

## THE OCCULT

### Lecture II : Magic and Witchcraft

Parapsychologists distinguish between two kinds of psychic phenomena and speak of them as being either of the Psi-Gamma or Psi-Kappa type. Psi-Gamma phenomena are those that involve paranormal knowledge, the name being derived from the Greek word "gignoskein" (to know). The various forms of divination, since they involve the acquisition of supposedly supernatural knowledge, belong under this classification. Psi-Kappa phenomena are those that involve some paranormal physical or psychical effect on people or things. The name of this second type is derived from the Greek word for "move" (kinein). The various forms of magic and witchcraft for the most part belong to this category, although many witches also practice divination.

#### DEFINITIONS

It has been suggested that the old English word "wicca," from which the word witch is derived, is related to the word "wise." The English witch Sybil Leek says witchcraft is the craft of the wise. This derivation is uncertain, but we do know that witches were often called "cunning women," and one of the Hebrew words for practitioners of the occult is derived from the Hebrew word for "know" and means "the knowing ones."

It is agreed, however, that the word "wizard," which in the sixteenth century came to be used to denote a male witch, is derived from the word "wise," and it may be that just as a drunkard is a man who drinks more than he ought to, so a wizard is a man who knows more than he ought to.

The word "warlock," which is also a common term for a male witch is an old English word for the devil. Literally, it means a "covenant-breaker," or a "covenant-liar." It later came to denote someone who made a pact with the devil and thus came into possession of magical powers.

The term "sorcerer" is the Anglicized form of a French word for magician which, in turn, is derived from the Latin word "sors," in the sense of "oracle" or "prophecy." It would seem, therefore, that originally it must have had reference to Psi-Gamma phenomena.

Another word used to denote a wizard is conjurer. To conjure originally meant "to swear together," "to enter into a conspiracy." Later conjuration came to denote the act of appealing to some sacred person or thing. From there it was an easy step to the meaning it has in witchcraft, namely to effect something supernatural by invocation or incantation.

The term magic is derived from the Persian word for "priest" or "wise man," and the word "magician," which today is largely used to denote a sleight-of-hand artist, was originally also a word for sorcerer or wizard. It is interesting to note, however, that the Greek author Heraclitus used it as a synonym for an imposter or a charlatan.

Of special interest is the Greek word for witchcraft, pharmakeia, from which our word "pharmacy" is derived. Drugs have from ancient times been associated with the practice of witchcraft. They were used and are used today to induce trance states, to cure diseases and to inflict suffering and death. Sybil Leek, for example, speaks of a fungus called the "Calendar of Death" which is tasteless and when fed to a guest causes a fatal illness of the intestines in exactly eighty-four days, leaving no traces of its use. Whether this is

true or not, it is typical of the sort of thing associated with the use of drugs in witchcraft. Much of the knowledge that made the witch a "wise" or "cunning" woman was and still seems to be connected with such drug use.

## TYPES OF MAGIC

Magic has been defined as "a divinely forbidden art of bringing about results beyond human power by recourse to superhuman spirit agencies."<sup>1</sup> That definition probably needs to be modified so that it reads instead, "Magic is the divinely forbidden art of attempting to bring about results beyond human power by recourse to superhuman spirit agencies."

In the various forms of magic we ought to recognize the devil's aping of the miracles of God. In this area, too, as in the question of divination, unbelief sees no qualitative difference between miracle and magic, and it must be conceded that from the outside they often appear to be identical. We may not be able to say exactly how the magicians of Pharaoh produced snakes, but as far as outward form is concerned they performed an act that seems to be identical, at least up to a certain point, to the miracle of Moses. Yet Christians believe that there is a great difference between the two. Moses acted at the command of God. The magicians acted in opposition to God. The miracles were done to promote faith. The magic was done to hinder obedience to God. This is the test by which magic can be recognized for what it is, according to Dt 13:1-5, where Moses says that miracle workers who encourage men to follow other gods are to be executed, just as a witch was not to be permitted to live (Ex 22:18).

Much confusion exists in the area of the distinction between magic and miracle. A former Jesuit now teaching philosophy at a university, writing under the pen name of David Farren, says, "As a Catholic student and then as a Jesuit seminarian, I lived in the environment of magic and never realized it. Magic was not even in our vocabulary: we had the sacraments (like the Eucharist) and the sacramentals (like holy water), all of which conferred grace ex opere operato; non-Christians had superstitions."<sup>2</sup> His words demonstrate how easily complete confusion can be created between magic and the mysteries of the Christian faith.

