

# Manifestation of Intention through Visualization

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CAN the human mind affect matter? Has thought any reality of its own? This is a field that some scientists are now beginning to explore, facing the reluctance of the vast majority of the scientific community. Although this subject was considered in different philosophies and religions throughout the ages, its exposition was either too mythic or too obscure to be grasped from a rational point of view. It was not until the founding of the Theosophical Society that this subject was explained in an understandable and rational way. Later on, many groups of the New Age movement took the Theosophical teachings on this and other topics and applied them in their own way and for their own purposes, many a time aiming at opposite ends. We will examine the Theosophical exposition about how mind can affect matter, and then we will compare the application of this knowledge in the Theosophical and New Age movements.

## Divine Thought and Ideation

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky wrote that, at the root of the

*manifested* Cosmos, there exist two fundamental principles: Universal Mind and Cosmic Matter. According to the Theosophical view, nothing that happens in the universe is the product of chance and blind force, but it is directed by an ultimate Intelligence, through what we call the 'Laws of Nature'. This concept implies that these two principles are not separate, but can react on each other. How does this take place? "There is a "bridge", HPB wrote, "by which the "Ideas" existing in "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic Substance."<sup>1</sup> This bridge is called Fohat, the Cosmic Energy, the creative power that works under the guidance of the Universal Mind.

The Theosophical teachings say that every force in the Universe is also present in the human being, and according to HPB he also has a creative capacity, because 'having inherited the nature of the unknown but palpable Cause of his own creation, [he] must possess in his inner, psychical self, this creative power in lesser degree'<sup>2</sup>. Thus, it is said that Fohat, the Cosmic Energy, when manifested in the lower realms has 'seven Sons', whose

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feminine aspects are the Seven *Śakti-s* of Hinduism. These *Śakti-s* work through the human being endowing him with different capacities, and making of him 'the reflection of the Demiurgos, the Creator'.<sup>3</sup> Out of these seven powers, we will examine only two, which are directly related to our subject. These are called *Ichhāśakti*, Will Power, and *Kriyāśakti*, Thought Power.

### Creative Powers

About *Ichhāśakti*, the Power of Will, Swami T. Subba Row says that 'its most ordinary manifestation [in man] is the generation of certain nerve currents which set in motion such muscles as are required for the accomplishment of the desired object'.<sup>4</sup> This is a very good scientific example about the ability of mind to affect matter. When the thought of moving our hand, for example, comes to our mind, we just 'will it' and then, an immense number of coordinated chemical reactions and electric activity take place in order to move the hand. How could mind, being something intangible, generate all those molecular movements? It is through what we call *will*, which acts as a bridge between mind and matter. But this power has more transcendental effects in the inner planes of the universe, as we will see later.

About *Kriyāśakti*, T. Subba Row says it is 'the mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible phenomenal results by its own inherent energy. The ancients held that any idea will manifest itself externally if

one's attention is deeply concentrated upon it. Similarly, an intense volition will be followed by the desired result. A Yogi generally performs his wonders by means of *Ichhāśakti* and *Kriyāśakti*'.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the human mind has the ability to affect matter thanks to those two powers. How does this take place?

### The Nature of Matter

As we all know, the physical is not the only manifestation of cosmic matter. It is in fact the grosser aspect of a continuous Substance. This Substance manifests progressively in seven different states of vibration, each manifestation being grosser than the previous one, and thus forming what we call the *seven planes* of matter. As HPB said, 'the universe develops from within outwards', which means that the grosser state of matter is an 'emanation' from the subtler. And it is not only an emanation but also its reflection. Every physical object is a later emanation of an astral counterpart, made according to the previously existent astral model. Because of that it is said that during the process of gestation of an embryo, the physical growth follows faithfully the development of its etheric model. In fact, everything that happens in the etheric body will be later reflected in the physical body.

