

Straight Talk #40 on “Spiritual Hygiene” (Updated!)

By William Schnobelen - © 2006

In the homes of Believers, we often find that the reasons for various unfortunate situations (illness, problems with children, besetting sins, emotional problems, etc.) can be traced to the presence of some sort of idolatrous objects in the home – used as décor. Even though these things are often used in innocence, they can still be an “open door” to Satan to come in and attack the family.

The title of this article, which may be puzzling to some, relates to the fact that we are all brought up with certain rules about hygiene in the physical realm (regular bathing, washing hands before eating, etc.). We know that if these rules are violated, tiny invisible organisms can invade our bodies and cause grave harm. The recent occurrences of *E. coli* give a chilling example.

To be sure, the people that ate the spinach (or whatever) did so innocently. They assumed that spinach was healthy (which it usually is) and acted accordingly. They may have not washed the vegetables as thoroughly as they ought because they *assumed* they were pre-washed and/or that they were organic. The tragic results we have all seen on the news.

However, in the spiritual realm, there are also small – unseen – organisms which are harmful to us. We call them demons or devils or evil spirits. Just as physical hygiene practices keeps us reasonably safe from disease, so *spiritual* hygiene keeps us well protected from demonic attack and the fiery darts of the enemy.

Some people who would never dream of putting a steaming pile of horse manure in the middle of their dining room table during dinner (flies and all) may have the *spiritual* equivalent right in the heart of their homes and not realize it.

Before we get into details, two more important points which need to be made:

- 1) We are not saying that possessing something like the below-listed items will cost you your salvation (unless of course you

are *literally worshipping them!*). They may cause you emotional, mental, volitional¹ or physical harm, but they cannot normally harm your spirit.² They may cause a gradual deterioration of the spiritual vitality through prolonged exposure though. It is just like being in an unhealthy environment may not kill you, but it may weaken you or cause you to constantly pick up viruses, colds, etc.

- 2) The scriptural basis for this entire teaching is found in Deut. 7:26, where Yahweh warns us: *“Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.”* A cursed thing is, first and foremost an idol. But secondarily, it is anything that Yahweh says is cursed or abominable or other similar terms. In the New Testament, this is echoed in Acts 19:19, where new believers came and burnt their occult or pagan books and paraphernalia in obedience to the gospel. We should do likewise.

The broad principle is this: **ANYTHING**, especially if it is three-dimensional³ which is religious or mythical or which is worshipped can be an idol or cursed object.⁴ We should note that in the passage where this command plays out (Joshua 7), the cursed object which caused Israel to lose a key battle was just a *“goodly Babylonish garment”* (Joshua 7:21) It was not even technically something that was worshipped.

But, and this is KEY, it was something YHWH had placed **under the ban** and was forbidden to be in the possession of an Israelite. If you read the chapter, you will note that the offending man was executed

¹ Volitional refers to your faculty of will, or your will-power. Some people who are holding onto sinful items are astonished how hard it is for them to get rid of bad habits, addictions, etc. This is because their will-power may be crippled.

² We believe the Bible teaches that we are a tri-part being – body, soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). This reflects the fact that we are made in the image of our Creator, Who is also a Body (Yah’shua – Jesus), soul (the Father) and a Spirit (the Holy Spirit). The mind, the will and the emotions are usually thought of as faculties of the SOUL realm of human beings.

³ See Exodus 20:4 – a *graven* image – meaning something engraved, carved or sculpted.

⁴ The three dimensional part of the precept is important. Some people fear something like the cover of one of our books, MASONRY BEYOND THE LIGHT, because it has – in the background – a demonic looking goat’s head or Baphomet. If that were a three dimensional figure, it would be an idol. But as a 2 dimensional illustration it is harmless, unless some actually does use it for worship – unlikely in the case of a book cover.

by stoning for this sin. Yahweh does not take things lightly when we transgress His commandments.

The following list is not exhaustive, nor could it be. But it gives a good idea for people to follow:

- I. **Pagan Art Idols:**
 - a. Buddhas, Kwan Yin statues or Foo Dogs, other similar Asian religious symbols.
 - b. Kachina dolls, Native American sand paintings, totem art and other Native American religious symbols.
 - c. African religious art – especially things which are overtly sexual in nature such as Obeah staffs or wands (often sold as canes) or aboriginal art.