It is not difficult to understand why an apostate Catholic should make such an observation since the sacramentals of Roman Catholicism are little more than magical charms, but it is a little more surprising to discover that John Stevens Kerr, in a book published by Fortress Press, creates the same kind of confusion when he defines magic as "the art of manipulating the course of nature by supernatural means" and goes on to say that praying to God to avert a disaster or to bring rain is, "technically...as much a magical act as the Roman haruspices sacrificing a pigeon to the gods for the safe return of a general from battle with the barbarians."<sup>3</sup> This is surely a point of view against which our people must be warned in these days of the repopularization of magic and witchcraft.

Magicians and witches distinguish between "black magic" or "g<sup>o</sup>ety" (from the Greek \_\_\_\_\_, sorcery) and "white magic" or "th<sup>e</sup>urgy" (from the Greek \_\_\_\_\_, sorcery). Black magic involves calling upon the devil or evil spirits and is used to harm others or for purely selfish ends. Most witches claim to employ "white magic" in which the invocation is directed either to the Triune God or to spirits or gods classified as benign. Sybil Leek, for example, denounces black magicians and insists that all good witches believe in a supreme being. Yet she speaks of "incantations invoking the help of the Lords of the Watchtowers."<sup>4</sup> She distinguishes between "witchcraft" and "Black Magic." The first she says is a "religion" and the second "a debased art."<sup>5</sup> She claims to use her powers only for good and yet she implies that it would be perfectly proper to murder anyone who would dare to reveal the secrets of the craft.<sup>6</sup> She relates in her Diary of a Witch how she once threatened to use "reverse tactics" (her term for what under all the rules ought to be called "black magic") on a black magician who came to her for help. When he objected that this was

contrary to her principles, she replied "that evil may be justified if it is for the greater good of the whole."<sup>7</sup> She also says that in the practice of witchcraft all "sympathy, pity, affection, dislike...have to be put aside."<sup>8</sup> It is rather obvious that the differentiation between black and white magic is completely meaningless from a Christian point of view, and a Bible-believing Christian will be especially horrified at the use of the name of the Trinity or the name of Jesus in the incantations of magic. One of the members of my first congregation once told me of how she was cured of malaria by scattering a handful of barley in a circle around herself at the crossroads at midnight while reciting an incantation that began with the words,

"Ich streue diesen Samen  
In meines Jesu Namen"  
(I scatter this seed  
In the name of my Jesus).

This is surely an open misuse of God's name which deserves the name "black magic" even though it has a show of Christian piety. Unger says that "white magic" is only "black magic in pious masquerade."<sup>9</sup>

Some writers speak of a third type of magic, which is variously named neutral magic or impersonal magic. In this type no personal beings, either "good" or bad, are invoked. At times such magic is almost pure superstition which in itself may not involve the misuse of God's name. For that reason it may be very difficult to demonstrate its sinfulness. People who believe that alfalfa tea can cure a case of nerves may have as little justification for their faith as a man who believes that warts can be cured by touching them with a round stone by the light of the full moon. Kurt Koch does not agree with this judgment. He says,

My counselling work continually supplies evidence to the effect that magic in any form is the work of the devil, whether it sails under a black, white, or neutral flag.<sup>10</sup>

Magic is also classified according to the type of magical act employed. "Sympathetic magic" works with analogy. The familiar voodoo practice of sticking pins into dolls to cause pain and even death is one example of this kind of magic. When Jacob peeled strips of bark from twigs, so that the cattle at the watering troughs saw twigs with white streaks in them, in order to produce offspring that would show such striped markings, he was using what would by many people be called and is called, sympathetic magic. What should be our reaction to such remarks? My hair has a tendency to stand up at the back of my neck when I read such things in the commentaries. Yet we know that some of the great heroes of faith were guilty of many sins. We know also that God can use the sins of men for His own purposes without approving of the sin itself, and therefore we ought to be careful not to defend Jacob absolutely against such charges, nor, on the other hand, ought we without question to accept those charges as justified. There is nothing in the text to indicate that Jacob used the name of God in vain nor that he called upon infernal spirits in practicing what could be called an act of superstition. Nor does the text in any way recommend that such methods be used by us. Nor does it promise that it will ever work again as it did in Jacob's case. While I would be rather reluctant to call it magic at all, yet I do not believe that this ought ever to become a doctrinal issue among us. Perhaps in the story of Jacob we have another illustration of Luther's remark that it will not do to construct articles of faith from the words and works of the fathers. Certainly no one ought ever to say that the Bible teaches that we can produce striped cattle by laying striped twigs in the watering troughs where they come to drink.

