

# **Demons and Dunces**

*Evil Spirits, what they are, and how to deal with them.*

by

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**Q: I have just finished reading two books about Christian ascetics whose major activities seemed to be “fighting the demons” and being frightened or tormented by evil spirits throughout their lives. Does this really happen to those who try to attain higher consciousness and know God? Even yogis?**

Everything that happens to us externally is a matter of karma, the result of past life action. Everything that arises from within us is a manifestation of samskaras, habit patterns and impressions (including memories) from past lives. So everything in our life comes from, and in one sense is a continuation and reaction of/to, our past deeds and mental states. Therefore the yogi must from the very first realize that whatever happens inwardly or outwardly is a result of his own previous deeds and thoughts. He must understand that his inner and outer life is a revealing of himself, hopefully leading to the revelation of his Self.

There is a Chinese proverb: “When mean-spirited people live behind a door, mean-spirited people come to that door.” The entire universe is a field of vibrating energy, and that energy is magnetic—it tends to gather around itself energies of like character. Our inner and outer experience is determined by our present vibration. As Yogananda’s greatest disciple, Sister Gyanamata said: “Your own will always come to you. Indeed, you cannot have anything but your own.” This is a fundamental principle that is wise to keep in mind. It means that when something is said or done to us it is an echo of our own speech and action. We say and do it to ourselves. This is very bitter for the ego to face, but unless we do we will never understand anything about our life. It is all karma, and it is *our* karma.

Now we should consider what could bring about encounters with evil spirits.

### **Karma**

The first cause of such encounters is karma. Those (including yogis) who created karma with evil spirits in past lives by intentionally contacting them in some manner, by practicing witchcraft or magic, or by having it done for them, certainly may encounter evil spirits, but can easily deal with the situation as I outline later.

### **Religion**

A great deal of demonic attack by evil spirits is caused by the very nature of a person’s religion. For example, if much of their beliefs are false such as eternal hell and damnation (especially for others not part of their religion or sect), and they denounce beliefs that are true such as reincarnation, karma, evolution of consciousness and the ultimate salvation of all sentient beings, then they are vulnerable to such misfortune. For Jesus said to such religionists: “Ye are of your father the devil, ... for he is a liar, and

the father of it" (John 8:44). So a religion that propagates lies is of Satan. Lies have a negative, destructive vibrations even if they are declared to be theological truth—and even if those who speak them are sincere in their belief. Therefore a religion that is a mixture of truth and lies and therefore propagates lies will naturally be in tune with evil, including evil spirits. What other "spiritual" experience would its adherents have but demonic contact? Sincerity in believing lies does not shield you from their negative effects.

Jesus said: "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee,... According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 8:13; 9:29). If you keep thinking that you deserve to go to hell, the messengers of hell will come to help you get there! The mind and emotion are powerful magnets. If someone thinks of evil spirits and either fears or hates them, he attracts them to himself and by his own will makes himself vulnerable to them.

Sri Ramakrishna once told a young man who was a spiritualist medium: "My boy, if you think of ghosts you will become a ghost. If you think of God you will become god. Which do you prefer?"

The Lord Jesus also said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). So those who dwell on evil and evil spirits do so because they have an affinity, even a liking, for evil and evil beings. Those obsessed with sin, damnation and demons have made their choice and will get it. And those who know that God Is All and the destiny of all sentient beings is conscious oneness with God will attain that.

"If ye then be risen with Christ,... your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3). If a religion is truly of God, then practice of that religion will protect from and banish such spirits.

Saint James, the Son of Thunder, wrote: "Resist the devil, and *he will flee from you*" (James 4:7-8), not: "He will come back again and again and beat and torment you." And he told the way to be safe and free from evil: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7-8). In Saint Mark's Gospel (4:10) he tells us that when Satan tempted Jesus, all Jesus had to do was to tell him to get out, and out he got! This is true Christianity. Anything else is blasphemous superstition and evil which naturally attracts demons and demonic people.

## **Worship**

Obviously some religions such as voodoo and black magic invoke evil spirits intentionally, but the worship of ignorant religion can unintentionally do the same. The liturgical worship of exoteric Christians draws to them invasion of evil spirits, for the worship itself goes on and on about sin and sinfulness and unworthiness for salvation. Such "affirmations" must bear fruit. This is especially true of Lent which emphasizes sin

and penance, judgment and hell and God's "righteous wrath." Accounts through the centuries tell (brag?) about how during Lent demons manifest much more, and how possessed people become more actively so. On the other hand, the Lenten season of esoteric Christians is a true preparation for Easter, and the days become brighter and brighter until they are prepared to consciously participate in the Resurrection. I have seen this contrast for decades.

