



The Will

The First Arcanum of Magical Initiation

Samuel Richard Parchment was a former member of the Rosicrucian Fellowship. He formed the Rosicrucian Anthroposophic League in the 1930s, and wrote a series of books on his version of Rosicrucianism. This article looks at some spiritual aspects of using the will.

The Will - The First Arcanum of Magical Initiation

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In the chapter on Prayer: a Magical Invocation, prayer is emphasized as one of the means by which the cosmic reservoir of force may be tapped. Since this primal force is, so to say, diffused natural energy, it readily responds to the supplications of both white and black magicians. Prayer is one of the many crutches upon which the would-be thaumaturgist leans, but may be abandoned by him who has developed the greatest of all powers - WILL.

“The human will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless soul,
Can hew a way to any goal
Though walls of granite intervene.
Be not impatient of delay,
But *wait* as one who understands.
When Spirit rises and commands
The Gods are ready to obey.”

The trained occultist avails himself of a force that he knows; the religious fanatic and the sorcerer seek to importune and misuse that which they do not fully understand; and many devices, such as the wearing of amulets, the burning of aromatic herbs and incense, the chanting of mantras and prayers, are resorted to for no other purpose than to act as stimuli for the undeveloped wills of sentimentalists, and as means for accelerating the depraved imaginations of those soulless beings who have elected to travel the left-hand path. Occult investigations have convinced the author that WILL is essentially that which releases. By it the heterogeneous forces of nature which are diffused throughout space and interpenetrate the inmost recesses of man's being and environment may be readily marshaled into armies of active agents and commanded to bring into manifestation any phenomena desired.

History informs us that at the time the Master Jesus was taken captive, he sternly reprimanded Peter for smiting off the ear of Malchus (the servant of the High Priest), and being conscious of the elemental spirits hovering around them, said: “Thinkest thou that I cannot” now pray to my Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels!” It is evident that had the Master resorted to the elementary spirits for protection, His mission would not have been fulfilled.

“He saved others; Himself He cannot save” is but one of the many insinuations cast at every initiate.

It is obvious that will power and brute force have been prime factors in man's material accomplishments; but not until the candidate has learned to transmute these crude forces into *spiritual will* can he be initiated into the Royal Art. The arcane powers of the soul can be attained only after man has conquered his animal propensities – the dominant factors of the lower self.

A question wed by every student of occult science is, how may one increase the power of will? The answer to this question is that exercises are given by the Teacher for the particular needs of each pupil. But, owing to their simplicity they are too often considered of little value. It is the little things that count, says an old adage; but since students usually underestimate the importance of these simple tests, many of them fail to make progress. For instance, a pupil may be instructed to knock three times on the breakfast table with the knuckle of the forefinger of his left hand every morning for six months; another may be directed to arise at two o'clock every morning for a cold bath. One of the occult schools of the West instructs its students of a certain degree never to close their eyes in deep until they have gone over the occurrences of the day in reverse order. While performing this exercise they must commend themselves for the good they have done and condemn themselves for whatever they have done amiss. All these exercises are helpful though apparently unimportant; and when students have outgrown them they will of their own accord adopt other exercises that will lift them to higher planes of consciousness.

The hierophants of the Ancient Sacerdotal Order recognized no *will* until it had been tested. Their temples of worship and places of abode were surrounded by many terrors and apparitions, and not until the aspirant was able to transcend these terrors was he considered worthy of receiving true esoteric instruction. This custom has degenerated into the absurdities practiced in lodgeroom initiations, such as the rattling of chains, the sounding of gongs, and the wearing of hideous masks to terrorize aspirants for membership. Initiation, as defined by those who have attained it, is a spiritual awakening which brings the candidate face to face with his many shortcomings and the animal propensities of his being. After this has taken place, the pupil will see himself as others see him, and of his own volition wage a ceaseless warfare against his lower passions and emotions. While going through lodgeroom initiation the candidate is told to "follow the conductor and fear no danger." In true occult initiation, the conductor is the neophyte's own higher self, which is fully armed with the soul qualities and will he has developed. Although he may be deserted by every friend he must pursue his course. Step by step he climbs upward, until the lower passions and emotions in their death struggle ally with the spirit of the four elements, Fire, Earth, Air and Water, and eventually concentrate their forces against the ego, in the form of a hideous monster known as the "Dweller on the Threshold." Thus the battle royal of Michael and the Dragon is fought by every aspirant to the higher life.

