

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

In view of the considerable attention and publicity currently being given to psychism, it will be found beneficial to review the Rosicrucian Fellowship Teachings concerning this phenomenon, and thus to understand why these Teachings emphasize the superiority of positive spiritual growth over negative psychic development.

Two Classes of Sensitives

As far as the growth of so-called extra-sensory faculties is concerned, humanity is divided into two general categories. Among the members of one category, the "ordinary" people engaged in material pursuits and by and large out of touch with the spiritual worlds, the connection between dense and vital body is close. In the other category, that of the so-called "sensitives," the connection between the two vehicles is loose. These "sensitives", in turn, are also divided into two classes; voluntary clairvoyants, positive and actuated by their own wills; and involuntary clairvoyants, negative and amenable to the will others.

Pituitary Body and Pineal Gland

A lax connection between vital and dense bodies induces sensitivity to spiritual vibrations. The pituitary body and the pineal gland, two organs presently dormant in most people, were eons ago connected with the involuntary nervous system and invested man with involuntary clairvoyance. They are the instruments with which voluntary clairvoyance, under control of the cerebrospinal nervous system, will be attained as man progresses spiritually. The man who consciously evolves his spiritual faculties controls the vibration of these organs by will, and the power to "see" in the other worlds is constant, to be used at his discretion.

Voluntary Clairvoyant

The voluntary clairvoyant develops his sensitivity, and learns to control his extrasensory abilities, as a result of exercising his will in living a pure, spiritual life and devoting himself to selfless service to others. In time, after he has proved himself worthy, he receives the teaching necessary to complete the connection between pineal gland and pituitary body and to become a trained clairvoyant -- a master of his faculty at any and all times, free to exercise it or not, as he pleases.

When the connection between the vital and dense bodies has become so lax that part of the vital body may be withdrawn, the positive clairvoyant may become a conscious Invisible Helper. He has, by pure and selfless living, developed his soul body -- the two higher ethers of the

vital body, sense perception and memory -- to such an extent that he can withdraw in it at will from the dense vehicle, using the soul body as a vehicle in which to operate. He can then function consciously in the spiritual world and remember everything he has done there. He is as fully conscious in the spiritual as in the material world and, after awakening in the morning, is well aware of what he has done in the spiritual world at night, while he was asleep.

Negative (Involuntary) Clairvoyant

The case of the negative clairvoyant is entirely different. He, too, because of the loose connection between physical and vital bodies, is sensitive to spiritual vibrations. Since he is of a negative temperament, however, and since retrogression is more readily accomplished than progression, he makes no effort to submit this sensitivity to his own domination -- in fact, it is not likely to occur to him that he might eventually do so. Instead, he easily renews the negative activity of the pineal and pituitary organs, and becomes a negative clairvoyant. Inasmuch as the negative faculty is exercised by means of the involuntary nervous system, it is not under the control of the will and is, thus, sporadic in nature. The involuntary clairvoyant has no control over what he sees or experiences in the other worlds. He is aware only of what happens to come before him, and cannot use his power for investigative purposes.

Negative clairvoyants often allow themselves to come under the control of earth-bound Spirits who constitute themselves as "spirit guides," and are, in many cases, unscrupulous entities who seek to coerce their human victims for their own nefarious purposes. The negative clairvoyant then becomes a trance or materializing medium, and, when this happens, it can truly be said that his life is no longer his own.

Mediumship

In the case of a materializing medium, the materializing earthbound Spirit entrances its victim, and, because of the loose connection between his vehicles, draws the ether of the medium's vital body out through the spleen and uses it for its own materialization. The vital currents which give us vitality are specialized. Deprived of this vitalizing principle, the body of the medium sometimes shrinks to a fraction of its usual size; his flesh becomes flabby and the spark of life burns very low. When the vital ethers are returned and he awakens, he is exhausted. This procedure naturally has extremely adverse consequences to health -- a hazard which does not exist for the positive clairvoyant.

Spirit Controls

Mediumship, once entered into, does not usually remain a matter of choice. Once a Spirit control has gained ingress, the medium loses the power to shut it out. If he is content to do the control's bidding -- even, sometimes, to the point of committing murder or suicide-he escapes harassment, but if he tries to balk or rid himself of the now-unwelcome Spirit, he is likely to experience great agony at the hands of the more unscrupulous of these entities. Some Spirit controls-usually those least experienced and, therefore, most dangerous -- go so far as to push the Ego and the higher vehicles out of the medium's physical body and step in themselves to take temporary or permanent control. This condition is generally known as obsession, and is the basis of many so-called "mental cases."

