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The Values and Dangers of Hypnosis (By a member of the medical Profession)

This matter of hypnosis is a very controversial subject today; and I think the best place to start is to tell what Hypnotism is, because most people really don't know. They have a lot of ideas about it from watching people on the stage, or watching things happen in certain little groups, and wondering about the use of it for medical purposes. All of us have noticed the phenomenon of hypnotism, as such; but just what it is is another question.

As to the term hypnosis, it may be considered an induced psycho-physiological state of an organism characterized by hyper-suggestibility. The word is derived from the Greek word Hypnos, meaning sleep. Since hypnotism is different from ordinary sleep we may ask what part of the organism is asleep, and we would answer that the person's censor is gone - or asleep. When somebody says to him, "Black is white," he doesn't say, "Why, that's ridiculous! Black is black and white is white, and you can't fool me by telling me something different," But in using hypnosis, we get a person into a condition where this little censor goes away, and the person accepts some ridiculous suggestion to prefer Ford cars to Chevrolets - or something like that. Or he accepts a constructive suggestion that he is well, and this or that physical organ is functioning perfectly, etc. The suggestion then works.

Now, the suggestion is the action by which an idea is induced or pushed into the brain. Many people in the normal state will accept suggestion, and this is known as waking hypnotism - where they accept it whether they want to or not. We have these two separate ideas; but really when you talk about hypnotism you are talking about suggestibility - the ability of a person to accept a suggestion even though in his normal state he would not do it.

Historically speaking, hypnotism has been used for centuries, even back to the ancients' use. You probably know about Ihotep, the famous healing god of the Egyptians who about the year 2900 B.C., according to the ancient records, could heal people when they were asleep. In fact, he healed so many people that eventually the Egyptians deified him and he became one of the Gods. And the fame of Ihotep spread through Persia and eventually ended up in Greece, where his name changed and became Asklepios for sometimes spelled Asclepius. There we have the healing temples in Greece where the people used to come to Asclepius and spend the night; the priest would talk to them as they were going to sleep, and when they were waking up in the mornings. There were all sorts of wonderful healing in these temples. The Greek goddess Hygeia was associated with these temples of Asclepius, and the name Hygeia is preserved to this day. Everybody has heard of Hygeia and the goddess of Hygeia - a wonderful name.

Among primitive peoples, even up to our times, we find the use of hypnosis - that is the production of a trance state or a sleep state, or even a state of hyper-suggestibility; achieved amongst such primitive peoples by such means as drums, or the beating of drums. For this involves the constant repetition of rhythm—a principle which has been carried over into medical hypnosis by the use of a metronome. You have seen these little instruments, much used by musicians, with the little wagging finger going back and forth to keep the beat. The physician sets it at a certain rhythmic beat and leaves the patient alone with it, and the first thing you know he is suggestible. Of course that isn't as much fun as the drums; I prefer the drums; but the metronome has its use. Also by borrowing a repetitive pattern of doing things, we will get a condition of hyper-suggestibility in a patient.

Also among primitive people, we come to the fine business of dancing, which also results sometimes in a trance state, where people become suggestible; and we find God speaking through people who have been dancing. I understand some of our religious sects today use some sort of business like this.

Amongst primitive people we find one of the great misuses of hypnosis, which has resulted in the term zombie. You may have heard of zombies, that are known primarily in Haiti. They call them the walking dead. Now it has been found that in Haiti, a zombie is a person who was put into a very deep hypnotic trance- such a deep one that he seems to be dead. So the dear family decides that their beloved has died, and he is taken away and put into a white crypt; then the hypnotist comes and takes him out and, keeping him in a trance, uses him to work his fields. Working in this deep hypnotic trance, of course, he walks and looks as if he were in a stupor. But actually it might happen that one of the relatives might come along and see his dear departed who left him several months ago, and see he is alive and walking along the road. So we get the term, the living dead, the zombies. The Haitian government has set the death penalty for anyone found doing this; nevertheless enough of it has happened so that we still hear the term Zombie.

Incidentally, the "things" mentioned in the *Story of Atlantis* from the Cayce readings may have been "zombies."

Mesmer: 1733-1815

Coming now into the more modern development of hypnosis, the man who really brought it back was probably Dr. Mesmer. He used a type of hypnosis in his search, that seems very different from what we are using today. Mesmer believed in the action of the planets on the body, by means of or through the exertion of a universal magnetic force. And so he applied magnets on people, in order to heal them; figuring that magnets would pull down the force operatic from the planets and throw it through the body. He also used certain hand-passes, in order to direct this universal magnetic fluid which was coming from the planets into the bodies of people. And he got many cures from such treatments.