Having in mind this principle, it will be easier to understand the rationality of the powers of thought and will acting upon matter. HPB says: 'The will creates, for the will in motion is force, and force produces matter'.<sup>6</sup> She also speaks of each

human being having 'a plastic power of formation, so to say, in its very imagination' by which, when developed, he 'obtains the power of creation'.<sup>7</sup> Through the power of imagination (thought power) man can create an astral model upon which physical matter would aggregate, thanks to the force generated through his will. Explaining one phenomenon performed by a fakir, HPB describes this principle: 'The concrete image — slave to the subjective model outlined in the imagination of the fakir — is forced to follow the original in its least detail . . . The will of the fakir-conjurer forms an invisible but yet, to it, perfectly objective matrix, in which the . . . matter is caused to deposit itself and assume the fixed shape.'<sup>8</sup>

#### The Power of Thought

It is clear that to be able to create this kind of result, the person has to train his will and to develop his thought power. As HPB says, 'imagination is no fancy',<sup>9</sup> it is the image-producing faculty. One has to be able to concentrate all thought towards creating a clear image, and towards commanding matter to follow the image. But although this capacity is not developed enough in the vast majority of humanity, there is still a great power in the human mind which makes it the creator of our circumstances, whether it creates them consciously or unconsciously. As Annie Besant said: 'An idea gives rise to a mental image. A mental image will then generate a mental habit out of which a mental trait ultimately

blossoms. Master your thoughts and you master your mind; master your mind and you master your life; master your life and you master your destiny.'

But as we know, every power involves responsibility and wisdom to employ it for the right purposes, and the very inability of these being used, for the vast majority of humanity, still spiritually undeveloped, is a natural protection. However, there are now some movements promoting the development and use of these powers without the necessary understanding and purity of life and intention. They believe they are using 'spiritual forces' and that nothing is wrong in that, but let us see what HPB says in *Practical Occultism* about it:

It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — *Sorcery*. For it is the motive, *and the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving; the powers

## Manifestation of Intention through Visualization

and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart — and this is DIVINE MAGIC.

### Theosophy vs New Age

Let us examine now the objects aimed at, both in the New Age and the Theosophical teachings. The main postulate in the New Age movement is that every human being has the right to obtain all that he thinks he needs in order to be happy. The Universe, being eternally creative, will provide whatever one wants: love, a good job, success, etc. If you do not have something, it is merely because you are not using certain laws that will bring you the desired object. This is a materialistic and self-centred philosophy, because it considers the personality as the real Self, and that happiness is attained through the fulfilment of its desires. Some of them speak about the Spirit, saying that It is the source of welfare and power, and then they might say it is the Spirit who will provide what the personality desires.

To this end, they work through 'affirmations' that must be repeated together with a visualization of oneself enjoying the desired object. Some of these affirmations are: 'I love and accept myself', 'I am unique and loving, loved, and free', 'I am safe and always feel protected.' These affirmations are obviously self-centred and seek to make stronger the psychological self, which cannot lead to real happiness. But also, there are affirmations for abundance: 'I am a success in all that I do', 'Everything I touch returns riches to me', 'I am

constantly adding to my income.' And all that is mixed with so-called 'spiritual affirmations' of the kind: 'I am always connected with the Divine Love in the Universe', 'My inner vision is always clear and focused', or 'I have given myself permission to be at one with the Universe.'<sup>10</sup>

It is unnecessary to say that this cannot bring that happiness that comes through the forgetfulness of one's own personality and its childish desires. But worst of all, this is just more or less unconscious black magic, although advertised as a form of spiritual life!

And, what about the Theosophical practice? What are the objects for it? I will only give two examples that are representative of the Theosophical approach.

In *The Path* magazine,<sup>11</sup> a few years before HPB's death, were published some pieces of advice the Mahatma KH gave to certain members, regarding meditation. He said: 'Your best method is to concentrate on the Master as a living man within you. Make his image in your heart, and a focus of concentration, so as to lose all sense of bodily existence in the one thought . . . Every one of you create for yourselves a Master. Give him birth and objective being before you in the Astral Light. If it is a real Master, He will send his voice. If not a real Master, then the voice will be that of the Higher Self.'