The term "Dweller on the Threshold," was coined by Bulwer Lytton, and used in his occult novel *Zanoni*. But, in occultism "Dweller" is a term used by students for ages past and refers to the astral bodies of evil-minded defunct persons. These discarded astral shells are sometimes used by elementals, or subhuman entities, while playing pranks; but since these shells contain some of the magnetism of their former owners, the entities using them seem

impelled to gravitate to the surroundings of the original owner and are often seen by those possessing etheric sight – a slight extension of physical vision. The natives of Jamaica, B. W. I., many of whom still retain their primitive clairvoyant vision, call these sells when ensouled by elementals “Jumbie”; when ensouled by the egos of their original owners who are going through purgatory they are called “Duppie”; and when ensouled by the malignant, earthbound souls who may be either incarnate or discarnate they are called “Zombie.” The latter are the beings which the magicians of Haiti sometimes force to take possession of the bodies of young persons who passed out suddenly.

It is customary for English and American people to classify all apparitions as “ghosts,” but this is as erroneous as to call a Jumbie or a Duppie a “Dweller.” In the true sense of the word, the entity which occultists call the “Dweller on the Threshold,” is the aggregation of all the evil thoughts, words and deeds of past incarnations of the person to whom such an entity is attracted. Every living being has a good and an evil genius. The good genius is the product of high desires, while the evil genius is the progeny of the lower self. In other words, the good genius is an appendage or vehicle of the spirit, while the Dweller is especially attracted to the physical man. The Dweller is a self-created devil which prompts us to do many evil deeds, and when we surrender to its promptings, it seems to be in glee and thrives on all coarse vibrations. It can readily be seen that when a person commences to live the higher life the evil genius is deprived of its sustenance; and as a ravenous beast battles for food to prolong its physical life, so does this entity struggle to maintain its existence.

No one has ever been known to receive the degree of Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret from the Ancient Operative Order of Phree Messens until he has completely slain the dragon of lust. Yea, to become wise each disciple must, like Siegfried (the hero of the Nibelungenlied), slay the dragon and taste of its blood.

The following incident, the truth of which the writer avows, should be of special interest to students of occultism, and because of its peculiar nature should also prove invaluable to that class of humanity which is frequently visited by spiritual phenomena, of which they possess no knowledge. Statistics show that cases of dementia praecox are yearly becoming more numerous, and occult investigation has convinced the writer that those whom our medical men call “insane” are mostly recruited from the latter class. He is also convinced that a great percentage of the people so affected could have been saved from insane asylums had they or their physicians possessed even a slight knowledge of occult science.

The incident referred to is as follows: A man who was highly respected in the vicinity in which he lived began to observe during the performance of his daily duties the faint outline of a terrible antediluvian monster, that followed him wherever he went; it walked upright like a man, but its head was more hideous than that of a Chinese dragon; its eyes were horrifying to behold and could not be likened to the eyes of anything in physical existence. Instead of hands it had claw-like appendages which somewhat resembled the forefeet of a crocodile; its body and legs were human in appearance, but its feet were cloven like those of Pan. The good actions of the man seemed to incite it to wrath, at which times varicolored fire would dart from its mouth, nostrils and eyes; but when he became angry, or did things unbecoming a

man of culture, the being would chuckle with laughter. Its gleefulness, however, had a more nauseating effect on the man than when it spurted streams of fire during its innumerable outbursts of wrath. At times the entity was so vivid to the man's sight that he could not understand why others did not see it; not being a student of the sacred science, and silence being one of the strict rules in the Magian philosophy, he held his peace and silently pondered the mysteries of life and being.

