

The discerning of spirits

If we can contact evil spirits in the paranormal world, it is of the utmost importance that we discern which spirits we contact. We must be aware of Satan's tricks, so that he, the liar, cannot deceive us.

Mrs. Martie Dieperink

How do we discern?

Paranormal healers, reiki-masters and spiritual leaders tell us that they communicate with spirits. This will be dealt with in more detail in the next section. What is of interest at present is whether they discern between good and evil spirits and, if so, how they make the distinction.

It is remarkable that, without exception, New Age authors speak about their spirits and guides in a positive way and don't wonder whether they may be deceived. Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer write in their book *Opening to Channel* that people, without exception, say that channelling has influenced their life in a positive way. For instance, they now have a broader worldview and have more compassion for themselves and others. Almost all people, they say, have experienced more prosperity and have become more conscious of their goal. Moreover, they have got more confidence in their inner messages. Many people experience channelling as an important step towards illumination. They experience spirits as being higher light bearers. They write that many guides of a high level are almost pure energy and radiate light. They also realise that there are lower entities with which we must

not contact, but they don't call them evil entities; they are only less developed and can give negative experiences. They predict calamities or they promise wealth or fame. After their advice you feel powerless, depressed or anxious.

The medium Ursula Roberts also warns in her book *All about Mediumship* against lower negative entities. We should distrust messages like: "You will save the world," "you are a strong personality," and "Jesus writes to you." All these messages need not be untrue, she says, but good spirits preach humility. Evil spirits only want to flatter the ego and foster a spirit of misplaced pride.

The conclusion is: New Agers can indeed make a certain distinction between lower and higher good spirits, but they don't believe that there are also high, but fallen angels. They simply think that the spirits they communicate with are higher light bearers; therefore they are good.

In New Age books there is no warning about the risks taken when we start communicating with spirits. Roman and Packer only relate petty discomforts. For instance, the world may look unreal in the aftermath of a trance. And one can

experience pain, which is explained as follows: the guide brings a higher energy into your body with which you are unable to deal. Or you can become depressed. This is explained as an after-effect of the higher consciousness that one has experienced.

Only John Klimo – in general he has a positive view of channelling – remarks on the fact that serious troubles can occur and cites Hans Bender, a psychiatrist, who talks of “mediumistic psychosis.” In his experience a lot of patients who suffer from a psychosis, have entered the paranormal world in one way or another. Channelling can even lead to suicide. In general there are no references to the great risks of channelling in New Age books.

Experiences with the paranormal

When I was still at school I met a Greek who read my palm and predicted that something quite horrible would happen before my death. For a long time I lived with the feeling that something terrible was going to happen to me at the end of my life. Predictions are very often concerned with negative things and can cause great anxiety.

Once in a while I too had predicting or telepathic dreams concerning disasters. One summer when I was staying in Germany I had a nightmare in which a war started in a city. The next day I heard that the Berlin wall had been built. Just before going to India I dreamed that I was on my way to India by ship but there was something wrong. The ship could not sail through the Suez Canal and had to sail around Africa, which meant I arrived in India too late. I sensed some pending disaster. Fortunately, the ship could sail through the Suez Canal on the way to India and I forgot about my dream. But when I stayed in the ashram, a war against Israel broke out and the Suez Canal was indeed closed and the ship had to sail around Africa.

Once you have entered the paranormal world, one thing leads to another. During my student days I examined the different aspects of the alternative circuit. I attended a meeting of the Sufis (mystical Islamic sect) movement and a course with the Rosicrucians. I read books written by eastern gurus and Rudolf Steiner and occult books on Palmistry, astrology and also mag-

