiveness, which are interpreted by the depraved adult as a tacit overture.

The Phosphorus child is capable of sexual response at a relatively tender age and may be groomed to be a willing partner in the abuse. Anger, rage and hatred will only come later.

**Revealing the lost gem**

In Phosphorus we possess a remedy, which, when indicated, can create boundaries, protecting the over-impressionable, innocent and perilously vulnerable child and adolescent against perverse influences. It can heal the most terrible emotional wounds and their dread consequences. It can convert cold-light into the warmest and kindest light of all – “the light that shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (St John 1:5): a sublime light illuminating the deepest recesses of the abyss, revealing the lost gem of universal love that it may be restored to the brow of the fallen angel.

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