During the entire period of these psychic experiences he held a responsible position, but was so reticent that not even his wife or his closest associates knew aught of what was taking place in subjective life. He managed to arrange his duties so that he could give a few minutes daily silent meditation. These periods were exceedingly trying, due to the fact that then the being would transform itself into the shape of a Medusa; it had the power of entering into his innermost being and would endeavor to manipulate his mental fatalities; and it was always a terrific struggle to prevent the entity from taking possession of his body. Strange as it may seem, the man had no fear whatever of the creature; and stranger still, he saw what appeared to be a caricature of himself in it. Throughout this entire period he endeavored to acquire as much information as possible from the reading of occult literature, but none of the descriptions contained therein tallied with his experience. His dreams were more real to him than the happenings or his daily life, and his nocturnal experiences were so vivid, and so true to life, that he could prearrange his nightly visits to any place he desired. During the subjective state we call sleep, the Dweller appeared in the guise of an undersized man, sooty-black in complexion, with terrible; piercing eyes, and pointed ears with lobes curved forward like those of the fallen archangel, Mephistopheles; his body and hands were well formed, but his feet remained 'cloven like those of Pan.

It is obvious that the phenomenon of sleep spans the gap between our objective and subjective existences. Thus, during the nocturnal period the ego of the man was in closer contact with this hideous creature than during his waking hours, and sleep had become only as a shifting of consciousness from one plane of existence to another; In other words, there was no break of consciousness between the hours of waking and sleeping. During the time that his body was wrapped in peaceful slumber the ego was in close communion with the Dweller, and during their several discourses the man implored it to cease following him. When peaceable methods failed, he resorted to rough, abusive measures; but all such methods ended in failure and his pleadings were met with cynical laughter, intermingled with the sneering reply, "How can I leave you when you are my daddy! It is you who brought me into existence."

After several of these conversations the man discovered that some quality embedded in his inner most soul responded to the vibrations created by the monster's cynical laughter, causing him to feel as though he were overshadowed by a cloud of remorse and terrible fear.

After careful self-analysis, he discovered that although he had been courageous throughout the ordeal, selfish pride was still lurking in his soul. He was obsessed with the fear that since the Dweller had not given him a moment's rest, should this continue his health would eventually give way beneath the strain; and in the event of his illness, should his associates

learn the cause of his indisposition the knowledge of his unusual experience would be sufficient to ruin his social prestige. This condition lasted for several months until, in the early spring, on the darkest night of the month when the sun and moon were conjoined in the sign of the ram, the man received an invitation to attend a special meeting to be held in one of the magnificent temples on the astral plane. On this momentous occasion he pleaded earnestly that the Dweller desist from following him. He felt certain that some of the distinguished guests present would sense the monster that was attracted to him. Thus, while gliding through the intangible ether he besought it not to follow, but his pleading fell on deaf ears and on a stony heart. They had now come to where they saw in the distance a magnificent temple which towered over the ocean. The structure stood in resplendent beauty and seemed to have been hewn out of the imperishable rock against which the waves had dashed through incalculable aeons. As the service was not to begin until shortly before the lunation took place, the man stopped for a last plea with the Dweller, but again his request was ignored. On this occasion, however, instead of permitting himself to grow angry as on former occasions, his heart began to throb with altruistic love and sympathy toward all creatures, and in a loving, yet positive manner, he grasped the hand of the Dweller and exclaimed: "Since thou art indeed the product of my ignorance, I feel it my duty to assist thee in the upward struggle for immortality; I have resolved to call aside all shame, and will present thee to the sisters and brothers of the Lodge. As the Buddhas of Compassion have foregone eternal bliss to help nascent humanity, so have I been prompted not to leave the wheel of life until thou hast been redeemed." As the vibrations of the man's words were being gradually absorbed by the all-pervading ether, the etheric form of the Dweller synchronously dissolved into nothingness. Free from the disturbing influence, he continued his journey to the temple.