### **Personal diagnosis**

"Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5). If you "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (I John 1:7), you will be in the light. But if "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23). This is how you discern whether you are really "in the light" or not. If demons flock around, you are in the dark and likely to stay that way if your religion is so oriented. When you are in a place where pigs are rooting all around, you are in a sty. Where there are no pigs at all, you are not in a sty. The dwellers in the religious sties rationalize that the demons are roused against and jealous of them because they are following the truth, and those who are not bothered by demons are in league with them, and that is why they leave them alone. Not true.

### **Inner negativity**

When the mind is dark and clouded and inclined toward that cloudy darkness, then it becomes itself demonic and the person becomes also a demon in human form. I well remember a spiritual director saying to me about a man who had abandoned spiritual life: "He was never bothered by demons. He was his own demon." Just as I have read and heard ridiculous "enlightenment" experiences that came solely from the deluded minds of the narrators, in the same way I have read and heard "demonic attack" experiences that also came from the same source: a distorted and deluded mind.

We all have subconscious minds, and those minds can hold much negativity and foolishness from previous lives. Just as hypochondriacs conjure up illnesses for themselves, the negativity of our subconscious can project all sorts of imaginations and even hallucinations. If we realize this, then dealing with them will not be difficult, even if tedious. This can be the case with beginning yogis, since there may be a good deal of negative karmas and energies that must be cleared away before the yoga life can really be lived.

One of my closest yogi friends one day saw the decaying face of a corpse in meditation. Overcome by terror, she stopped meditating. From then on, every time she sat for meditation the horrid face would appear along with paralyzing fear. Instead of going to an experienced yogi for advice (she knew several), she went to a psychiatrist

who convinced her that yoga meditation was bad for her, and for all non-orientals. So she stopped meditation and ended her spiritual quest.

Recently I read a rather lengthy book in which the author recounts his “warfare” with demons. If he had understood about reincarnation, and how we all have had many lives filled with evil deeds and thoughts much of which remain buried in our subconscious, he would have known that the temptations and attacks came from his own mind, that the apparitions of demons and various threatening phenomena came right out of himself. He was his own demon. Some of the things he told were so obviously from his mind and not from any other source that it would have been amusing in a child. But in a man it was tragic. And he is teaching others to follow him in the same path. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

### **Deluded asceticism**

The Bhagavad Gita rightly and reasonably says: “Asceticism [tapasya] which is practiced with deluded notions of the Self, and with self-torture... is declared to be of the principle of darkness and ignorance [tamas]” (17:19). Unfortunately, such deluded asceticism can be found in every religion. In Hinduism and Buddhism it is based on the delusion that self-torture of the body is a discipline that somehow develops the will and enables the mind to master itself. This is like the mother of the spoiled boy that told his schoolteacher: “If he misbehaves, just slap the boy next to him and he will straighten up.” Torturing, weakening and ultimately destroying the health of the body in no way improves the mind, but is a symptom of mental and moral aberration. In Christianity it is based on delusion in the form of belief that God is pleased with self-torture, that the body (and not the mind) is the cause of evil and therefore torturing the body somehow expiates sin. Such “discipline” based squarely on self-loathing justified by the idea that God is angry with us, and therefore loathes us, and we really only merit the torments of hell. So such ascetics create and live in hell in their own body, mind and life. Such hellish delusion proves that they are the real demons, and naturally they attract evil spirits of like mind. Their own comes to them.

### **Evil spirits exist**

There are such things as evil spirits. Some are earthbound human beings and some are non-human spirits that have wandered into our dimension from other universes. Others were involved in the creation of our universe, yet became corrupted and fell into the ways of evil. These are the beings called “fallen angels,” though that is not exactly correct. They are real and malevolent, so I am not expounding to you the Pretty Positive Thinking philosophy that denies the existence of evil and evil spirits and

such terrible things as black magic and worship of such evil beings. Misguided and mistaken “positive thinking” can be very negative in its effect when it denies what truly exists.

