

Mediumship with respect to ideas is not only very wide spread but is also the most insidious form of this phenomenon. It grows very largely out of intellectual indolence and as work, in the intellectual sense, is even more distasteful to the average human being than the more objective forms of labor the consequence is that ideational mediumship is probably more the rule than the exception. Ideas, received and accepted as suggestions without the use of the discriminative activity of the mind are not really the ideas of the individual who receives, holds and expresses them in this sense. Such an individual is but a channel for the ideas in question, he is not a thinker of them. To be sure, it is not necessary for the ideas to be original before they may be properly called the ideas of a given individual, but it is necessary that his thought-relationship toward them should be positive and active and that their acceptance should be based upon an act of self-directed discrimination. Now most ideas that the average individual holds are but suggestions received by him from the environmental influences of church, party, newspapers, advertisements, etc. Predominantly the publicity agencies of the day capitalize and exploit this fact. An especially marked application of this procedure is to be found in most of the current advertising methods. Strongly asserted and essentially simple suggestions are made in attractive forms and repeated endlessly on every side. After a time the individuals subjected to these impressions takes them into his mind without ever having reflected upon them critically and proceeds to act in the sense that was desired by the advertiser. It is really a modified form of hypnotism and the effect is a more or less complete control of the actions of the victim by mediumship of ideas. Propaganda, in the sense that word

has come to be understood, especially since the world-war, is simply a systematic process of instilling ideas by suggestion so that they are accepted without reflective discrimination. In this way large portions of the public, even to the extent of the predominant ruling portion of a state, are reduced to mere mediums for ideas which are the actual thought of only a few dominant leaders.

Military education is an out-standing example of this method. The military ideal is beautifully formulated in the words of Tennyson;

"Theirs not to reason why,
"Theirs but to do and die."

This is nothing more nor less than pure mediumship in which the individual abrogates his most precious pre-rogative of individual, self-directed thought and becomes a mere carrier of those who stand in the position of leaders. All phases of regimented consciousness whether religious, political, military or social are ~~is~~ nothing more nor less than ideational mediumship.

While ideational mediumship is considerably less pernicious than psychic mediumship, especially in the more pathological form, yet it tends to produce a condition which, if not checked in time, will almost certainly develop into the latter when the subtler or psychic nature begins to awaken into activity. The habit of being a mere channel for ideas, as contrasted to being a thinker of those ideas, is very easily transformed into being a channel for psychic impressions. This course, persisted in, leads to weakening of the individual will and ultimately results in intellectual suicide which, in its turn, is followed by loss of self-conscious consciousness or real extinction as an individual. This is disastrous.

To avoid a possible misunderstanding it may be well to point out, at this time, the distinction between ideational mediumship

and the conscious expression of the ideas of others in a way that involves no weakening of the power of self-conscious and discriminate reflection. The latter activity is well instanced in the case of the historian of philosophical ideas. The good historian, it is true, makes it a professional virtue to keep his work, as nearly as may be, uncolored by his own philosophic point of view. Thus, in the generic sense of the term, he is a medium for the formulation of the thoughts of other thinkers. But there is no mental passivity in this work. In fact, quite on the contrary, worth-while historical work requires a very positive mental discipline and an active development of discrimination. So there is nothing weak or invidious in serving as a medium of ideas in this sense. The outstanding differentiation between this activity and ideational mediumship lies in the fact that the historian knows the distinction between the ideas he is formulating and his own ideas. If it so happens that his individual thought accords with that of a particular philosopher who may be under consideration, it yet remains true that this accordance is achieved by self-conscious and independent reflection. There is no ideational mediumship in this. In every case the ideas of others are formulated ^{explicitly} as their ideas and not as the expression of the thought of the historian himself. In contrast, ideational mediumship involves ^{acceptance or} expression as one's own, without independent reflection, of the ideas which are really the fruit-age of another's thought.

In the case of the student who stands on the border-land of occult knowledge the difficulties arising from a tendency to ideational mediumship become peculiarly aggravated. In the case of the individual moving in the sphere of ordinary exoteric

consciousness this mediumship does not involve immediate dangers of grave import. He is largely reduced to the status of a mere unit in the ordinary mass of humanity possessing no individual significance, but he may continue thus as a mere member of the common herd for many incarnations without incurring any especial danger that would threaten such autonomy as he has. But the student who has opened a little the door to the occult side of his nature stands in a very different position. While on one hand, he comes within the range of new powers of consciousness at the same time he stands face to face with what, for him, are unknown dangers. If inclined to mediumship, he may become a channel for currents of consciousness and force that may rot the very substance of his inner nature. That is, provided such tendency is not checked in time. The fundamental danger of mediumship does not lie in the negative or dark character of the specific current channeled, ^{at a given time.} It lies, rather, in the tendency to passivism. This is just the respect in which mediumship can become so insidious. Profound, noble and beautiful ideas enfolded in an aura of illuminating energy have, on occasion, been transmitted by mediumistic methods. So far as mankind in general, is concerned, the value of these ideas and currents is not less because they have come through a mediumistic channel. They stand before the bar of human intelligence on the basis of their own inherent value. But for the individual medium the case is quite different. Unless continuously protected he may equally well serve as a channel for dark and destructive ideas. His inherent passivism is the weakness that makes this possible. Furthermore, regardless of whether the current playing through him is light or dark, noble or ignoble, the persistent practice