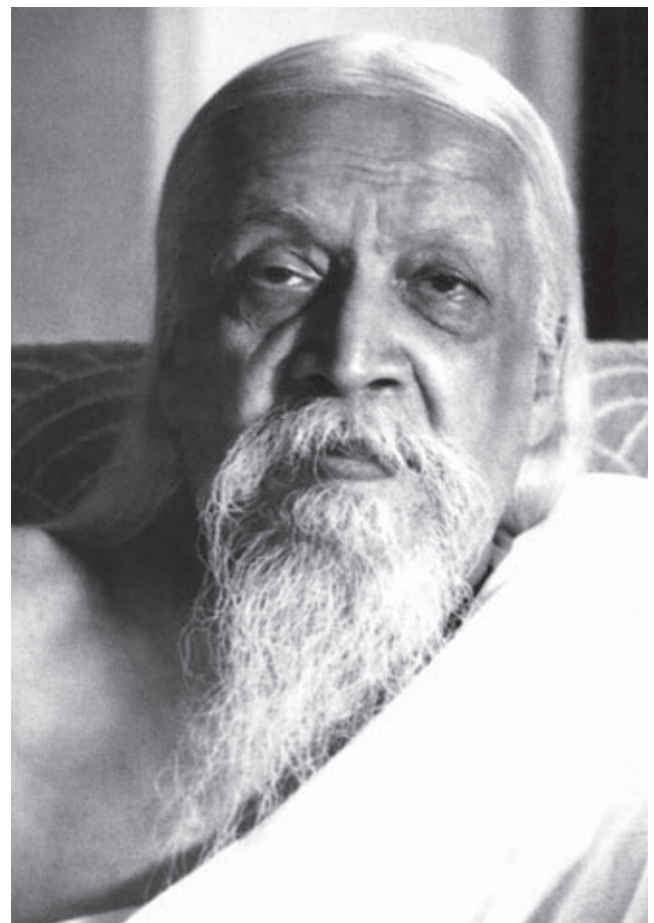
ic. I practiced some yoga exercises and went to a meeting with the paranormal healer Croiset. I attended séances several times. The medium, a woman, was hypnotised by her husband. She would lose consciousness and then the so-called spirits of the dead would speak through her. A young man who was visiting was troubled by a black magic spell, he was apparently treated by the spirit of an Egyptian doctor. I never heard whether he got cured or not. The medium said that she was exhausted after such séances. These sessions did not have a beneficial effect on her health. But, in those days, that did not bother me at all. I was not aware of any dangers and, full of expectation, I even went to India on my own.

Aurobindo Ashram

My stay in the Aurobindo Ashram in South India during 1966 – 1967 impacted my life enormously. An ashram is a community where one practices yoga under the spiritual guidance of a guru. The guru, Sri Aurobindo, had already died but his co-guru, a western lady of almost 90, called the ‘Mother’, was still alive and possessed great paranormal powers. She had trained in occultism for years. On my birthday I went to visit her. She laid hands on me and I received her ‘blessings.’ I sensed that her powers were paranormal.

After that year I returned to the Netherlands with the feeling that I had gained new inspiration that could also be important for the church. I continued my studies and had almost completed them when my life took an unexpected turn. Ini-

Guru Sri Aurobindo



tially, I had the feeling that the trip to India had done me good, but then I was suddenly confronted with a long period of suffering. It all began when I went into a trance and this happened whether I liked it or not. According to Roman and Packer a trance is a state of consciousness in which you can contact a spirit guide. I also experienced that, in a state of trance, you can become hypersensitive to influences from the paranormal world of spirits. In such a mental state your own spirit becomes empty and then another spirit can act through you. At first it was a state of supreme bliss. I had a sensation

started to suffer from nightmares and the physical troubles increased. One night I woke up with excruciating pains in my chest. They were so severe that I could no longer even sit in a chair as usual. This caused me to spend months lying on my bed. In my distress I wrote to my guru who sent me a 'blessings packet,' in which she had radiated energy. I was required to put it on my chest. (This is the same method now used by Jomanda.) Then I had a wonderful experience of being healed! I was so happy! In spite of everything I had completed my studies and now I could start to work.



**Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry**

of experiencing something of the divine and the feeling of having reached a state of illumination. But this bliss did not last long. I even lost consciousness like the medium did through hypnosis and, when I came out of the trance, I experienced a tremendous tension and pressure on my head for the first time in my life and I was unable to study.

