

# The Enticement of the Occult

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*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart  
from the faith,  
giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.  
(1 Tim. 4:1)*

Just as a child reaches for its mother for help, so does man instinctively reach toward God — especially during the trying moments in life. In God he sees his Heavenly Father, who wishes him well and who can even perform the impossible. The Lord Jesus Christ promised: *"sk and it will be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it will be opened unto you* (Matt. 7:7). God answers him who asks for something really necessary, such as: strengthening of faith, learning how to pray, attainment of the Holy Spirit, physical recovery, help in work, improvement of family ties, children's welfare, etc. God accepts pleas from all who address Him with sincere faith and hope.



Besides the fact that prayer attracts God's help to us, it is also remarkable in that it assists in man's inner growth. This is because prayer is not a monologue but a **conversation** in which God illuminates with the Holy Spirit the soul of the one who prays to Him. Illuminating man's inner being, God teaches him to seek not only that which is material and temporal but also primarily that which is everlasting and truly precious. Man, while conversing with God in prayer, realizes that God is the highest and mightiest Being, who must be worshipped with reverence and love, who may not be manipulated as some blind force. Thus, sincere prayers that come as a result of various deeply felt personal needs, help in the **moral improvement** and inner growth of man and lead him toward the highest blessing—the Kingdom of Heaven.

In full contrast to such steadfast devotion, founded on faith and obedience to God, there emerges an unhealthy "black spirituality" of the occult. Here also there is an element of the supernatural and a search for help, but it is sought

not from the Creator but from some dubious spirits or from some mysterious nonmaterial forces. If a steadfast faith in God ennoble man, then an unhealthy faith in the occult cripples him spiritually. This unhealthy faith is directed toward all that is earthly, trivial, and sinful. The purpose of this preoccupation with the occult is strictly utilitarian: to find out secrets, to attain worldly acclaim, to win someone's love, to strengthen one's health, to draw up bioenergy in order to enhance one's potential, to take revenge on an enemy, or simply to "play" with the mysterious. Many are drawn by the fact that all this is attainable without any physical strain or the breaking of civil laws.

If turning to God awakens man's conscience and rouses him to repentance and reform, occult knowledge, in contrast, does not bind him with any moral obligations: just take and enjoy! The main attraction for the occult seems to be in the apparent freedom from any moral obligations. As we shall see later, the spirits of the nether world are anything but unselfish, and sooner or later man will pay dearly for any services rendered by them. It is only at first that everything seems rewarding and easy.

Occultism is as old as mankind. In Paradise the tasting of the forbidden fruit was man's first attempt at receiving extraordinary knowledge and talents by means of the occult (see Genesis ch. 3). Sorcerers, shamans, spiritualists, and so forth have always existed, although covertly in most societies. Significantly, our era is witnessing a much increased popularization and passion for various forms of the occult, confirmed by a whole series of serious contemporary investigations. The booklets *The Facts on the Occult* and *The Facts on Spirit Guides* by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 1991) gathered together information from many such studies in the United States referred to and quoted here and provide further details on some of the topics discussed below.

Thus, Mircea Eliade, a well-known scholar, remarks in his book *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*: "As a historian of religions, I cannot fail but be impressed by the amazing popularity of witchcraft in modern Western culture and its subcultures. However, the contemporary interest in witchcraft is only part and parcel of a larger trend, namely, the vogue of the occult and the esoteric" (The University Press, Chicago, 1976). Under the influence of the present day belief system known as the "New Age," thousands of people in the United States profess themselves to be "channelers" (mediums) and "psychics." Millions turn to them for counsel and services while being captivated by their writings. Some of these channelers are well known in artistic and entertainment circles. In Europe, Canada, Brazil, Russia, and elsewhere, there is also a noticeable increase in the interest in the nether-world. Occult ideas have even begun to infiltrate serious sciences like psychology, medicine, philosophy, and archeology. Pseudo-Christian sects spread ancient occult ideas disguised in pseudoscientific and Christian terminology. The New Age sections in many bookstores are larger than those

devoted to Christianity.