of passivism tends toward intellectual suicide and the loss of individual autonomy. If the medium is sufficiently pure he will be saved from descent into the pit of the evil or disintegrative side of Nature, but none the less he will gradually fade away as a self-conscious individual. This is the fundamental danger of mediumship.

It should be readily seen that for students of the occult the dangers of mediumship of passivism are little if any inferior to those arising out of over-developed and hardened egoism. These two types of danger are really diametrically opposed. They are the Charibdis and Sylla of Occultism. The man of overly developed and hardened egoism escapes the dangers of mediumship, it is true, but on the other hand he runs the risk of self-conscious identification with Evil. His autonomy as an individual may remain sharp and clear for great cycles of time, but if he has become identified with Evil he stands eternally separated from Good, which is simply "God" taken in the positive sense. The penalty of passivism carried to the limit is loss of autonomy as an individual, or, in other words, loss of self-consciousness. The consequence of strong and hardened egoism, carried also to the limit, is individualized consciousness living through Eternities in Darkness. However, since the concern of the present chapter is mediumship and its problems the development of the significance of this second danger of the Path does not properly come here.

In general, the subtle aspects of passivism constitute a problem of more importance than its more obvious phases. The medium who has gone far down the path of psychical debauchery is, in his own person, a sufficient danger signal to warn away all but the densest and most stupid of men. But such is not the case on the level where passivism may have all the seeming of a virtue

For here those who possess real nobility of heart and inherent fineness may be seduced into the fatal bye-path, provided their wisdom has not been sufficiently alert to perceive the danger. Undoubtedly self-abnegation is a ^{relatively} virtue, but there is also a sense in which it is a sin. Abnegation of earthy or separative personal pre-rogatives undoubtedly means spiritual advancement, and since the bondage of man to matter inheres in attachment to such pre-rogatives it follows, naturally, that self-abnegation in this sense is of high importance. But when it comes to the abnegation of those qualities that give to man his real dignity as a man and as a spiritual being the case is quite different. Such abnegation is a sin. Now, just as on certain levels, the most frequently manifested, men cling to the assertion of personal egoism, there are other levels where men seek to abandon themselves with equal intensity. Here self-abnegation takes on a form that is almost a passion and consequently tends to step beyond virtue into a sort of sublimated sin. For those attracted by this level abnegation even of manly qualities may become tempting. This explains how many natures respond readily to demands not to resist but to become a passive instrument.

The view is wide-spread that man, the thinker, is a rebellious entity standing in opposition to "God" and to spiritual consciousness. Hence, for man to realize "God" or to become spiritually awakened he must abnegate himself as a ^{self-directed} thinker. The ideal is to reduce himself to an instrument through which God-consciousness or Spiritual Light may stream. Thus by renouncing himself as the conscious thinker he becomes sublimated as an instrument of Divine Inspiration. Now all of this contention is so close to a fundamental truth and further owing to the fact that occasionally

individuals of exceptional purity do function by this means as channels of Spiritual Light, it follows as a consequence that many students of finest motives are lead to follow this course of training. The all-important fact is over-looked that by this proceedare, if followed sufficiently far, individual self-consciousness is forfeited and the individual fails of realizing the highest destiny of man. Abandonment in Spirit is not man's destiny but self-conscious spirituality, and this is the vital distinction.

The truth is that the mind or manas like every other vehicle of man is in reality an instrument for the expression of his spiritual being, but not himself as the conscious thinking entity. This differentiation may seem subtle but it makes all the difference between true mastery and a sort of sublimated mediumship. Wherever man's apperceptive unity of self-consciousness may be centered whether on a low or high plane of Consciousness that is the point where he must maintain his autonomy unbroken. The plane of the "I am I" may be anywhere from the lowest level of personal egoism up to the level of the true Atmic Self, but the important consideration is the preservation of the integrity of this "I am I" at all times. This means that the "I am I" or self-identity must never at any time be regarded as instrumental even with respect to the highest form of spiritual consciousness. It should never abnegate or renounce its status as the ruling Lord even in the presence of the grandest of Beings that stand as objective on any plane. To do so is to be guilty of the great sin against the "Holy Ghost" or, in other words, the Divinity that is man's own true Self.

