

Psychism and Spirituality

On the human spiritual journey many powers are developed including the various aspects of psychism. Often called extra-sensory perception, psychism may best be understood by comparing it with spirituality. The difference between the two becomes clearer as we examine the makeup of the human being.

A study of Theosophy suggest that we function in three main fields: spirit, soul and body. Further that a human being has a sevenfold nature in which to manifest comprising a **personality** which is composed of the four 'lower' aspects and an **Individuality** consisting of the three 'higher' aspects. These aspects are not layered but interpenetrate..

Personality

This consists of:

- * . the dense physical body
- * . the etheric sheath (sometimes called the Health aura)
- * . an emotional vehicle (sometimes called the astral vehicle or body)
- * . that factual or analytical aspect of the mind which is aware of the world around us

The physical and its vital etheric sheath function very closely together. However, under anaesthesia and in deep sleep the functioning of our physical senses is stilled and the etheric is slightly dissociated from the physical.

Individuality

This consists of:

- * . the higher, spiritual aspect of the mind, subjective in nature, the seat of true 'knowing', known as '**Manas**' in the theosophical teachings
- * . insight, intuition, compassion and understanding, known as '**Buddhi**' in theosophical teachings
- * . the all-pervading spiritual principle, the Source of all, known in theosophical teachings as '**Atma**'.

The Individuality is therefore the abiding spiritual essence of our being and yet is one with the Supreme Spirit, the One Life or the Source of all existence

Through the process of evolution, the Individuality learns to express itself fully through the personality and reincarnates many times using a fresh personality each lifetime, in order to evolve.

Balanced Development

A balanced development of the spiritual and the physical/psychical nature is crucial to our evolutionary development. The two do not always function together, however, and each can develop independently of the other. If psychic abilities do develop along with spiritual growth, they can be valuable tools for extending awareness of our universe. Psychic powers should not be seen as unnatural but as a normal extension of the sensory processes of our personality.

If our true spiritual nature is ignored, the training of psychic faculties will result in unbalanced development and can be dangerous.

The physical and its etheric vesture function very closely together, but under anaesthesia and in deep sleep, the functioning of those senses is stilled and does not reach the brain consciousness of the body. During our waking hours, the physical senses are stimulated constantly, but we become very selective regarding what we see or hear. However, the senses can be trained to see more acutely (as an artist is trained to see gradations of colour) or to hear more sensitively (as a musician is trained to hear slight variations in tone). The other senses - taste, smell, touch - can be similarly trained. Such training becomes very important when we consider the use of psychic faculties.

Extra-sensory Perception

Extra-sensory perception (ESP) or psychism is an extension of the physical senses. It involves the analytical mind. However, such psychic perceptions are often influenced and coloured by emotions and therefore can be inaccurate. ESP includes clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, psycho-kinesis and similar phenomena. Developing extra-sensory or psychic perception may leave the individual with the same character traits as before the awakening of such faculties – just as greedy, just as self-centred, or just as petty. Spiritual vision or insight, if it is genuinely spiritual, can completely change human nature, transforming the individual into a more caring, loving and compassionate person.

Clairvoyance

. Clairvoyance literally means ‘clear seeing’. However, what has been ‘seen’ at a higher level has to be brought into the physical level to be communicated to others. This inevitably involves the use of the rationalising mind and of language, all of which will colour the perception, according to the personality of the Clairvoyant. Thus clairvoyants observing the same phenomena may, and have been known to disagree with one another.

Types of Clairvoyants

There is great variation in the quality and type of clairvoyance possessed by different people. In general, there are two main types. Firstly, there are passive clairvoyants, often unable to fully control their psychic ability and sometimes operating in a semi-trance state.

Secondly, those who have their psychic capacity actively under control and integrated with daily life. These psychics are more self-aware and have developed a steady, controlled mind, usually using meditation to quieten the outer mind. Therefore their psychic perception is more accurate.

Practical Uses of Psychic Perception

There are various ways in which awakened psychic faculties can be made of practical use, if sufficiently trained. For example, in the field of education, many of the more difficult problems with children may either be avoided, or dealt with positively and intelligently. Another use is in the field of medicine where trained clairvoyants have been helpful to health practitioners in determining whether disorders are psychological or physiological in origin. Police around the world have on occasion had assistance in finding traces of crimes.

Spiritual Vision

There is a difference between spiritual and psychic perception. Spiritual inspiration flows through our Individuality. In this way we gain spiritual vision and illumination that can transform our life. True and deep spiritual perception is of inestimable value in our understanding of life at all levels, whereas psychic perception is more limited in scope. If spiritual perception is developed we merge our consciousness with that of other people and truly understand them, thus being able to discover our common ground as human beings.

Spiritual insight, heightens our awareness of the significance of the unity of all life, transforms our minds and brings about a deep sense of wholeness, caring and responsibility for the world and all its life forms.

Remembering that we are essentially Divine, we can learn to use whatever psychic faculties may be awakened within us, illumined by spiritual vision, to bring about peace and happiness in our troubled world.

Suggested Further Reading:

- * *Our Psychic Sense* by Phoebe and Laurence Bendit
- * *Man Incarnate* by Phoebe and Laurence Bendit
- * *Exploring Psychic Phenomena: Beyond Mind and Matter* by D. Scott Rogo
- * *The Chakras and the Human Energy Field* by Shafica Karagulla and Dora van Gelder Kunz
- * *The Human Aura* by Dora van Gelder Kunz
- * *Psychism and the Unconscious Mind* edited by H. Tudor Edmonds
- * *Call to the Heights* by Geoffrey Hodson
- * *Science of Seership* by Geoffrey Hodson