A “New Thought” type of church bought a property adjacent to their church to use for various church activities. But they found they could not use it because its unsettling and eerie atmosphere. No one could handle the negative energies, and people who went there for Sunday School classes in a short while ended up out in the yard. Since the church denied the existence of evil and evil spirits the minister and members were helpless to do anything. All their “white light” meditations and affirmations did nothing to clear things up. So when the great scientist and metaphysician Marcel Vogel came to speak at the church, they asked him to go to the house and see what he could do. He asked me to go along and investigate with him. The next morning we went and discovered that there were a few harmless earthbound spirits in the house. But the problem was in the attic-apartment at the top of the house. We both could see it, and Marcel perceived that it was a non-human entity that had somehow gotten into our dimension and become trapped there and was frantic to get out. People felt its agitation and panic and that was what drove them out of the building. Marcel simply opened the way for the entity to return to its natural world and it was gone in an instant. Then all was well.

I have had a goodly bit of experience with spirits, and it is not at all uncommon for people to encounter them, but they often do not know what they are faced with. Sometimes both human and spirit frighten each other! Never believe the threats of spirits. It is all noise and bluff. But never laugh, mock or speak with contempt or hatred to them, because that can empower them. And besides, it is wrong to do because they are God’s children also. Just be calm and refuse to be affected by them. On occasion simply ignoring them can make them leave because it unsettles their ego and frustrates them. I must admit that sometimes I have gotten rid of a spirit simply by saying: “If you don’t go away I will bless you,” or: “If you don’t go away I will pray to God that he will deliver you from your evil.” Neither of these appeal to truly evil spirits.

### **Dispelling evil entities**

Negative spirits detest that which is positive, therefore a positive environment repels them. The best way to keep away or banish evil (or insane or ignorant) spirits is to keep yourself in a positive frame of mind and to see that your home is filled with positive vibrations. If something does not feel right and you think some kind of negative entities (or even wandering negative energies) are around, begin gently intoning Om over and over aloud. The intoning of Om aloud is recommended because the vibrations will affect everything in a room, including the walls. Water blessed by

intonations of Om while holding your hands over the water, or holding the water container, and then sprinkled around can also help greatly, as can incense or candles blessed in the same way. Yogananda said that Om intoned in the right ear of a possessed or obsessed person will expel the spirit.

Playing or singing positive spiritual music is also a help.

But the best of all is meditation. I have seen spirits that have haunted a place for a long while easily banished by the regular meditation of a single person in the house.

### **Positive attitude**

Always remember that the positive expels the negative and do not fear or feel animosity for the spirits, for fear and hatred attract evil. Many of the exorcism prayers for both Eastern and Western Christianity are ridiculously negative and even hateful, and can prolong the disturbance and even guarantee its continuation. Furthermore, a psychotic individual pretending to be possessed by spirits and undergoing such exorcism is capable of producing all kinds of phenomena that read like the best of horror stories. I have witnessed this nonsense myself. Here, too, sincerity on the part of the exorcist is no safeguard.

Blessing is usually the best form of exorcism. I have seen possessed and obsessed people freed quickly and easily (and without drama) by such means. On occasion I have found that praying for an entity can benefit it. This is because some spirits actually come for help, but at the same time their deep negativity may impel them to be hostile and threatening—they cannot help themselves. Do not let spirits fool you by pretending they need you to keep on “helping” them by praying and suchlike. This is just a way to tie you to them. If something does not get rid of them right away, then another approach is needed.

One of Swami Sivananda’s disciples told me that in an Indian scripture it is written that once many evil spirits came to Brahma the Creator and asked how they could be delivered from their negative condition, for their evil rendered them unable to help themselves. Brahma told them to seek out true yogis and sadhakas and stay near them and in time they would be freed. In India I have been in some ashrams and holy places that were incredibly haunted by such spirits. I once read an account by a Westerner who had encountered negative spirits in one of the holiest shrines of Shiva, who is merciful to evil and crazy spirits. She was so terrified that she ran from there and denounced Hinduism as being demonic. But the negativity was in her, and that attracted the spirits to her just as positivity can attract them. I met her some time after reading her account and found her to be literally spiritually crazy, just like the spirits she had encountered that frightened her so.

Another yogi friend began seeing a terrifying and threatening entity every time

he sat for meditation. His meditation room had doors with glass panes. Shortly after beginning to meditate he would feel something awful nearby, and opening his eyes would see a werewolf kind of creature leaning against the door on the opposite side and glaring at him. Obviously the being could not come in the meditation room, but how could he close his eyes with it just a foot away from him? Well, he *could* and he *did*, and after about four times the thing no longer appeared.

