

Companions of the Stone
Emerald Lodge No. 3

Attention, Intention, and Magical Will

1: Focus

1.1 When Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the story goes, was teaching Annie Besant about concentration, she noticed that one of the exercises Annie Besant was very tense. "Relax, Annie," she said. "You do not concentrate with your muscles."

1.2 Kneeling by a stream, you see something glitter among the pebbles. Reaching down, you scoop up a handful of mud, sand, and small stones. As you lift your hand through the water, everything is carried away but the thing you wanted, nestled in the palm of your hand.

1.3 If you try to grab a bar of wet soap, it will slip out of your grasp. To hold it, cradle it lightly.

2: Structure

2.1 It's proverbial that it's hard for fish to be aware of water. For human beings, especially now, it's consciousness, or experience: not experience of something, but experience as such, that is hard to notice. Note the things that are substituted for it: life, emotions ("feelings"), intelligence. None of these are the thing itself. It is sometimes called interiority. It might also be called reality.

2.2 Plotinus distinguished noema (the known, or experienced) and noemata (things known) from noesis (the process of knowing). Objects of awareness, and being aware. And what of the subject?

2.3 Try seeing object and subject are accidents of the act of experience --- or, they are limits of the function of experience, created from moment to moment. Chokmah and Binah, the Pillars of Mercy (energy) and Severity (form). They are limits because they cannot be gone beyond: they are the surfaces. But what is within?

3. Intentionality

3.1 Blindfolded, you are led to a wall and told that a large design is carved on it. Your hand sweeps out to discern it. You are led to another wall, and told that there is a minute design carved on it. Your hand delicately palpates the surface. What is the tool you used to explore the walls? Where was it located? In the object? In the subject? In the background? The foreground?

3.2 To grasp or to be grasped. It is possible to be either, to do either. But to do both and neither? To suspend grasping/being grasped? This is relaxation. Relaxation undermines "libido dominandi". It is not an absence of intention: it is a specific intention.

3.3 Action and experience are the same. A probe is a tool and a sensory organ at the same time. To act is an experience. To experience is an act. To stop doing something is to do something -- but something else. To stop, and attend, is to go beyond the surfaces, the limits, and venture toward the root.

4: Construction

4.1 Structures rise and are demolished in the pulsation of an artery, though they may also last forever:

Time flies like an arrow

Fruit flies like a banana

4.2 To read is to construe:

Him gave I all that now has he.

Him made I all that now is he.

4.3 When we construe, we participate in the structures through which we give a construction to the sentence, or to any experience. When we step back from the sentence, those structures become objects. And with what do we construe them?

5: Will

5.1 Magical will *can* be a matter of holding your breath and making a wish. It doesn't have to be, and even when it is, it's only that by accident.

5.2 Ritual is structure; formal ritual is training in structure: the apparatus of intentionality. Like the grammar and syntax taught in schools, it brings something to attention, and sends it back whence it came, after a change. But the language was there before, and is there afterward. Ritual schools intention: it forms it, but does not necessarily fill it. An act performed with intention: but what act is not? With what intentionality?

5.3 You don't need to hold your breath and wish real hard to read a sentence, or write one. You intend it and do it. Magical will is intent that knows what it means, speaking, acting, and perceiving through structures that construct its cosmic (and cosmological) context. True will, then, is the act that is your root, the intentionality that constitutes at once, in the twinkling of an eye, you and your world.