After the usual New Moon service he was approached and congratulated on his achievement by a Brother of high degree whom he had not before met. But since he had endeavored to keep his experience a profound secret, he was somewhat dismayed at the remark, and asked: "What have I accomplished?" To which the adept replied, with evident pleasure: "The vanquishment of the Dweller by the dual forces of Will and Love; by uniting within your being the masculine and feminine principles of nature, you struck the key of the being that came into existence by your folly. This achievement entitled you to attend the meetings which convene on the first quarter of the moon, and if you continue to wage war against ignorance, you may in the near future also be permitted to attend the Full Moon services. At such gatherings further knowledge will be revealed to you; but from now on you will be more responsive to the instructions given you, and if you apply yourself diligently as in times past, you shall in the near future be permitted to take part in the esoteric function of casting the Molten Sea, or which the shining disc of the full moon is but a replica."

The above narrative of the student and the Dweller is pregnant with valuable information that should be helpful to students of occultism, as well as to the layman. Worry over the petty things of life, and brooding over the horror of death have caused many of the ignorant masses to prematurely rend the veil which hides the realms of spirit from mortal eyes. Since the majority of these have neither knowledge of occult philosophy nor *will* sufficiently developed

to cope with such conditions, there are but few that have been able to redeem themselves from the deplorably negative state into which they have fallen. In the great struggle for existence we must give *proof* if we would advance. Power or knowledge does not surrender itself; it must be merited.

It takes but a moment's reflection upon the narrative related to convince us that had the man not been instructed in occultism, his ordeal might have caused insanity. It behooves us, therefore, to strive for knowledge, to be ever up and doing; for by merit alone can we hope to attain emancipation.

Since it takes years of painstaking labor to develop the least of the faculties we possess, it can be readily understood why the almighty power of WILL is the birthright of but few. Paracelsus taught that "Determined will is the beginning of all magical operations. It ill because men do not perfectly imagine and believe the results, that the occult arts are so uncertain, while they may be perfectly certain."

Candidates who are striving to attain the Sanctum Regnum should ever bear in mind that there are four indispensable conditions: First, intelligence acquired and illuminated by ardent study; second, an intrepidity which allows no obstacle to conquer it; third, will that cannot be broken; and fourth, a prudence which no base allurements can corrupt.

Intelligence, intrepidity, will and prudence may be considered the four cardinal attributes of the Spirit. From time immemorial these qualities have been considered the four most powerful anchors of the soul. Therefore let the disciple who has not developed these qualities strive ardently to cultivate them. "It is the law of God," said Pythagoras, "that virtue is the only thing that is strong, and everything else is a trifle." Thus, although WILL is the first arcanum of magical initiation, it cannot be denied that if such power be developed while the other qualities of the soul are left dormant, such a one-sided development will engender self-destruction. Man can become king of the brutes only by subduing or taming them; otherwise he will be their victim. He who strives to command the forces of nature must first subdue the instinctive animal passions within himself, and in exact proportion as he is able to conquer self, shall he be successful in leading others into the realm of true magic.

"To dare, to know, to will, and remain silent," are considered cardinal axioms of the Kabbalist. But above all, let Virtue be the beacon light of him who aspires to attain the Sanctum Regnum; for only so can he be in constant touch with the "blazing star" or the Light of the Logos.

"Man, know thyself."

Editor's Notes:

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The spelling of several words has been changed, generally to reflect modern US English standards. The context or meaning remains the same.

The Will Project

Roberto Assagioli, the founder of the Psychosynthesis movement, outlined the Will Project in *Part Three* his book [The Act of Will](#) [1973]. He stated that this book "*should be considered as a beginning, and not as an end. The resources of the human will are immense and the purpose of this project is to help in actualizing them.*" He goes on to suggest an outline for the various areas of Will Project, which he described as "*a program of research on the will and its applications.*" His idea was to look at all aspects of the human will, and all ideas and philosophies relating to the will. As such, the Will Project was intended to explore volition and the will far beyond the core teachings from Psychosynthesis.

The current initiative for the online presence of the Will Project stated in 2006 with the establishment of a [website](#). This site offers articles relating to the will, categorized according to the structure suggested by Assagioli. Everyone is welcome to contribute articles or suggestions to this website.

A second website, [The Will Project Research Library](#), has been established to provide original research and a library of public domain books and articles. Most books and articles are provided free of charge, although various books are also for sale.

To discover more about the potential of the Will, or to contribute, please visit [The Will Project website](#):

<http://willproject.org/>

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