It should now be clear that even the noble light of Inspiration

can become a force leading to man's undoing if he relates himself to it in a negative way. Inspirational thinking can, and often does, become a sort of spiritual vice which, while it spiritualizes, at the same time undermines the individual integrity of the man. This happens when the individual holds himself as a mere passive instrument or medium for Inspiration. Inspiration is a force which the ruling Lord, Self-identity, can and should seek to control. If the Self-identity is centered on the levels of personal egoism this control is, of course, impossible, but such is not the case when it is centered on the higher planes. Inspiration may be regarded as a formless Light of Insight which is an essentially spiritual quality. It is not, however, a self-directed spirit that comes and goes as and when it listeth as is so often imagined. It may be likened to the light of the sun which shines continuously whether or not that light is received upon the surface of the earth. If the surface of a portion of the earth is turned away from the sun or clouds enshroud it then the light is not received there. As the earth turns further upon its axis or openings appear in the clouds then the light shines through and is realized. Now this appearance and disappearance of the light might well seem to those who have not a sufficient knowledge of the laws of nature like a self-directed coming and going of a spirit that is entirely independent of the operation of law. But for those who have knowledge it is known that the sun shines in unbroken continuity and further the appearance and disappearance of its light is due to earth relationships. The alternation of night and day is but a manifestation of the law of periodicity which may be understood and future periods of light may be foreseen and planned for

accordingly. The darkness of enveloping clouds may be overcome by the appropriate effort either by moving to another point of the earth's surface where there are no clouds or by rising above them in an airship. The same principle is true with respect to the inner Light of Inspiration. It shines eternally in the inner Consciousness of man, but it is hidden from the outer consciousness more or less completely partly through the action of the periodic principle and partly through the enveloping clouds of Maya. It is true that for the mass of mankind these clouds rarely break and consciousness moves mostly in the relative darkness of the external world. But this does not mean that the Light of Inspiration shines one wit less brightly on its own level. So by winning the power to pierce the clouds of Maya at will Inspiration can be commanded.

Of course, it is not true that Inspiration can be commanded in any sense such as that of being ordered-about as one might command his subordinates. But it can be commanded just as any resource of nature can be mastered by understanding the natural laws involved and acting in the appropriate way. In this way manner it is possible to reach the level of Inspiration at will by understanding the aspect of the periodic principle involved and by being able to remove obscuring veils. This is merely one of the powers of Yoga which may be consciously invoked. It is manifestly much more important to be able to command the resources of Inspiration in this sense than it is simply to be inspired. To hold an attitude of waiting upon Inspiration is to tend toward mediumship, while to seek command of Inspiration is to progress toward Mastery. The one course, at its best, leads toward spiritual negativism, the other toward positive Lordship.

This brings us to a phase of consciousness-technique which is both the most powerful instrument for reaching transcendental levels of Consciousness and at the same time may weaken the fiber of an immature capacity for individual self-direction. This is the practice of Meditation. In the strict sense of the word Meditation is the same power as the limb of Yoga known as Dhyana. This is ^{the door to} immediate apperceptive consciousness in which the Knower, the thing Known and the Knowledge are dissolved into one synthetic whole. It is the level of omniscient and therefore certain knowledge of Being. It is not knowledge of Becoming which is necessarily relative. This Knowledge is, of course, identical with the Plane of the Light of Inspiration. It is the level that constitutes the normal habitat of the Buddhas. But not all of meditational effort reaches to this plane. In fact, Meditation in this strict sense is very difficult to attain and is realized only after mastering all the lower steps on the ladder of Yoga. Among these are Pratyahara and Dharana or the power to control the modifications of the mind (manas) and to direct it in Contemplation upon any chosen object for as long as may be desired. It should be very clearly understood that this is not an act of side-stepping the mind, as it were, but quite on the contrary a most positive development and control of it. There can be no maintainance of individual self-identity without this development of mind. Now the most common practices of meditation, so-called, are either the active directing of the mind into a given field of contemplation or else an effort to side-step the mind in an endeavor to reach Inspiration. Neither of these practices are to be regarded as Meditation in the sense of Dhyana but stand upon a distinctly lower level. They may or may not be harmful.

Meditation in the sense that involves an active use of the mind as something consciously self-directed does not involve any danger of becoming mediumistic and, in general, is a safe and wise practice. It does not weaken but tends to strengthen the ~~individual~~ power of individual self-direction. There are but few individuals with whom ^{strengthening} such is not desirable and for the vast majority of mankind it is a grievous need. There is, in fact, but a small number among men in whom the power of self-directed thought is developed to the degree necessary to secure the preservation of individual self-identity throughout all stages of the Path. An active mind is, in fact, a necessity for the would-be occultist. In this connection it is well to note carefully the words of one of the know leading occultists of the present day. This Master has said: "--we do not 'require a passive mind' but on the contrary are seeking for those most active, which can put two and two together once they are on the right sent --". (Mahatma Letters 1st ed. p 277) This is very significant and should be noted well by all who have mediumistic or passistic tendencies.

