

Visualization

Visualization plays an important role in the meditation work in all its stages. It is an important tool in the work of inner “bridge” building, learning to build in mental matter, helping to integrate the mental and emotional bodies in the beginning stages of the work, and later helping to integrate the higher aspects of the mind in the advanced stages. Thus it is necessary to learn how to visualize skillfully.

In order to create something, we first need to visualize or build a thoughtform of it in our mind. For an architect, that might mean being able to visualize in the ordinary way, actually seeing what something will look like. For a musician, it is hearing the combination of notes arranged in a particular way. But for an esotericist, it means being able to work with ideas, “seeing” or “sensing” the relationships and connections between them and how that might manifest on one plane or another.

Many students report having difficulty visualizing. Usually such students fall into one of two groups: some students are not visually oriented and cannot visualize any image at all or only very fleetingly, and other students are so visually oriented that the visual images are prolific, detailed and so uncontrollable as to become a distraction.

For the first type of student it is important to realize that visualization, like any technique, is developed through practice – simply doing it over and over – while keeping in mind that progress will be subtle and cumulative over time. In some cases this difficulty in visualizing may be due to ray make-up, but progress can still be made through practice, and the persistence we develop through this practice is the same persistence we must use in all our esoteric work.

A good beginning practice would be to work with three basic symbols: a white circle with a white dot at the center (against a dark background), an equal-armed cross, and a white equilateral triangle pointing upward. For people who are kinesthetically or sense oriented, it might be helpful to imagine drawing these symbols in the air with a finger, or even imagine drawing them on the palm of one hand with the forefinger of the other, thus adding movement and a tactile element to the visualization process. For those who are aurally oriented, sound might be incorporated too. Additional suggestions and exercises can be found in Christmas Humphreys’ book *Concentration and Meditation*.

For those who visualize too prolifically and uncontrollably, it is useful to focus on the *meaning* behind the specific visualization given in the meditation, thus controlling and creating only those images that relate to that meaning. The difference between controlled visualization and spontaneous imagery is that the latter refers to those symbols or visions arising in the mind that are not *consciously* and deliberately created by us. Usually they are simply glimpses of “astral scenery” and should simply be noted and dismissed. Occasionally we may receive “teaching symbols” resulting from Soul impression and these may contain a clue that we can wisely follow.

In the initial stages of learning to visualize we are working as Soul-infused minds. We endeavor to remain positive and aware that we are the controlling and directing agents. We use mind stuff to build the image in etheric substance, and our heart’s love will render it spiritually attractive and endow it with vitality.

In the advanced work of integrating the higher aspects of the mind in order to build the Antahkarana, the student should have achieved a high degree of skill in visualizing. In this work, we use the higher mind to interpret substance from the cosmic etheric subplane, and this is done through a process that can be referred to as symbolic apperception. This interpretation process links the pure reason of Triadal intuition with the creative imagination. The creative imagination is composed of matter from the highest astral subplane. Having relayed that which has been either imagined or registered, the mind then impresses the brain with the results. This higher visualization or symbolic apperception may or may not involve pictorial visualization.

Many rely largely upon a “felt sense” while others perceive sound or even what might be interpreted as an aspect of smell.

The use of visualization to manifest what is intended or desired is a powerful process used by a high-grade personality. What has always been used *unconsciously* by the average person to bring about what is desired is used *consciously* by the disciple with more reliable results.