From that moment I had continual problems. From time to time I would go into a trance, I

But my joy did not last long. A few months later the misery began again, and from that time on I started to feel pain and tension in my whole body. I had the feeling that I had to compete with a power much stronger than myself. With ups and downs I suffered like this for many, many years.

A paranormal healer crossed my path; he wanted to help me because he could transmit energy. And, again, I experienced the same

thing. After the treatment, for a time, things improved but afterwards my health deteriorated once more so that I finally came to the conclusion: things are only going to go from bad to worse. In the next section we will see how the turn for the better came. Of course each story is unique and, fortunately, not everybody who enters the paranormal world needs to endure such pains, but there is always a price to pay.

The Bible

I have personally experienced that evil powers and forces do exist. The warnings given in the Bible are not the product of the narrow-minded from the distant past, but are highly relevant today.

The criterion for New Agers is, as we have already seen, that their spirit guides are of a high level and are light bearers and, therefore, good beings. Once when I talked to Jomanda I asked her, "How do you know you have contacted good spirits and not the evil ones?" She answered, "They are of a very high level." But I replied, "Jomanda, that does not mean a thing. The Bible teaches that the devil is of a very high level." Then she became very angry. I simply wanted to make clear that the Bible warns that this is not an adequate criterion. Satan was created as a high-ranking angel and the apostle Paul warns us that he, Satan, can imitate the miracles of God (2 Cor. 11:14). In the Old Testament we find a striking account about the battle between the real prophets of God and the magicians who imitated God's miracles. We read:

"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'When Pharaoh says to you, Perform a miracle, then say to Aaron, Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.' So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs." (Exodus 7:8 – 12)

As we have seen, Professor Tenhaeff thought that the saints perform the same miracles as the witches and magicians. Indeed, the wonder Aar-

on performed was exactly like the magic of the Egyptian magicians. Although it appeared they performed the same wonders, the miracles of both parties came from different sources. Moses and Aaron accomplished the miracle in the name of God but the Egyptian magicians performed their signs by means of their idols. There was a radical difference between God and these idols because Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. God shows here that He is the Conqueror and that He is stronger than the demonic forces. Jesus warns also, as we have seen, that people who are influenced by satanic spirits can perform great signs and wonders.

Satan has brought illness and ruin into this world. A well-known example of this is Job's suffering. God had permitted Satan to test Job. Job sat down among the ashes, covered with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head (Job 2:7). He looked so terrible that his friends did not recognise him. This is Satan's horrible work.

Jesus speaks of bondage to Satan in the case of a special disease "On the Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath. The Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?'" (Luke 13:10-16)

Satan can also make people mentally ill. Job was afflicted by inner unrest (Job 3:26). This is also a great problem today. Satan can even make man possessed or mad. He can also cause man to lose his or her humanity and so become like a beast.

“They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.” (Mark 5:1–5)

So Satan can inflict a great deal of suffering on men. But apparently Satan can also cause people to have good luck and he can perform healing miracles. How is that possible? We associate Satan’s work with death and destruction, but what about healing? We have to realise that Satan was not bad originally; on the contrary, he was a high-ranking angel. Being one of the highest angels he received great gifts and power from God. The force and energy he has received from God, he now uses for evil in order to bind people. Because he has received his power from God originally, he can imitate the wonders of God and also healing miracles to a certain extent. He can also inspire you to make beautiful art and to write fascinating books. If you will fall down and worship him, he will give you all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, he told Jesus (Matthew 4:8, 9). If man binds himself to satanic powers, he can do abnormal things. We have seen that a possessed man could wrench his chains apart. This is impossible to do with our normal strength. This man had paranormal strength from an evil spirit.

At the start things can look pretty good. We have the feeling that we have benefited from it and have received gifts, but the end is bitter. The devil’s intention is to bind a person’s soul to himself and pull him into hell. One does not immediately see that because the devil comes as an angel of light. Remember demons know how to make a good impression at first, but after a time you discover that you have been deceived by them.