"Imitative magic" operates on the theory that like produces like. When paganrain dancers imitate the falling of rain by the motions of their bodies together with the ritual

chant or incantation, this imitative action, in theory, will produce rain. "Contagion magic" works with things that have been in contact with the person acted on in order to produce either a beneficial or harmful effect. For this reason people who consult witches are often asked to bring some object which has been worn by the person who is to be harmed or helped.

#### HOW WITCHES ARE MADE

A great deal has been written about the way in which a person becomes a witch or a wizard. It seems rather evident that most of the Protestant writers on the subject have done a great deal of plowing with Kurt Koch's heifer, for repeatedly one finds a repetition of his remark that most often such powers of witchcraft are hereditary and can be traced back over three or four generations in one family.<sup>11</sup> Sybil Leek, however, claims that her family has a tradition of witchcraft that can be traced back on her mother's side to 1134 A.D. David Farren, a former Jesuit seminarian, whose interest in witchcraft stems from his marriage to a witch, says that his wife is descended from a line of thirteen generations of witches.<sup>12</sup> Women who have acquired their supernatural powers by heredity are called "genetic witches" by Farren.

Farren tells the story of how his wife became a witch. From the age of five her mother and grandmother instructed her in herbs and spells. At the age of eleven she was amusing herself with a ouija board when she suddenly began to hear voices that told her she would not need to use the board anymore since she would hear the answers. The voices identified themselves as "the voices of God." She was committed to a mental hospital, diagnosed as a schizophrenic. After two months in the hospital she had a vision telling her that if she did not want to hear the voices, which she was hearing constantly, she would not hear them. She recovered very quickly from that point on, much to the amazement of the doctors. But, according to Farren, (and it might be remembered that this man is a former Jesuit seminarian and a university professor of philosophy) she also from that time on had powers, which, if Farren describes them correctly, we could only classify as supernatural. Farren's description would seem to indicate that it is sometimes impossible to distinguish clearly between witchcraft and possession by the devil.

Kurt Koch speaks of two ways in which the powers of witchcraft are passed down from one generation to the next. The first is by genetic inheritance and the second by what he calls "succession." By this, he says, "we mean the custom of a person on his deathbed actually bestowing the magical powers upon the eldest son or daughter in order to die peacefully." Koch says that at times the children do not want the powers, in which case the witch "may cry out for weeks on his deathbed for someone to relieve him of his magical powers."<sup>13</sup> The Spanish scholar Baroja says that among the Basques magical powers are transferred by accepting certain objects, often a pincushion or a needle case, from a witch, or by the touch of a witch on her deathbed.<sup>14</sup> It would appear, however, that to a certain extent at least, the passing on of occult powers either by genetic inheritance or by deathbed transfer is often accompanied by instruction in the art. Both Sybil Leek and David Farren have much to say about such teaching.

Another method by which magical powers are supposedly transferred is by the laying on of hands. In this connection Kurt Koch speaks of a young man who did not have the gift of dowsing for water but who acquired it when a dowser held his hands while he held the stick.<sup>15</sup> Apparently Koch believes that this is not dowsing on a purely "physical level," of which he speaks in one of his later books,<sup>16</sup> for he says that after acquiring the gift the young man's love for the Word of God declined.

In regard to this type of occult transference, Merrill Unger writes,

Sometimes magical powers are transferred by the occult ceremony of laying on of hands.... The history of occult practice often relates how one or

more magicians, particularly those adept in black (devil) magic, impart gifts of healing or clairvoyant and mediumistic abilities by placing their hands upon the head of a person desiring them and uttering magic charms and incantations.<sup>17</sup>

Simon Magus of Samaria apparently believed in such a transference of occult powers (Ac 8:18). This is an occult phenomenon that surely ought not to be left entirely out of consideration when we evaluate the modern charismatic movement with its practice of the laying on of hands. There may be a far closer connection between the revival of magic and witchcraft in our time and the rise of the Pentecostal movement than we sometimes realize.