Dr. Walter R. Martin, an eminent expert on cults in America, confirms that at least sixty percent of Americans observe occult practices or profess an interest in the occult in one form or another. There exist at least 3,000 occult books and magazines, and even traditional magazines that, though having no real interest in this area, nevertheless print articles regarding occult ideas, astrological signs, curing by means of crystals, and so on. In Russia as well, the passion with the occult is taking on epidemic proportions. These sad facts point to a socio-spiritual degeneration and are an indication of the nearing of the Second Coming of Christ (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1).

The word *occultism* is derived from the Latin *occultus*, meaning something hidden and inaccessible to most. In the sphere of the occult are included various unexplainable phenomena and acts which set into motion mysterious non-physical forces. Preoccupation with the occult strives for the following goals: 1) to acquire knowledge inaccessible through normal physical means, 2) to make contact with souls or supernatural forces, and 3) to learn how to manipulate these spirits or forces. The following is a partial summary of occult teachings and occupations: fortune telling, astrology, chiromancy (palmistry), chimerology (hallucinations), theosophy (based on the society of Elena Blavatskaya), kabbala, anthroposophy, spiritualism, astral travels (also known as astral projection or out-of-body travel), several varieties of mysticism, transcendental meditation, mediumism or channeling, yoga, telesthetic (unconventional) healing, healing by biofeedback, ritualistic coding, shamanism, sorcery, and all forms of white and black magic.

Presently, great popularity is being gained by the essentially occult New Age movement, which has incorporated into itself many of the more ancient occult teachings. In addition, a number of contemporary sects and cults have either originated through the influence of the spirits or carry within themselves elements of the occult and make use of occult practices. Among them we should count: the Anthroposophical Society, the American Meditation Society, the Baha'i Faith, the Children of God (Family of Love), Christian Science, the Church of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons), the Eckankar movement, the Universal Society of Hare Krishnas, the Rosicrucian Fellowship, the Self-Realization Fellowship, the Spiritualists National Movement, the Theosophical Society, the Transcendental Meditation movement, the Unification Church, the Vedanta Society, the Watchtower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses), and Zen Buddhism—to name just a few.

What motivates the enlightened people of the twentieth century to turn toward such unscientific and doubtful occupations as the summoning of spirits? The answer is that science and materialism alone cannot satisfy all the questions posed by modern man. Something in each of us thirsts and seeks after higher, spiritual answers to the principal questions, such as: what do we live for? Are there other worlds and other more complex forms of existence? What awaits us after death? Are there nonphysical forces which

can help us to overcome the laws of physics and attain lasting happiness? And so people living in ignorance or simply ignoring Christian teachings turn to the esoteric.

These esoteric cults claim that they know the answers to the fundamental questions of existence and can open the paths to nonphysical forces. But their answers are false and the methods disastrous. The most frightening thing is the fact that they smother the fear of God in man and the sense of responsibility for his acts. The fallen spirits joyously tell the novice occultist that there is no judgment by God or everlasting torment, but on the contrary, that everything in the afterlife is easy and pleasant. So enrich yourself with knowledge and absorb the power given you. Truly, sometimes as a result of occult practices a person may develop unusual capabilities: telepathy, clairvoyance, the ability to heal by "biofeedback," the ability to move objects without touching them (telekinesis), etc. However, as we shall see, these capabilities are not self-developed in man, but come to him through the **assistance of the unclean spirits**, and that is the reason they are so menacing and harmful. True, in order not to scare off a naive novice, demons cleverly conceal their presence and present themselves as harmless roving spirits or as impersonal nonphysical energy, spread out in the cosmos or hidden within man himself. Now we shall examine and answer these claims of the occultists.

### **The nature of occult spirits.**

Communication with the spirits is realized either through spiritualism or through mediums. The history of invoking spirits (spiritualism) goes back to antiquity. It is mentioned in the Bible as being a sinful practice forbidden by God: *Regard not those who have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God (Lev. 19:31). And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits and after wizards to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul and will cut him off from among his people (Lev. 20:6). A man also or woman who hath a familiar spirit, or who is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them (Lev. 20:27).*