The effects

When I went to India, I was still young and naïve. I had no idea that evil powers could indeed deceive you. So it is with many people today who enter the paranormal world not realis-

ing the dangers. Sometimes people only realise on their deathbed that they have been taken in by the devil. Rolf Wennekes saw Transcendental Meditation teachers who died rebellious, frightened and insecure.

Often people only perceive after a time that they have become bound: they suffer from psychic troubles, like anxieties, depression or suicidal tendencies. Their headache may be healed at first, but after a time the complaint returns and often much worse, or they have psychic disorders. The worst effect is that a spiritual blockage arises, making it impossible to believe in Jesus Christ. Such a person has become bound and, in the worst case, becomes possessed like the man in the gospel of Mark. He is completely under Satan’s control.

Simon the magician

Let us look once again at what we need to notice when we come into contact with a person who claims to have seen an angel or can heal people so that we know whether that gift or experience is of God.

We have learned the following principles:

- One can recognise a false spirit by arrogance
- Satan discredits the gospel
- Satan imitates the miracles of God. At the outset they seem real and positive miracles.
- We have to pay a high price for his gifts: we become bound and rush headlong to perdition. Jesus said you will know the trees by their fruits.

We have seen that Professor Tenhaeff made no distinction between miracles done by the apostles and the magic practiced by Simon the magician. In either case the point would be that general human capacities are at work. The Bible, however, mentions a battle between the apostle Peter and Simon the magician. If Peter and Simon had the same spirit as their source, this battle would not have taken place. The battle is really only understandable if there was a conflict of spirits.

Let us see whether we can recognise the above-mentioned principles of false wonders worked by Satan in the story of Simon the magician. The account is as follows:

"And Philip going down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did. For many of them who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, went out. And many, taken with the palsy, and that were lame, were healed. There was therefore great joy in that city. Now there was a certain man named Simon, who before had been a magician in that city, seducing the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one: To whom they all gave ear, from the least to the greatest, saying: This man is the power of God, which is called great.

And they were attentive to him, because, for a long time, he had bewitched them with his magical practices. But when they had believed Philip preaching of the kingdom of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and being baptized, he adhered to Philip. And being astonished, wondered to see the signs and exceeding great miracles which were done. Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

For he was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw, that by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him: Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." (Acts 8:5-20)

This story gives us several indications that Simon's miracles were not of God.

1. Simon had a spirit of arrogance. He claimed to be a very special man. He was even called 'the great power of God.' He believed he was divine.

2. In Acts 8:19 it is clear that his heart is not right in the sight of God. He thought he

could purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit with money. (This is still called simony.) So he perverted the ways of the Lord.

3. He worked miracles and people were baffled by his magic, but he was not able to all that the apostles did. His wonders were an imitation of the real miracles of God.

4. He did not set the people free, instead he bound them to himself. They listened to him. When the apostle came into the city, there was great joy which they did not have before. Magic does not give real joy. On the contrary, the atmosphere takes on an air of dejection. The gospel brought real deliverance to the city.

In an early Christian writing (Recognitions of Clement) we read more about the battle between the apostle Peter, who had also come to Samaria, and Simon the magician. "I have," Simon said, "made the soul of a boy, unsullied and violently slain, and invoked by unutterable adjunctions, to assist me, and by it all is done that I command." So he was into spiritualism. This spirit assisted him. Peter recognized that Simon was deluded by demons. It is not true that his magic was simply a matter of general human ability. He was assisted by a spirit, probably a demon.

He felt very special; he claimed to have an exalted power, which excelled that of God the Creator. His flesh was so influenced by the power of his divinity that he believed he could endure through to eternity. Furthermore, he said that could make himself invisible to those who wished to lay hold of him, and again become visible when he felt it was right for him to be seen again. He professed to have made a boy out of the air. The ancient account of Simon is that he went to Rome where he embarrassed people. That is why Peter went to Rome. Simon also believed that he could fly and, in the end, he destroyed himself. The Bible warns the ungodly: "Then I (the psalmist) understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin." (Psalm 73:17,18)

Jesus never did miracles in this way. He did not want, like a magician, to satisfy his hunger by commanding the stones to be made bread. It is vital that we discern between the real wonders of God and the magic of Satan.