While practitioners of witchcraft often speak of inheritance and transference as the way to the possession of magic powers, (Sybil Leek, for example, says that "most of the leading witches in the present era have a family tradition of witchcraft behind them,"<sup>18</sup> and Baroja says that "all" (our emphasis) witches and "all" magicians in Scandinavia were descended from three specific ancestors.<sup>19</sup>) yet the practice of acquiring such powers by making a pact with the devil has been known since ancient times. Such agreements were and still are often put into writing and signed with the blood of the witch. Merrill Unger says of this way of coming into possession of occult powers,

Such blood-bound occultists frequently become endowed with astonishing magic capabilities...This practice of satanic blood pacts is not a mere superstitious hangover from medieval witchcraft and hobgoblins. It is a well-known and fairly common practice today in various rural districts of Europe where magic literature has circulated for centuries and magical powers have passed from one generation to another.<sup>20</sup>

Kurt Koch also speaks of the acquisition of magical powers that come from reading occult literature and experimenting with occult practices on one's own. He gives few examples of this and the case is not well made. But it may still serve as a reminder to us that interest in the occult for the occult's sake or experimenting with such things is potentially dangerous and also here we ought to flee every form of evil.

Baroja says that according to Basque tradition one can also become a witch by walking around a church three times.<sup>21</sup>

## WITCHCRAFT AS A RELIGION

Some witches insist that witchcraft is a religion. The English anthropologist Margaret Murray claims that it is the original religion of man by which man sought to bring nature under his control. She calls it the "Old Religion" and one commonly finds this term in the literature. In using the term "Old Religion" witches often make the point that their worship antedates and therefore is superior to Christianity. Jeffrey Russell, a historian who has made a study of medieval witchcraft, says "the historian knows" that there is no evidence for Margaret Murray's view "that witchcraft is an ancient religion that has preserved a marvellous continuity to the present day."<sup>22</sup> Baroja also rejects the view that the worship of witchcraft dates from pre-historic times.<sup>23</sup> For us this question is not important, and it is enough to know that witchcraft is heathenism pure and simple.

The gods generally worshipped in witchcraft include Hecate and Diana, the so-called "horned god," whom Christians have usually identified with the devil, the forces of nature conceived of as personal or impersonal, the devil himself, and many others.

In witchcraft worship special efforts are evidently made to ridicule and blaspheme the God of the Christians. It may well be true that some of the descriptions of this worship found in the records of the medieval church are exaggerated. Those descriptions are based on confessions extracted under torture. Jeffrey Russell, however, says that some of the confessions were made in the secular courts and that therefore "there are good reasons for not rejecting them as fraudulent."<sup>24</sup> Baroja gives such a report from the records of the inquisition which says

They all walked over a cross, spitting on it, scorning Christ and the Holy Trinity. Then they exposed their hinder parts to the sky and the heavens as a sign of their disregard of God, and after eating and drinking their fill, they all had sexual intercourse.<sup>25</sup>

Baroja himself says,

In witchcraft, Christian symbols and values are always used in inverted form. Whereas in Christian ritual the blessing is given with the right hand, witches use the left hand when making their spells.... At the mere mention of the name of Jesus all spells lose their power.<sup>26</sup>

Baroja records a prayer used at such services which reads

Come infernal, terrestrial, and celestial Bombo, goddess of the cross-roads, guiding light, queen of the night, enemy of the sun, and friend and companion of the darkness, you who rejoice to hear the barking of dogs and to see the blood flow; you who wander among th tombs in the hours of darkness, thirsty for blood, and the terror of mortal men; Gorgo, Mormo, moon of a thousand forms, look favorably on my sacrifice.<sup>27</sup>

There are also persistent reports of the sacrifice of infants, and a few weeks ago the Milwaukee Journal reported that a woman in a divorce trial testified that her husband wanted to sacrifice their child to the devil. More may be said of this in connection with Satanism.