We have seen how imagination can create a model in the Astral Light, and it seems that that image could be used as a channel for communication with the Spiritual Consciousness, whether in the form of a Master or the Inner Self, because

in that realm there is no real separation. In this technique, the practitioner is not trying to predetermine the kind of message he wants to receive, or the gift he wants to obtain by doing this. He is only opening a channel that will work in the measure of the practitioner's purity and sincerity. And the ultimate aim of this is not personal progress itself, but a greater ability to work for humanity's evolution.

The second practice I want to mention is related to sending good thoughts to people. In the book *At the Feet of the Master* it is said: 'Use your thought-power every day for good purposes; be a force in the direction of evolution. Think each day of someone whom you know to be in sorrow, or suffering, or in need of help, and pour out loving thought upon him.'<sup>12</sup>

In order to realize deeply the connotations of this advice, we will examine some ideas given by C. W. Leadbeater, as results of his own investigation. In the book *The Power and Use of Thought* he says that each thought produces a 'radiating undulation' in the mental matter that may also put in motion astral and Buddhic matter, according to the nature of the thought. This undulation radiates in all directions, affecting the inner bodies of other people, where the same kind of vibration will be reproduced, with more or less strength. The extent of the effect will vary according to the original energy of the thought, and the person's receptivity to that kind of vibration. Therefore, for example, a compassionate thought will tend to make people feel compassion. But besides this general effect, every thought

produces a 'form' which is endowed with force and vitality, and in many cases this thought-form may behave like a temporary living creature. CWL explains that 'The work of a thought-form is more limited, but much more precise than that of the undulation . . . When a man sends forth from himself a thought of affection or of gratitude . . . towards someone else . . . the thought-form which it creates is imbued with definite intention . . . and it goes straight towards the person to whom it is directed, and fastens itself upon him . . . If the man towards whom it is directed is at the moment in a passive condition, or if he has within him active oscillations of a character harmonious with its own, [the vibrant energy of the thought] will at once discharge itself upon him.'<sup>13</sup>

We can see that this power may be used as a useful aid for many people, even if we are far away from them, but it also may be used in a wrong way. Even without any conscious evil intention, when we think badly of someone, we are sending a force against which he will have to fight. That is why in *At the Feet of the Master*, in the writings of HPB, CWL, and other Theosophists, we find clear explanations as to how our thoughts may strengthen the virtues or shortcomings of other people by thinking or speaking about them.

### Conclusion

Mankind has a great power in its mind. Very wisely, that power is relatively weak in the undeveloped human being, as a form of protection, both for himself and to others. But if we are earnestly treading

## Manifestation of Intention through Visualization

the spiritual path, it is inevitable that those powers become stronger, and therefore we have to learn more about them to prevent unconscious misuse and to gradually become a co-worker with Nature's process of evolution.

On the other hand, when the

development of these powers is indiscriminately encouraged, without a right view of life as a foundation, and proper self-purification, the selfish use of them may be a curse instead of a blessing for humanity. Let us be aware of all this and act accordingly. ♦

### References

1. *SD 1*, Proem, p. 16.
2. *Collected Writings (CW)*, I, p. 377.
3. *Isis Unveiled (IU)*, pp. 396-7.
4. *Esoteric Writings*, 'The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac'.
5. Op. cit.
6. *IU*, I, p. 140.
7. *CW*, X, pp. 222-6.
8. *IU*, I, p. 140.
9. *IU*, pp. 396-7.
10. <http://www.mjbovo.com/Affirmations.htm#daily>
11. See issues of July 1889, pp. 102-3 and Sept. 1890, pp. 177-8.
12. *Good Conduct, Control of Mind*.
13. Op. cit., pp. 10-11.