The medical profession, however, thought he was a complete charlatan and a fraud, although he got cures. Of course the reason was that the medical profession couldn't see this force coming from the planets. They couldn't see this magnetic fluid anywhere, so naturally they figured this was wrong. Nevertheless, some power working through people put them into a trance, condition of hyper-suggestibility. And as long as a person is suggestible, it doesn't make much difference how he got that way- whether we

use a universal magnetic fluid or not, he is that way. So Mesmer got his results.

Later on, other people came along and finally, in 1841, Dr. James Braid developed a technique that we use more or less today. This is, to let a person gaze steadily at an object and concentrate his eyes on this object; eventually to become receptive to suggestion. Such objects could be little rings, little candles, or even interesting types of things, like little whirligigs that you can turn round with your fingers.

Now we have come to the point where I think you see that anything which makes a person sensitive to suggestions - or make him accept a suggestion - can be termed hypnosis. What is involved in this suggestibility?

Let us turn to Edgar Cayce. In reading 294-1 comes this statement: "Edgar Cayce's mind is amenable to suggestion the *same as all other subconscious minds*. Then *in addition thereto*, it has the power to interpret to the objective minds of others, what it acquires from the subconscious minds of other individuals of the same kind. The subconscious mind forgets nothing. The conscious mind receives the impression from without, and transfers all thought to the subconscious where it remains even though the conscious be destroyed."

Cayce, in this reading, brings out a new idea which these other people have thought of but haven't given much consideration to. That is: the subconscious mind never forgets anything, and by suggestion we can contact the subconscious mind.

In another reading, 294-4, that he gave November 27, 1922, a question was asked. Question: What do you mean by suggestion?

The answer was: "All force controlling any individual body is reached by suggestion to the physical, soul or spiritual forces. By suggestion, we mean saying a thing is black, and it is black; say a thing is white, and it is white. To this body, here, say to it that it will become normal in its waking state and that the circulation will be so equalized as to remove strain from any and every part of the body. Just to say, 'You are not going to have a headache when you wake up' doesn't mean anything."

This brings up the second factor. Cayce demonstrated, that was very, very wonderful. That is, you don't hypnotize a person who has a headache and say, "When you wake up you will *not* have a headache." You have to direct your suggestions to a more reasonable factor such as in this particular case where Cayce said to suggest that the circulation would be equalized.

Professor Granstead of Oxford University made use of hypnotism, and he had a case in which a man thought he was a dog. He worked on him and gave him a suggestion that he was *not* a dog. And he reported to a friend that he had tremendous success with this man. He told his friend that the man no longer thought he was a dog, but unfortunately "he now thinks he is a water rat".

He didn't get to the basis of the trouble, the reason for the problem in the first place. There's always a cause; and if you just use hypnosis and say "Now your problem won't be there any more," *that symptom* of the basic underlying cause will disappear, but some other symptom will occur. You go from dog to water rat!

Suggestive Therapy

Now, if You noticed, Cayce did not recommend this negative type of hypnosis, or suggestion. In the reading, 902-54, he states: "If you desire a strong, robust, healthy body, then think health and bring it. Should you weaken within yourself and feel that the physical as below normal, then you become oppressed by it. The mere suggestion causes

the condition to become active within the body. As the entity thinks within, so is the entity." This is suggestive therapy.

Suggestive therapy as such - that is, just as suggestions given - was probably started or carried to the greatest fame by Dr. Emil Coue, who said: "When you get up in the morning and when you go to bed at night, say, 'Every day in every way I am getting better and better.' "

That seems ridiculous, doesn't it? Yet the list of cures miraculous or otherwise of Dr. Emil Coue is fabulous. But of course you have to keep that negative suggestion away. When you say, "Every day in every way, I am feeling better and better", you can't add that little postscript of, "except this arm still hurts and really I have a headache, and I wonder what's wrong with my tummy", etc. etc. As the entity *thinks* so is the entity, as Mr. Cayce said.

In addition, during our present generation, we have had some very interesting types of variations on hypnosis and suggestibility. Probably one of the most interesting types that has run through the medical profession and run away from it, was Dianetics. It was started by L. Ron Hubbard back in 1950, and his idea was to get the body in a nice quiet state and give it nice quiet suggestions. Not use hypnotic trance, but just get it to the point where it can accept suggestion and then have a person go back to his early days - back when he was really little and tell the problems that happened then. In this way he could clear the minds of people and have them work at top notch - you know, clear and sharp, remembering everything - the kind of mind we ought to have. And the medical profession went along with this. They said, "Fine, this is fine psychoanalysis." For a child could say how his daddy beat him when he was two years old, and he could admit how much he'd been afraid of people, particularly men etc.