Some of the confusion about the religion of witchcraft stems from the fact that the worship services are held in secret. Sybil Leek says that it is a pity that the ritual of the Golden Dawn and the Sabbath ceremony must remain secret,<sup>28</sup> yet she herself gives at least some of the details connected with her own initiation into a witches' coven. Among other things she says that she was bound and a knife was held close to her heart while the high priestess explained what becoming a witch would mean. After that, she says, she took the oath of fidelity to the religion of witchcraft and joined in the ritual dances and incantations.<sup>29</sup> She also implies that terrible things would happen to anyone who would dare to reveal the secrets of the craft. Many writers state that sexual orgies are connected with these worship services, that the Book of Shadows or the Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses are read, and instruction in magic arts is given.

While there are accounts of gatherings of multitudes of witches in medieval literature, it seems to be generally agreed that a coven or congregation of witches consists of thirteen members, usually, a high priest or priestess, plus six men and six women. The word "coven" is said to be related to the word "covenant" and signifies a gathering of people who have assumed an obligation to each other, or a group of people gathered for religious purposes.

The covens meet from midnight to dawn on the witches "sabbath." Michelet says that the word "sabbath" when used in this sense is a corruption of the name of an ancient festival in honor of Bacchus, called Sabasia,<sup>30</sup> but I found this derivation nowhere else. Baroja says that in the Basque country of Spain, Friday night is the appointed time of the Sabbath

meetings in memory of the day when Christ was crucified.<sup>31</sup> Others say that the sabbaths are held on the night of the full moon, at the beginning of each season, and on the night of Jan. 31, April 30, July 31, and Oct. 31. In connection with the sabbaths it might be mentioned that Sybil Leek writes, "One of the marvellous things about a Sabbath meeting is that it always leaves me completely exhilarated."<sup>32</sup> Those who are impressed by the claims of charismatics who speak of the exhilaration brought by the "baptism with the Spirit" might take note that not all feelings of joy are inspired by the Spirit of God.

There are evidently a great many witches and witches' covens active in our day. Edward Tiryakian of Duke University wrote in 1974, "In the past five years witchcraft has come to life again in the urban centers of the United States, a country where one might least expect it to happen."<sup>33</sup> William Petersen says there are 10,000 practicing witches in Germany and 30,000 in England. He quotes Sybil Leek as saying that there are 400 covens in the United States, more than two dozen of which are found in San Diego.<sup>34</sup> Not all witches are associated with covens, however. It is, therefore, a problem that we can not ignore, especially because the television networks persist in presenting witches as perfectly normal citizens of the community. A related problem of which we as pastors ought to be aware is that it is a subject that carries with it a great deal of fascination for many people, which could only be increased by an incorrect presentation of the subject.

## MAGIC PRACTICES

The magic practices which are carried on by witches are many and varied.

### Hypnosis

Kurt Koch classifies what he calls the criminal use of hypnosis as a form of magic.<sup>35</sup> Most psychologists insist that no one under hypnosis can be forced to do what he considers to be wrong, but Koch disagrees and he cites a number of cases to demonstrate that the views of the psychologists in this area are incorrect. Psychologists, however, do warn against the use of hypnosis by amateurs who are not aware of the damage that they may do. Koch's view is that some types of hypnotism can not be condemned, but that it easily lends itself to magical abuse.

### Astral Projection

Apparently a very common magical practice is what is today usually called "astral projection," and which is associated with the ancient belief that witches rode to the Sabbath meetings on broom sticks. That there were people who really believed that they did such things is conceded by scientific investigations; but it is commonly held that the experience was a purely mental state induced by the use of drugs. Leaves of certain plants were boiled or smoked, drinks or ointments were concocted from them and they were used to induce sleep. Baroja says that "sleep induced in this way brought with it fantastic dreams,"<sup>36</sup> and "that it is these opiates, then, not flying brooms or animals, which carry the witch off into a world of fantasy and emotion."<sup>37</sup> He also tells of a scientist who used a recipe given to him by a sorcerer to prepare an ointment which produced such a reaction.<sup>38</sup> Carlos Castaneda, an anthropology student at U.C.L.A., in his book The Teachings of Don Juan, describes similar experiences induced by drugs to which he was introduced by a Yaqui Indian medicine man.

John Charles Cooper, in his book Religion in the Age of Aquarius, (p.135) records a young man's account of an LSD trip, in which he said,

I began to melt down into a little puddle of wax on the floor. I could see bright, iridescent colors of smoke, and I could taste the music--like

salt and pepper. Then I seeped under the door and floated down to the beach. There suddenly the clouds parted and I watched my soul leave my body and go up through the hole in the clouds---and there I met God. He took my soul to the planet where it will live when my body dies from life on this planet. Man, was it a beautiful place.

