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THE POWER OF IDEAS

How little do we know that which we are! How less what we may be!

—*Don Juan*, Canto 15

Plato is credited with saying that ideas rule the world. The French novelist, poet, and dramatist Victor Hugo once observed, “There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come.” As students of Theosophy, we should have a special understanding of the power of thought. Conventional thinking states that reality is that which can be touched, weighed, and measured—in short, the tangible world around us. Thought and ideas are acknowledged as having significance, but the materialist views them as *derivative*—not primary. In other words, they are by-products of neurological processes taking place within the physical organ of the brain. The Theosophist turns the conventional scientific view on its head by declaring that *ideas are primary*, that *the world is derivative*.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky says, “The Universe was evolved out of its ideal plan.” Furthermore, she says that “the universe is worked and *guided*, from *within outwards*.” This physical world, which seems so real to our senses, has been found by modern physicists to be nothing more than a phantom, an illusion of the senses. This seemingly solid matter consists of tiny molecules, which in turn consist of smaller atoms, which in turn consist of sub-atomic particles, all of which seem to resemble a *mental construct* rather than some ultimate building block of Nature as thought by scientists in the nineteenth-century.

In other words, the substratum of the universe appears to be a thought.

But our society has been increasingly influenced by the materialistic point of view: the universe is a random occurrence and the existence of human life (or any life form) is an “accident.” This attitude has led to a growing malaise of hopelessness and futility on the part of many. What is now needed is recognition of the fact that our lives have purpose and that we live in an ordered and intelligent universe.

Emerson said, “The key to every man is his thought.” Let us recognize the creative power of thought and the crucial role it plays in remaking our world. We are not victims, pawns, or “accidents” of blind evolutionary forces. We are intelligent beings endowed with the divine power of creative thought.

David P. Bruce
Director of Education