During a spiritualistic seance, the spirit emanates either in the form of a ghost or through its reaction on various objects, such as by moving a plate, rapping on a table, or moving a pointer (Ouija board). In mediumistic seances, the medium in a state of trance gives up his body to the control of the spirit, which in turn enters the individual, takes possession of his organs and performs through him various actions and makes various predictions or revelations. The New Age in particular is popularizing this second form of communication with the spirits (or "forces"), referring to it as channeling (from "channel," to conduct or guide). In some instances, as the medium (channeler) goes into a trance, his facial muscles and lips begin to twitch unwillingly. When the spirit totally possesses the medium, the rhythm of his respiration changes, as does his facial expression, to the extent that the

medium sometimes becomes totally unrecognizable. The voice changes as well; for example, a feminine voice may become deep and masculine. Coming out of the trance, the medium cannot remember what took place or what he said in his mediumistic state. At first the spirit cannot enter the medium without his consent, and it is necessary that the medium himself invite the spirit. However, after repeated mediumistic seances, possession by the spirit can happen involuntarily, in a spontaneous manner, with the medium becoming subject to the spirit.

It is obvious that among spiritualists and mediums there exist charlatans, although there also exist a great number who are quite accomplished and who truly communicate with beings of the nether world and receive from them information and abilities unavailable to others. A large number of ordinary channelers and spiritualists are unaware how **crafty** and **dangerous** those beings are in whom they place their confidence. These are far from harmless, roving spirits or impersonal forces of nature. On the contrary, there is consistent evidence from many accomplished mediums and shamans that the spirits with whom they deal consciously attempt to deceive them. They pretended to be benevolent in order to more easily possess and harm them. Furthermore, as Satprem, a student of the occult and of the Hindu guru (teacher) Sri Aurobindo, wrote: "The spirits can take any form they wish" (Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo, or the Adventure of Consciousness*, NY, Harper and Row, 1974).

Robert Monroe vividly described an event in which, during one of his "astral" travels, he was viciously attacked by two evil spirits. At one point in the fray, he panicked and desperately attempted to remove himself from the torment. As he looked at them, they instantaneously turned into the images of his two daughters, attempting to throw him off balance emotionally in his fight against them. "The moment I realized the trick, the two no longer appeared to be my daughters... However I got the impression that they were both amused, as if there was nothing I could do to harm them. By this time I was sobbing for help" (*Journeys out of the Body*, Garden City, NY, Anchor Books, 1973).

The noted medium Emanuel Swedenborg, who had dedicated himself to communication with spirits and who was acclaimed by many as an expert in questions regarding the occult, attests to the fact that spirits with whom spiritualists and mediums deal are so cunning and lying that it is impossible for anyone appealing to them to establish their true personality and intentions. These spirits are excellent actors masquerading under the guise of dead souls. Swedenborg warns novice occultists with the following words: "When the spirits begin to speak with a man, he ought to be aware that he believes nothing whatever from them; for they say almost anything. Things are fabricated by them, and they lie ... They would tell so many lies and indeed with solemn affirmation ... if a man listens and believes they press on, and deceive, and seduce in many ways ... Let men beware therefore and not

believe an iota of what they say" (*A Compendium of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*, NY, Swedenborg Foundation, 1977).

We hear the same affirmation from Uri Geller, known for his ability to twist spoons and knives by means of telepathy. He and his mentor, parapsychologist Andrija Puharich, MD, often experienced uneasy feelings in their dealings with spirits, noting a somewhat odd and suspicious behavior in themselves. Both occultists were convinced repeatedly that the spirits conducted themselves ambiguously, as though toying with them (Andrija Puharich, *Uri*, NY, Bantam, 1975). Similar uneasy feelings have been experienced by other accomplished spiritualists and mediums.

Consequently, if the spirits in touch with an occultist **lie**, is it not clear they are **not** good angels and servants of God? Neither could they be souls of the dead, since, according to Sacred Scripture, souls are not allowed to roam the world freely. On the contrary, after a person's death, God assigns his soul to a specific place, heaven or hell, in which the soul must reside until the Great Judgment Day: *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment* (Heb. 9:27). Therefore, if the spirits of the occultists are not angels nor are they the souls of the departed, then, as the last alternative, they are spirits subject to the one about whom the Savior said that *He is a liar and the father of lies* (Jn. 8:44) — that is, of satan. It follows, therefore, that spiritualists and channelers who rely on the spirits of the nether world place themselves and others in great danger (as will be explained later). It is difficult to understand how people who would never trust a stranger so naively place themselves under the control of nether world beings, about whom they know nothing, and who are professional liars.