The third sense of Meditation involves holding the mind passive. When this is done under the right conditions ideas may be received into the mind that are not actively thought. They may be regarded as something like photographs where the mind plays the part of a purely receptive sensitive plate. There is no active discrimination involved here. Now the ideas thus received may reach all the way from the grossest modes of consciousness to concepts of very high spiritual value. The purity and motive of the individual or group sitting in Meditation combined with environmental conditions are the factors which determine the type of result attained.

Under the right combination of these factors it is undoubtedly true that contributions may be made to human consciousness that are of genuine spiritual value. But this fact, none the less, does not make it less true that such practice does tend toward passivism and the consequent weakening of individual self-identity. Special conditions may justify the use of such forms of meditation but their extended use is fraught with the very real danger of awakening and strengthening mediumistic tendencies.

There are two modes of transformation in consciousness, frequently confused, that have radically different significance. These are spiritualization and etherialization of consciousness. Spiritualization is the penetration into timeless and super-spatial Reality or, in other words, the realm of genuine metaphysical Consciousness. In terms of polarized-consciousness this takes on the form of realization of Significance. This may or may not be associated with the subtle energy known as Radiation. If a radiant quality is felt as likely as not it will seem irritating and unpleasant rather than soothing and delighting. As a matter of fact the truly spiritual man is more irritating and disposed to arouse antagonism among those of his own generation than the reverse. This is due to an inherent clash between Spirit and Matter. Accordingly those individuals who have found a comfortable berth in a group of habitual forms of consciousness will find the truly spiritual man to be a distinctly unpleasant disruptive reagent. At a later period when the reagent has had time to do its work it will be felt by the same individuals as a most beneficent force. But this will be due to changes that have been effected in the latter such that their nature becomes consonant or

synchronous with the original spiritual Force. Now, Etherialization of consciousness is essentially pleasing in its effect. It is like a rare wine which frees the sluggish mind so that it is born aloft on the wings of imagination. In the beginning its taste is sweet and men naturally crave it, but in the end it ^{very} leads to the drugged sleep and the awakening with the bitter taste in the mouth. This subtle wine of etherialization sends forth joyous and seductive rays of sparkling light, filling the senses with rare delights. Those who know of this wine naturally ^{love} crave it and having drunk, ever return for more. But as they return subtly but inexorably their strength goes from them, until in the end they float down the stream of Life to the Ocean. It is not by that means that the Mountain Tops are sealed.

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Etherialization involves one stage or another of the state known as Ananda or bliss. Herein lies its enormous attractive power. It is unquestionably natural that men should desire bliss rather than misery and in principle there can be no objection to this. But there is a world of difference between super-sensuous Bliss, the accompaniment of Spiritual Realization, and the various forms of subtle sensuous bliss. The quality of seduction or intoxication does not attach to the former while they are very marked in the case of the latter. In the Orient they speak of the "God intoxicated man", and in this we have a very significant phrase. God-intoxication is not adeptship. And while the adept does win to Bliss in the higher sense it is a self-conscious Bliss rather than that of self-abandonment. It is not the indulgence of oneself in the enjoyment of "vibrations". All the lower blisses are at the command of the one who has achieved Mastery, but those who center their desires upon them and linger in their enjoy-

ment run the risk of never attaining to adeptship. Now in the cultivation of abandonment in the lesser blisses (Anandas) we have a form of mediumship, for in the act of abandonment conscious self-rule is forfeited. In the practice of passive meditation we have a technique that readily opens the door to the blisses growing out of etherialization of consciousness and in this lies its principle danger. If the individuals engaged in the practice are sufficiently pure they may realize realms of Consciousness corresponding to the higher levels of Devachan but this is done at the price of postponing self-conscious attainment of the Turya state and, perhaps, of forfeiting that possibility entirely. By following this Path the student may become a Deva but he fails of man's great heritage, i.e., of becoming "greater than the angels" for such is the realization of the Adept.

In this discussion most attention has been given to forms of mediumship that are of a more subtle character. The dangers of the grosser and more pathological phases of mediumship are so obvious that this practice is apt to be a temptation to the less evolved of men. But in its subtler forms mediumship is so disguised or may to so large an extent take on the seeming of a virtue that men of fine motivation and real nobility of character may easily be drawn aside from the true Path to Mastery unless they cultivate, what has often been called, the "Wisdom of the Serpent". Obvious dangers become their own signal of warning but when danger appears in subtle guise safety lies only in keeping ever alert the kingly power of Discrimination.