The difficulty with the medieval profession occurred when several of the patients were not properly cleared in this lifeline and went back to their previous lifetime; and back there they remembered a problem that caused their problem in this lifetime. The medical profession said, "My, this will never do, this is out! Goodbye to this."

Ron Hubbard grew interested in this too; and inasmuch as he had written his whole book on Dianetics about not using any type of deep hypnosis, but rather the light trance state, he shifted over to a different method of obtaining trance state, so he could go back to previous lifetimes. Next came Scientology. If anybody looks into the Scientology technique, he will find that there is not only a repetitive fashion of doing the thing over and over and over again, but a thinking which ties the mind into a type of dissociation which makes it very open to the subconscious mind. In my personal opinion this is done in such a way that the results are a little bit unreliable. So we won't go further into that.

But to show you how easy it is to go back to a previous life: some time ago my wife and I were heading a sort of group hypnotic work in another town, and in this group was a woman who said she had a deep fear of water. It was such a deep fear that she wouldn't go across the bridges that led off from this isolated town, in order to visit a nearby big city. It bothered her husband very much. She was just brutally afraid of water and she wouldn't go across those bridges.

In a light hypnotic trance, she was asked to go back to a time when she was afraid of water, and she did. Right away, she said she was in the river and she was looking across the rippling water at some fire on the shore. The hypnotist (in this case not I) said, 'what are you doing in the water?' She said, "I am drowning." So he said, "Go forward in

time a little while, about five minutes." She went forward about five minutes and she was gone. She had gone back to a previous life in which she had drowned. She was asked to relive this drowning experience several times and when she came out of hypnosis, the problem was over and she no longer had any fear of the river. She was able to join her husband going back and forth over those bridges and have fun in the big city, and all that sort of thing.

Another case in that group might be interesting and apropos to us here in the present. A young Jewish boy was taken into trance and he recalled a previous life he had lived in Africa where he was a colored woman living in a very isolated tribe. Previous life, a colored girl; this life, a white Hebrew boy. The pattern is an interesting one to people who are seeing the racial problems that are arising today, where people feel that they can't associate with a colored person. They may be one, the next time around.

We had a case rather recently here to show the cleaning effects of hypnosis and suggestion. It was that of a boy who was very much afraid of going out at night to go hunting, and he loved to hunt. When it got to be night time, he wanted to be home, with bright lights on. In this particular case, under hypnosis he went back to a previous life when he was an Indian and had been out alone at night without any weapons. A panther or mountain lion had come along and killed his father, and scared him a great deal. After recalling this experience and after coming out of trance, he was no longer afraid of the dark. As a matter of fact, the next night he went hunting half the night!

Increase of Psychic Powers

As Cayce said, the subconscious mind doesn't forget a thing, even though the conscious mind may be destroyed. And there are certain cases where the hypnosis is deep enough so that we can make contact with the subconscious mind, thereby having people remember things of the past. But other strange things happen under hypnosis which we don't know too much about. One of these is an increase of psychic power.

Now of course Cayce said that his increase in psychic power here was due to the ability of his mind to contact other minds. According to that first reading we cited, Edgar Cayce's subconscious mind was in direct communication with all other subconscious minds, and capable of interpreting through his objective mind and imparting impressions received to other objective minds. In this way it could gather all knowledge possessed by millions of other subconscious minds.

Now, I don't know of anybody who has ever achieved the kind of results that Edgar Cayce achieved. In a minor way, however, other people also obtain a certain degree of enlargement of psychic powers. As an instance, one of the boys we had had under hypnosis when we were in Key West told of advising one of the group not to drive through Homestead or he would get into an automobile accident at one special intersection he named. Now the other fellow always drove through Homestead in order to get down to Miami, but he didn't pay too much attention to this warning. He drove down towards Miami and as he got into Homestead he remembered about the accident that would happen. As he came to that special intersection, he didn't see anything, but he stopped anyway. Just as he stopped, a huge tractor trailer loaded with ammunition of some type went right by his car - straight across the intersection, never saw him. If he hadn't stopped, it would have been quite an accident! I could cite several instances of this kind.