Not long before I took up yoga, I had attracted a non-human entity unintentionally through a mistaken attempt at psychic development. How it got into the earth plane I have no idea, but it had been worshipped as a god in an ancient culture. When that worship had ceased it had just drifted about. It was not at all malevolent, but it was ignorant and at loose ends and wanted human contact. I did not fear possession or obsession by it, but I realized it was psychically unhealthy to have any kind of contact with it, and that further contact could be detrimental. (It might have caused me to be bound to it after death, but I did not realize that at the time.) So I just ignored it, and after a while I did not see it very often, and then not at all. Yet one day when I was in the vegetarian restaurant at the Hollywood SRF Center, the entity came up to me and wanted further contact. I concentrated at the third eye and calmly broadcasted the message that I was not interested in any contact and that it should seek to return to its normal plane and even to move higher. That was the end of all contact, and I feel sure that the merciful vibrations of Blessed Master Yogananda in that sacred place freed the entity.

As I have said, the yogi may have such experiences because of some previous life karma. Usually, though, japa and meditation draw that which is good and repel that which is evil. If evil (in the form of entities or energies) approaches and japa and meditation are maintained calmly by the yogi, then it leaves, dissolves or is transmuted.

### **Transmutation into a higher plane**

As I have said, spirits come to us for help. Even though a lot spend their time harming and terrifying people because of their hatred and malice, some really do want to be freed from their miserable state, even though they still manifest hostility toward the people or place from which they seek help.

Omkar Sahai, a disciple of Swami Keshavananda (Keshabananda) written about in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, told me that once when he was with Anandamayi Ma standing with a group of people where Ma was sitting under a tree, one of the tree's branches began to move up and down, at first gently and then violently. At the same time everyone backed away as though some force was pushing them. Ma continued to sit there quietly, and slowly the branch stopped moving. Then everyone came forward to where they had been standing. Later Ma said that a brahmarakshasa (see the article

“Brahmarakshasa” on Wikipedia) had come and was moving the branch to get her attention. That was all she told, but it was assumed that she had freed it.

It is a common practice in India for there to be continual (akhanda) kirtan (singing of Holy Names) for some hours, days and or even months. At Sivanandashram in Rishhikesh the Mahamantra Akhanda Kirtan has been going on for seventy-four years. One time I participated in an akhanda kirtan at Sapta Rishi Ashram north of the holy city of Hardwar. I had stayed at the ashram five years before and found it one of those places where spirits come for release or at least some relief. It was still the same, and early on in the kirtan I saw quite a few wandering spirits, one of them a very frightening spirit of the type called pishacha—a blood-drinker. After some hours this spirit came right into the area of the kirtan and began shouting and obviously threatening the singers, who of course had no idea he was there. But I saw and heard him and was on guard, to put it mildly. Fortunately, he ignored me and kept on raving and threatening. After some time he stopped and just stood there. Pishachas are intensely black, almost like a total void rather than a color. But after more time, he became more like a normal black hue, and then began to become lighter and lighter in color. Finally he was glowing white and suddenly was gone. He had gone to a higher world. I have witnessed less dramatic transmutations at other times, some of them in kirtan and others in ritualistic worship and meditation.

On occasion the released spirits express gratitude before passing upward. Always remember: the core of the evil spirit is the same divine spirit at the core of all beings. Otherwise they could not be freed.

### **Earthbound spirits**

I mentioned earthbound spirits before. They can be encountered also, some of them malevolent, some of the insane and some them suffering and frightened. These, too, may show up, especially to a yogi. Prayer and good will go a great deal to healing them. They, too, can be lifted into a higher level where they would be if they had not for some karmic reason become earthbound.

Those who see a demon behind every grain of sand will say: “Aha! he is telling people to sympathize with them and in that way get under their power!” There is no doubt that a foolish and sentimental sympathy will not help those spirits, and they can start pestering and even tormenting those that do not try to help them in the right way. In fact, there are times when they must kindly be told: “I cannot help you. Please go elsewhere.” I have had to do so myself on occasion, because otherwise the incautious yogi can become swamped by such spirits. Knowing our limitations and acting accordingly is an important asset in many aspects of life, including this.

If the spirit does not go, then intonations of Om and water and fire blessed by

Om as I described earlier must come into use as well as meditation.

### **Animal spirits**

Animal spirits can be earthbound, too. Since they do not have human intelligence you cannot talk to them. But you can pray for them and even ask their guardian spirits (they have them) to come help them or to ask holy angels to come to their aid.

This is a very long answer to your question, but I wanted it to be complete. Avoid those who are obsessed with the devil and demons and keep company with those who are devoted to God and his true saints.