### **Is spiritual energy impersonal?**

Let us now examine a second popular opinion, that through some occult practices one can activate the nonphysical energy which is either spread throughout the cosmos or is hidden in one's self. This opinion is especially enticing to the contemporary skeptic, who acknowledges neither God nor the spiritual world. He gets excited that through his wish alone he can put in motion a powerful nonmaterial energy and force it to work for him. In anticipation of the existence of impersonal nonphysical forces, there has arisen a series of contemporary occult theories saturated with quasi-scientific terminology which are offered to the reader in the form of practical recipes for all occasions in life.

The great success of these occult ideas is due to the fact that the people who are seeking are spiritually uneducated and yet seem somehow to discover a new world where everything that until then was mysterious and impossible suddenly becomes understandable and attainable. There is nothing to be afraid of and no one before whom to tremble — everything is simple and able to be realized by him who has learned to manipulate nonphysical forces.[1]

Curiously enough, the very spirits which operate "in the wings" of contemporary quasi-scientific, occult experiments, are never insulted by the fact that channelers ignore their labors and silence their merits. On the contrary, the spirits willingly hide behind faceless nonphysical forces, since in this manner they can attain their primary goal: enslavement. And they are very successful in this, since their own prince, the devil, is a many faced and deceptive demagogue. To a person with intellectual inquiries he says: "I shall give you supernatural knowledge," and to a person with mystical tendencies: "I shall open up to you the mysteries of existence." To the person who thirsts for authority, he promises fame and power; to the person who is seeking worldly happiness, he promises all the blessings of life; and to the unbeliever he shouts: "I don't exist. I am a fiction!"

Therefore, having enticed a person with what he treasures most, the devil takes him further and further from God, until he is dropped into the bottomless pit. Thanks to his ability to adapt himself to the thoughts of a person, the devil has been able to deceive modern man with ancient, occult, fairy tales set in quasi-scientific terminology. Thus, even in our time there has arisen a branch of science, parapsychology, which studies and tries to scientifically explain the ancient practices of shamans and mediums.

However, there remains the main question: does there exist a nonphysical, morally impersonal energy, and if so, what is its nature? In order to answer these question, one must take into consideration that any energy or force, either material or spiritual, is intimately related to the **source** that generates it. Thus for instance, no physical energy or field (electromagnetic or gravitational, for example) exists "by itself" but emanates from definite atomic or subatomic particles. And since these physical particles are impersonal, the forces which emanate from them are also impersonal and therefore are morally neutral. Similarly, spiritual energy and spiritual forces do not exist "on their own" but emanate from spiritual beings. And since the spiritual beings (angels, people, demons) are **individuals**, the energy emanating from them is, it follows, colored by their moral state — good or bad. Experienced psychics understand this very well and therefore try to guard themselves against moral infection.

In the world we live in there is black and white, and there are shades of gray, as well; there is light and darkness, and there is twilight, as well. However, at each point in empty space there is no twilight, only total light or total darkness. Similarly, in the world of spirits there is no morally undefined state. Spirits (in contrast to people) are simple beings: they can be either totally good (angels), or totally evil (demons). Accordingly, in the spirit world there exist only two states: paradise or hell. There is no intermediate, neutral state. Having understood this, we must agree that the force (energy) emanating from God and the angels is always benevolent and draws toward good, but the force (energy) emanating from the demons is always evil and pushes toward evil. Having two thousand years of spiritual experience the

Orthodox Church has established this fact quite unambiguously. The force emanating from God, or rather "non-created Godly energy" (in the words of St. Gregory Palamas) enlightens and enlivens the soul. *Lord, it is good for us to be here*, cried the disciples, when on Mount Tabor the divine light enlightened them (Mt. 17:1-13).