We also find among the increases of powers under hypnosis the ability to talk

with spirits of friends, as well as the taking- over of people by spirits, and the spirits talking through a person. In other words, they have put themselves into an hypnotic state where they can open their subconscious minds and can get out and make contact - apparently such wonderful contact that the spirit can talk through them.

And finally, there is the inner self phenomenon. This is the one in which some mediums operate. I had one person I had under hypnosis who was going from one period to another in his past lives. Back around 1750 we ran into a period where there was no particular life he was leading, and we found a certain being talking through him. He said, "I am the inner self of this man."

The minute he appeared, we had no further control over his hypnosis, but rather the inner self took over and said, "I will tell you such questions as you want." This is about the same phenomenon which Edgar Cayce had, where the inner self of Edgar Cayce was the one who took over. In the case of Cayce, we know that the results were authentic. In the case of this particular man I do not know whether they were authentic or not because we had no way of checking up on him to any great extent. Besides, he did not like to be hypnotized.

Warnings

I have mentioned a few of the things that are interesting about hypnosis. Now I come to a few of the things that are dangerous about hypnosis. The dangerous things about it are the suggestions. If you make a good positive suggestion, that's fine; if the suggestion is negative. That's terrible. Even now, if you are very interested in what I am saying and I make some suggestion that isn't a good positive suggestion, you are likely to accept it. I might say, for instance, that Fords aren't as good as Chevrolets, or vice versa, and somebody might accept this ridiculous suggestion; then go forth and repeat it to anybody else as if he believed it. So we must watch our suggestions even in our waking thinking. As Cayce said: as you think, so you are. Thoughts are things.

This is a thing that must be watched, but particularly so when there is a relationship such as that of a hypnotist to a patient. While we are inducing a person into hypnosis, we are giving suggestions that may be pre- or post-hypnotic, and following hypnosis, the post hypnotic suggestion will operate. Even so, while watching very carefully indeed, various and sundry things may happen. We will find anything from minor emotional outbreaks to complete convulsions and sieges, that people may have. Headaches, nausea, dizziness, depressions, persistent drowsiness - all these things may occur following hypnosis. And most of them are due to suggestion.

One professor of hypnosis in a Californian University reported that he had been trying to hypnotize a very difficult patient, and he said "Now, as I count to three, your arms will get very, very heavy and you won't be able to lift them up." So he counted to three, and the person raised his arms up. And the Professor concluded that hypnosis was not for this man; he gave him up. The next morning the phone rang, and the fellow called up and said he couldn't lift his arms up. The professor had never canceled the suggestion. He hadn't bothered because apparently the hypnosis hadn't worked. But the next morning, it worked! So any suggestion, of any type, that you make to a person has to be canceled.

One thing I must say about L. Ron Hubbard's dianetics technique was known as a *cancellor*, and I think he is the only man who ever used it. He starts out by saying, "When I use the word *cancel* at the end of this session any suggestion I have made during the

session will be canceled." Thus the technique starts by canceling and ends by canceling. And this is very necessary.

Another thing for the hypnotist to be warned of is the fact that it is very easy to lose a person in time and space. You use hypnosis and you have a person wandering between lives some time back; and you bring him out of hypnosis. He doesn't always know where he is. He might not know even whether his name is the one he has now or the one he had back in the old days. This is very confusing; so we must watch any suggestions we have made.

Now, Edgar Cayce always used good suggestions, and an example of the finest I will quote this: "May this body be so attuned to the Infinite that it may be prepared here and now for the greatest service it may render to its fellow man, in this experience."

In conclusion, and briefly, it should be said that hypnotism today is being used by physicians during childbirth; and to some extent by psychiatrists. It is being used by dentists for the relief of pain and fear in a dental chair, and also during dental operations.

In England today, hypnotism has won high approval; but in this country it is still a controversial subject. We have too many magazines and newspapers looking for scare and sex headlines, which are always ready to bring hypnosis into disrepute.

From the Readings

"As we find, as yet there has been little done in the way of the body-mind's attempting to become less self-conscious, This can be done or may be done by filling its mind with thoughts and things of the spiritual. Warnings have been given that it was not to become so (wholly) enwrapped in same, but to make it practical. An outline has been indicated - but the entity must do something for itself!

"If there is the desire to give self over to someone else then seek a good hypnotist and let self be submerged; but the better way is to fill the mind and fill the daily activities with the desire and purpose, by the reading of that type of literature which has been indicated. And this will bring better conditions; but follow through explicitly. Don't ask for that to be done *for* self which you may do for yourself!" (No. 5049-P-2)

<p>NOTE: This is a REPRINT of a former monthly publication of the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc.</p>