The young man was waiting to get out of jail so that he could take an overdose and go back to the planet God showed him.

Whether this is the whole story of astral projection remains to be proved. Sybil Leek claims that two teachers at the school she attended were prepared to swear that she was present in two classes during the same period and that it was "only a simple matter of astral projection."<sup>39</sup> Yet later in the same book she describes astral projection as an experience in which the spirit is released from the body,<sup>40</sup> which she says "can be extremely dangerous." This definition could hardly account for the body being in two places at the same time. David Farren in all seriousness tells of such an astral projection trip across the Atlantic Ocean made by his mother-in-law, who on this trip brought back from Scotland a piece of jewelry which she left around the neck of her sleeping daughter.<sup>41</sup> The Rosicrucian order claims to operate with similar powers.<sup>42</sup>

#### Metamorphosis

The persistent stories which are told of witches who changed themselves into animals are perhaps to be explained in a similar way. They may well be accounts of drug induced experiences. Already St. Augustine in the City of God expressed doubts about the reality of such events and explained the phenomenon as a trance state in which the subject imagined himself to be an animal.<sup>43</sup>

#### Incantations, Charms, and Spells

More common magic practices involve the use of incantations and charms or spells. These are verses or magic formulas recited either by an individual witch or in unison at coven meetings, which are intended to produce a magical effect. The word "charm" is derived from the Latin word "carmen" (a "song") and the word "spell" is the old Saxon word for "tale" or "story." It is the same word that forms the second part of the word "gospel."

"White" charms are often introduced with the names of the Trinity while "black" charms invoke the aid of three devils. Magicians insist that the spell must be recited in a precise way, syllable by syllable or it will not work.

Often the reciting of the spell is accompanied by a magic action, such as blowing, stroking or spitting. The object to be affected is sometimes sprinkled with "Easter water," which is water taken from a pond at 12 p.m. on Easter night, or with the ashes of a burnt snake, toad, bat, or bone.<sup>44</sup>

There are many types of charms. For example, one magic recipe recommends as a cure for stomach trouble the drinking of holy water while reciting the names of the Trinity.<sup>45</sup> The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses recommend boiling a piece of swine's flesh in the urine of a sick person. The boiled piece of meat is then fed to a dog, after which the dog is supposed to die while the ill person recovers. Walnut leaves inscribed with Bible verses which are eaten unread are used to cure disease. A fertility charm also recommended in the Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses consists in placing a woman's hair between two loaves of bread which are then fed to cattle while reciting the magic words.<sup>46</sup>

#### Charms, Amulets, Talismans, Fetishes

The word "charm" has acquired also another meaning. Through the use of incantations and spells it is believed that certain objects can be charged with magical powers which are



able to cure or inflict disease, attract the opposite sex, improve crops, bring rain, defend against enemies or danger in general, or any one of a hundred desired effects.

Such charms are also called amulets, talismans, or fetishes. They may be worn around the neck, buried in the basement of a house, hung on a tree or fence, or used in other similar ways. Sometimes the charm consists of a potion to be drunk or an ointment to be rubbed on the body. Here again the witch's knowledge of herbs and drugs is undoubtedly of great significance.

#### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CHARMS

Such charms are often very effective. Kurt Koch tells story after story to demonstrate this. It is also a well-documented fact that African witch doctors are able to cause death by pronouncing a curse against a man and leaving a sign of the curse on his doorstep. Scientists usually explain such happenings as cases of autosuggestion by saying that it is fear that kills the man who knows he has been cursed. The fulfillment of predictions of death by fortune-tellers is explained in the same way. Kurt Koch, however, holds that the charms or curses often work when the person involved is ignorant of what has been done.

Why do they work? Practitioners of witchcraft often express their belief that witches can direct a psychic force toward the object to be affected. This force is especially effective if a group of witches gathered for a Sabbath direct their powers in concert with one another. Such ceremonies produce what is called a "cone of power," which can produce magical results. The midnight hour is especially suited for such efforts since the world and also the person to be affected are more relaxed and therefore more open to outside influence.

