

# The Metaphor of the Talisman

by Kambeze B. Etemad, MD

In mythology and other forms of fiction, a talisman is an object endowed with hidden power and virtue. Under the right circumstances, the talisman's potentials can be unlocked, harnessed and wielded to produce extraordinary results.

In reality, **a human being is the ultimate metaphoric "talisman"** – filled with latent qualities and capacities just waiting to be discovered and expressed. The more these attributes and abilities are revealed and practiced by and among people, the more meaningful, fulfilling, resilient, effective and coherent can be our individual lives, our relationships and work, our groups and families, our organizations and systems, our communities and cultures. Awakening the "human talisman" can help us achieve all types of positive transformations in our circumstances. But like the fictional talisman, the right ingredients are needed to tap into the capacities of human nature, and it's necessary to align to the right conditions in order for them to be evoked and applied.

The metaphor of the talisman as a symbol of human potential is inspired by several literary and historical sources. The following are some of those references which have influenced me over the years:

1. One exploration of this metaphor is woven into the storyline of *The Lost Symbol* by Dan Brown:

“

From the Greek *telesma*, meaning “complete,” a talisman was any object or idea that completed another and made it whole. *The finishing element*. ... transforming the unfinished ... into a symbol of completed perfection...

*The Apotheosis of Washington* ... adorned the nearly five thousand square feet of the Capitol Dome...a promise of a time when man would evolve to complete spiritual maturity.

Today, man's most advanced inventions are being used to study man's most ancient ideas. ... Perhaps we simply need our science to catch up with the wisdom of the ancients.

The Ancient Mysteries... were a kind of instruction manual for harnessing the latent power of the human mind ... a recipe for personal apotheosis ... It exists in all the enduring texts, from the Bible to the Bhagavad Gita to the Koran and beyond. ... each of these texts, in its own way, is quietly whispering the exact *same* message ... ‘Know ye not that ye are gods?’ ... The ancient texts are obsessed with the power of the human mind. The Vedas describe the flow of the mind energy. The *Pistis Sophia* describes universal consciousness. The *Zohar* explores the nature of mind spirit. The Shamanic texts predict Einstein's ‘remote influence’ in terms of healing at a distance. It's all there! And don't even get me started about the Bible ... When the Bible tells us to ‘go build our temple’ ... a temple that we must ‘build with no tools and making no noise,’ what *temple* do you think it's talking about? ... the Scriptures are well aware of the power latent within us, and they are urging us to harness that power ... urging us to build the temples of our *minds*.

the Gnostic Gospel of Mary: *Where the mind is, there is the treasure*.

”

2. Another expression of this idea animates the protagonist's unfoldment in Stephen R. Donaldson's epic fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*:

"You are the white gold."

"You require no answers. You are sufficient to every question. ... The knowledge is within you, though you cannot see it. But when the time has come, you will find the means to unlock my gift. ... Remember the paradox of white gold. There is hope in contradiction. ... Be not afraid...Go in Peace."

He had tried to use the wild magic like a tool or weapon, something which could be wielded. But ... It was not a thing to be commanded, employed well or ill as skill or awkwardness allowed. Now that it was awake, it was a part of him, an expression of himself. He did not need to focus it, aim it; bone and blood, it arose from his passion.

"I'm the paradox. You can't take the wild magic away from me."

3. A primal source of this metaphor for me is the following piece of timeless wisdom:

*"Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education has, however, deprived him of that which he inherently possesses. Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."*

– Mírzá Husayn-Alí of Núr, surnamed Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892

There are surely many other sources of this idea. Perhaps you yourself may know some. If you'd like, please feel free to contact us and share.

Inspired by this metaphor, I've given dedicated study and work to this premise since I was in high school – wanting to equip and empower myself, other people and situations to better recognize, evoke, employ and direct their capacity. Now, TDS's aim is to offer this very opportunity to people – to learn the right ingredients and enact the conditions that will awaken a person's or situation's "inner talisman." If such "talismans" can be awakened, the quality, wholeness, satisfaction and viability of lives, spheres and circumstances can be elevated.

There's a "magic" in all of us – again metaphoric for our truer humanity. Using the psychological skills and interactive processes within TDS's programs and services, the deep reservoirs of the real-life magic of heart, mind, motive, volition, manner, words, action and interaction can be managed, humanized and realized.

For TDS, the terms "talisman," "magic," Human Quality/Capacity, and "soul" are synonyms. So "engaging your inner talisman" is the same as "engaging your soul in the modern world," is the same as "bringing out your magic," is the same as "maximizing human quality/capacity" – and many other descriptions like "transforming from copper to gold" or "achieving human alchemy" etc. Whatever one calls it, here you will find a dedication to helping various settings enhance and engage their *human capacity* (discussed in detail via text and video elsewhere on the website).

In conclusion, it's important to say that my use of the term "talisman" is only metaphoric. In no way is it an endorsement in a belief or practice of either the occult or of fantastic ideas usually associated with the term in fiction.