Even more perilous is the situation which threatens the medium after death. The Spirit control to which he has been subject during life does not then release its hold; on the contrary, its despotism often becomes more intense after the medium enters the spiritual realms and may continue for many years before the medium can finally break away. Thus the medium, in addition to experiencing the torture that comes from being deprived of his vehicles, lags behind in his evolutionary timetable.

It should be obvious to the student that mediumship, or any other negative undertaking in which one Ego surrenders his free will to another is, at best, hindering to evolutionary progress — which depends on individual initiative — and at worst, is extremely dangerous in terms of both life on Earth and life after the passing. Yet most of the psychics who are now receiving public notice and acclaim are negative in character. Those few spiritually advanced Egos who have developed positive extrasensory perception use their abilities in service, selflessly and quietly, without calling attention to themselves or their talents.

Self-Mastery and Self-Reliance

The object of the Rosicrucian Philosophy and method of development is to free the student from dependence upon others and to help him acquire the utmost degree of self-mastery and self-reliance. Negative psychism of any sort obviously represents a condition of dependency which is completely at variance with this end. Both self-mastery and self-reliance, together with attendant positive spiritual growth, are achieved only when we live noble, unselfish lives, devoting our time to serving God and man, and keeping our thoughts and deeds pure and elevated. Only in this way can we strengthen the two higher ethers, develop our soul bodies, respond positively to the spiritual vibrations to which we will become increasingly sensitive, and learn to avoid all external influence and dominance. Only when we feel, within our innermost beings, a holy, unselfish desire to help humanity, can we begin to make progress in the direction of positive clairvoyance.

Negative clairvoyance is, so to speak, more or less thrust upon a person. He has done nothing on his own initiative to generate the ability to perceive in the other worlds and does not, at least initially, set out purposely to do so. Some psychics, in fact, have publicly expressed the wish that they could cease to encounter the, to them, disturbing and distracting phenomena which sporadically intrude upon their consciousness.

Will and Effort

Positive clairvoyance, on the other hand, is achieved solely after determined effort and persistence, both in living the spiritual life of purity and service and in performing the requisite exercises which are given at the appropriate time. Many people simply do not make the sustained effort which will achieve the necessary degree of spirituality, but without the will and effort, positive spiritual perception will not be attained.

A Permanent Asset

Positive clairvoyance, once achieved, remains a permanent asset which the Ego retains in subsequent lifetimes -- at least, as long as he continues to conduct himself as an aspirant should. Negative clairvoyance, however, is a temporary attribute, not secured from one lifetime to another. Thus, although it is much more difficult to develop positive clairvoyance, this becomes, once attained, an enduring power of inestimable present and potential value to the Ego.

To evolve voluntary clairvoyance is an arduous task; this faculty, therefore, is possessed by few. Negative clairvoyance, unfortunately, has been developed by many who have no idea of the potential dangers to which they are exposing themselves.

Spiritual Truths Revealed

Surely, if we wish to work with the trend of evolution, for ourselves individually and for humanity as a whole, we should strive to develop every constructive faculty we have in potential, including particularly the superphysical ones. It is wise, however, to cultivate them along the lines most beneficial to our own evolutionary progress and to our powers of service to God and man. Negative psychic development is hazardous to the Egos concerned, and seldom results in observations or "revelations" of intrinsic or lasting value. Positive, trained clairvoyance, on the other hand, subject to the will and determination of the Ego, is a highly effective instrument of investigation and scientific study. Many spiritual Truths will be revealed through the use of this faculty, once it has become commonplace among mankind, as it is destined to be.

The Spirit evolves by dwelling in vehicles of dense matter and by working with the material found in the world. Thus, the Spirit progresses, and matter is also being refined because the Spirit works with it. The more advanced Spirits naturally draw to themselves finer matter than those behind them upon the path of evolution, and the atoms in the bodies of a highly evolved race are more sensitive than those of the earlier peoples. -- *Letters to Students*, page 91, by Max Heindel.