However, people are much more complicated than simple spirits (angels and demons). That is why people can pass some of the time in a morally undefined state and are capable of wavering between good and evil. Due to the fact that in man there is a moral uncertainty and an inconsistency, the good and evil in him most of the time neutralize each other, leaving his spiritual energy weak and ineffective in comparison to the energy of simple spirits. This is similar, for instance, to the charge balance of a chemical compound that comes about from the sharing of electrons between positively and negatively charged molecules. In the spiritual world, there do not exist any morally neutral, nonphysical forces, because they always emanate from morally definite beings, angels or demons. Therefore, every time a person comes in contact with energy that is being exuded by these beings, he will experience a pull either toward good or evil.[2]

Consequently, the occultists are mistaken regarding the neutrality and safety of the nonphysical force. Since neither God nor His angels allow themselves to be manipulated, the demons are the ones who come willingly to the service of the occultists. Therefore, they dispense to the occultists the needed energy. But they do not do this unselfishly. On the contrary, they loan their energy with the purpose of receiving it back with a good return. Sorcerers, witches, satanists and many accomplished occultists are well aware of this but keep it in secret. Let us examine some remarks from a few specialists.

Professor Michael Harner has been a visiting professor at both Columbia University and Yale and teaches anthropology at the New School for Social Research in New York. He authored the book *The Way of the Shaman* (NY, Bantam, 1986). His research in the field of occultism brought him to the conviction that the basic fountain of shamanistic energy emanates from the world of spirits. "Without a guiding spirit it is virtually impossible to be a shaman, for the shaman must have this strong, basic power source ..."

Some Hindu and Buddhist gurus (teachers) openly acknowledge that their energy comes from the world of spirits. Idries Shah remarks, for example, that "Gurus on their own do not possess extraordinary spiritual power. They receive it from the spirits. To the gurus belongs solely the ability of concentration" (*Oriental Magic*, NY, E.P. Dutton, 1973). In the book *The Adventures into the Psychic*, Jess Stearn, a long time investigator of parapsychological manifestations, makes the following observation: "Almost without exception all of the great mediums ... felt that they were instruments of a higher power which flowed through them. They did not presume to have the power themselves" (NY, Signet, 1982).



However much the occultists may want to be praised for their overwhelming capabilities, they are nevertheless obliged to acknowledge that in reality spirits from the other side work through them. For instance, referring to the parapsychological investigation by Lawrence LeShah, who studied a series of Western and Eastern psychic healers, Charles Panati writes the following: "But if the healers he studies had one thing in common, it was that they all felt that they did not perform the healing themselves; a 'spirit' did it working through them. They felt they were merely passive agents... All the healers he studied slipped into altered states of consciousness in order to heal" (*Supersenses*, Garden City, NY, Anchor/Doubleday, 1976).

One of the most concise reports regarding the question of psychic healing can be found in the collection called *Healers and the Healing Process*. In a ten-year investigation in which many specialists participated, it was found that "Any study of healers immediately brings the investigator face to face with the concept that spirit intelligences (variously referred to as guides, controls, or protectors) are working through the minds of healers to supply information of which the healer himself has no conscious knowledge" (Wheaton, IL, *Theosophical Quest*, 1977). This investigation also concluded that abnormal healing is more widespread in countries where spiritualism and belief in spirits is popular.

Consequently it has been established that regardless of the terminology used, occultists enter into contact with real fallen spirits who supply them with knowledge and nonphysical energy.

*From "At the Threshold of Fiery Gehenna"*

**See Part II - The fruits of occult practices.**

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[1]A special danger to spiritual health is represented by that school of the occult which advises a method for opening the fountain of energy within man himself. According to this teaching, every person, having adapted to himself a specific technique, can develop in himself great receptivity to the outer and inner world, to save and reestablish health in himself and others, to learn how to be connected up to any information, to open the third eye, to perform astral travels, to learn to unveil his chakras (a Sanskrit word relating to the energy centers of the human auric (atmospheric) field corresponding to the human endocrine system). Having opened the chakra with the help of special methods in order to free psychic energies that offer boundless possibilities, the claim is that a person can be placed on a par with the gods — possessing clairvoyance, telepathy, telekinesis, and so forth. Nevertheless, the masters themselves in this field warn that the opening of the bio-forces in oneself bears serious consequences. A detailed examination of this topic goes beyond the scope of this article. We shall indicate only that people who are occupied in opening the chakras within themselves sometimes irreparably damage their psyche.

[2]Of course, the fountainhead of all types of energy is God, who is good. However, the fallen angels have polluted the energy they have received, as well as all other gifts given to them by the Creator.

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