DALTON'S ATOMIC THEORY

- 1808: Publication of Dalton's "A New System of Chemical Philosophy", which contained the atomic theory

- Dalton's theory attempted to explain two things:

1. CONSERVATION OF MASS
2. LAW OF DEFINITE PROPORTIONS (also called the LAW OF CONSTANT COMPOSITION): All pure samples of a given compound contain the same proportion of elements by mass

The parts of Dalton's theory

1) Matter is composed of small, chemically indivisible ATOMS

2) ELEMENTS are kinds of matter that contain only a single kind of atom. All the atoms of an element have identical chemical properties.

3) COMPOUNDS are kinds of matter that are composed of atoms of two or more ELEMENTS which are combined in simple, whole number ratios.

1:1 or 1:2 or 2:3, etc.

Most importantly,

4) CHEMICAL REACTIONS are REARRANGEMENTS of existing atoms to form new compounds.

- Atoms are not gained or lost during a chemical reaction.

- Atoms do not change their identity during a chemical reaction.

- All the atoms that go into a chemical reaction must go out again!

Another look at chemical reactions

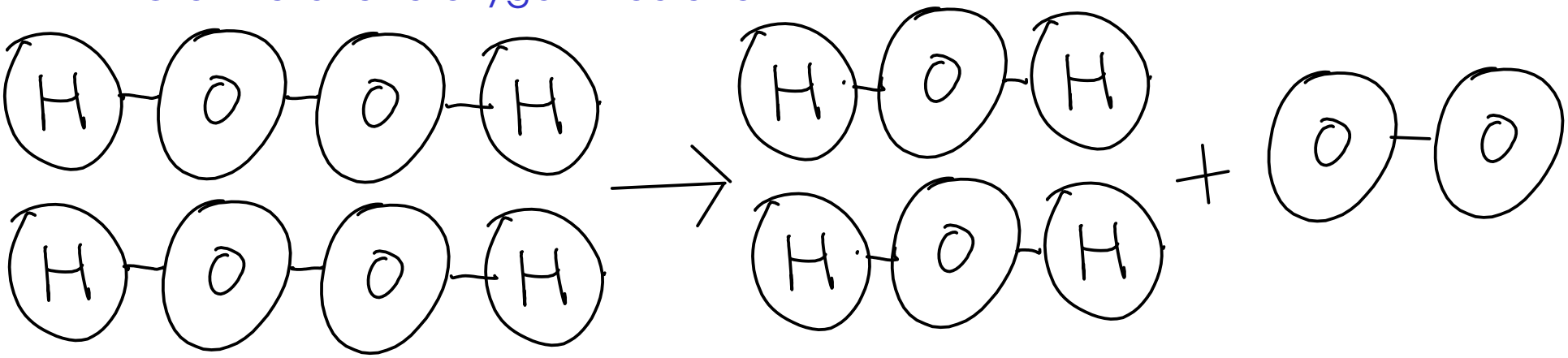
You observed this reaction in the oxygen lab:

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE → WATER + OXYGEN GAS

$H_2O_2 \longrightarrow H_2O + O_2$

... but wouldn't this mean that somehow an extra oxygen atom would form?

Not according to Dalton's theory. Dalton's theory would predict a different RATIO of water and oxygen would form:



$2\ H_2O_2 \longrightarrow 2\ H_2O + O_2$

- Dalton's theory sets LIMITS on what can be done with chemistry. For example:

1. Chemistry can't convert lead (an element) into gold (another element). Sorry, alchemists!

2. You can't have a compound form in a chemical reaction that contains an element that was not in your starting materials.

3. You can only make a certain amount of desired product from a fixed amount of starting material.

... but Dalton's theory said nothing about WHY atoms behave the way they do. What makes gold ... gold?