The various studies in parapsychology may indicate that there may be some truth in these claims, but this can hardly be the full explanation. Some of the effects that apparently are produced go far beyond anything demonstrated in the laboratory of J. B. Rhine. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the devil's power is actually brought to bear in many cases of magic. If half of the stories told in the books written by Kurt Koch are true, then there can hardly be any doubt that witchcraft is effective today through the enlistment of demonic powers. It should be mentioned that Koch himself says that we must be very careful not to jump to the conclusion that we are dealing with occult phenomena.

David Farren tells a story which would also seem to substantiate this. He and his wife visited a magic booth at a fair near Los Angeles, where he saw a copper amulet with his wife's zodiac sign. The man in the booth who claimed to be a warlock tried to sell him the amulet for his wife and kept reducing the price until he bought it. A few days later his wife got a phone call from the man even though he did not know her name and her phone number was unlisted. He invited her to become a member of a black magic group and put her into a trance over the phone. Even though many attempts were made to get rid of the amulet it kept reappearing under the most mysterious circumstances, and Farren's conclusion is "that witchcraft does involve something more than hallucinations which might be attributed to an overactive fantasy."<sup>47</sup>

#### HEALING MAGIC AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Of special interest and significance in view of the modern charismatic emphasis on healing is the area of magical healing. Sybil Leek, for example, claims that she has a "flair for healing."<sup>48</sup> She tells in some detail of a cure she claims to have effected at long distance on a man in Rotterdam whose doctors had given three months to live. It is

significant that she says that the process of healing someone through psychic power resulted in a severe strain on her own health.<sup>49</sup> This would tend to corroborate Kurt Koch's statement that in magical healing there is always a detrimental compensation in some other area.

We have surely all learned to be extremely skeptical about reports of miraculous healing, for all too often such reports can not bear the pressure of close investigation as the examination of Kathryn Kuhlmann's healing "miracles" by Dr. William Nolen, for example, have clearly shown. And yet we must bear in mind that one demonstrated fraud does not prove that no such healings really take place. The evidence for the genuineness of some of the cures seems to be rather strong.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Kurt Koch who accepts charismatic healing openly charges in one of his books that the healing ability of Oral Roberts is magical rather than charismatic.<sup>50</sup>

All things considered, there would seem to be enough evidence for magical healing to warrant the conclusion that being healed can hardly in itself serve as a good basis for believing that the Holy Ghost has been active or that the person healed is a believing Christian. Even if the healing were real, it would still not serve that purpose well.

In fact, there are many things in the popularization of magic in our time that remind us of the charismatic movement. The more we become at least open to the possibility that witchcraft and magic are not pure invention, the more aware we ought to be that it is imperative that we remember that the spirits can be tried only by God's Word, and while the miracles confirm the Word and are intended to be aids and not the hindrance to faith which modern theology so often considers them to be, yet the Word must also confirm the miracle. False doctrine ought always to alert us that a false spirit is at work, and a charismatic emphasis which in any way detracts from the Word is always a work of the devil. When charismatics say that after they had been baptized with the Spirit, there was no more need to quote Bible passages, the spirit that motivates them is all too clearly revealed.

Kurt Koch, as we have said, is sympathetic toward the charismatic movement and defends it. Yet even he cites examples to demonstrate the danger that may accompany such phenomena. He tells of eighteen missionaries in Japan who were overjoyed when they received the gift of glossolalia at a pastors' retreat. Within a very short time, however, fifteen of the eighteen dropped out of mission work, one died, and the two others continued their mission work only after renouncing their charismatic experience.<sup>51</sup> He speaks of a school in France where about a dozen students became involved with charismatic activities while the rest of the student body rejected the movement. Sometime later all of the affected students had given up living as Christians while all the rest were still active.<sup>52</sup>

It is impossible for human beings to look at apparently supernatural or paranormal events and identify the spirit behind the event except for the context in which the event occurs, and the most important feature in that context is the Word of God. Where false doctrine accompanies the so-called miracle, the spirit behind the miracle is always suspect.

As far as magic and witchcraft themselves are concerned, both foes and friends agree that they can be extremely dangerous. On that account alone, all men ought to avoid it. Human reason itself would seem to indicate that it is a mistake to take laws against witchcraft from the statute books. But whether they are on the statute books or not, God's people will know that God wants them to have no traffic with any kind of witchcraft. He made His will clear when He told His people under the old covenant, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

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### Lecture II

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