The terms Obeah and Wanga are African diasporic words that occur in The Book of the Law (the sacred text of Thelema, written by Aleister Crowley in 1904):

Obeah is a folk religion and folk magic of found among those of African descent in the West Indies. It is derived from central African Kongo or Bantu sources and has a close North American parallel in African American conjure or hoodoo.

A wanga (sometimes spelled oanga or wanger) is a magical charm packet found in the folk magic practices of Haiti, and as such it is connected to the West African religion of Voodoo, which in turn derives from the Fon people of what is now Benin.

In his Commentaries, Crowley explains:

The obeah is the magick of the Secret Light with special reference to acts; the wanga is the verbal or mental correspondence of the same. [...] The "obeah" being the acts, and the "wanga" the words, proper to Magick, the two cover the whole world of external expression.

Describing Obeah as "acts" is sound enough, but to call a wanga, a wrapped-up packet that resembles a mojo bag, "the words" is incomprehensible except as veiled allusion or metaphor. Thus it is possible that Crowley was not referring to literal Jamaican Obeah practices or to an actual Haitian wanga.

He goes on to say:

Magick is the management of all we say and do, so that the effect is to change that part of our environment which dissatisfies us, until it does so no longer. We "remould it nearer to the heart's desire."

Magick ceremonies proper are merely organized and concentrated attempts to impose our Will on certain parts of the Cosmos. They are only particular cases of the general law.

- d. Dragons
- e. Anything resembling a demon or devil (for example, gargoyles)
- f. Perhaps surprisingly to some, Catholic religious objects such as crucifixes⁵, **statues** of “Jesus”, Mary or the “saints.”

II. **Occult Objects**

- a. Unicorns (originally associated with Christ, these horned horses have become so associated with the New Age and occult in the past generation that we advise caution).
- b. Crystals – if charged by New Age gurus or mediums, etc.⁶
- c. Hex Signs (Pennsylvania Dutch)
- d. “Italian Horn” jewelry – small golden “horn” worn around the neck by men on golden chains, supposedly to induce virility.
- e. Pegasus (winged horse)
- f. Sun bursts (or sun stones, actually symbols of Ba’al)
- g. Occult toys (the list is legion and ever-growing, it is beyond our ability to keep current, but these give you some ideas):
 - i. Harry Potter books⁷ or paraphernalia
 - ii. Ouija boards (**very bad!**)
 - iii. Various toys such as Ninja turtles, Power Rangers, He-Man, Smurfs, My Little Pony, etc.
 - iv. Dungeons and Dragons games and figurines, other paraphernalia
 - v. Pokemon and Yugiyoh and similar card collection games.⁸
 - vi. *Magick the Gathering*, *Vampire the Masquerade* and similar card games.

⁵ Let us be clear here, a crucifix is defined as a cross with a sculpture or bas relief of “Jesus” hanging on it. This is a danger because (aside from being 3-D) the Bible clearly says that he that is hanged on a tree is accursed of YHWH (Deut. 21:23) and that – by being crucified on the tree – Yah’shua became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).

⁶ In and of themselves, crystals are just part of creation. But if they are “loaded” or “charged” by an occultist – watch out! But just getting a plain, beautiful crystal in a rock shop is not idolatry.

⁷ Even though the hugely popular HP books are not, per se, idols; they are virtually “worshipped” by millions of impressionable children. Some kids read the large books through 10-15 times over. We do not recommend having even the books in the house if you have children around. For more on this controversial topic, see our *Straight Talk on Harry Potter*, or the video/DVD “**To Harry or not to Harry?**”

⁸ See our *Straight Talk on Pokemon* for more information on this.

- vii. Halloween bric-a-brac⁹
- viii. Cabbage Patch dolls

h. Jewelry

- i. Pentagrams (five pointed stars)
- ii. Hexagrams (but not the Star or David or Magen David¹⁰)
- iii. Ankhs
- iv. SS Runes (Nazi) – symbol of the initials of the horned god of witchcraft
- v. Skull and Crossbones – also symbol of the god of witchcraft
- vi. Some Native American jewelry

i. Catholic paraphernalia – rosaries, chaplets, etc.

j. Birthstone jewelry – borderline, depends on the intent of the person.

k. Masonic Regalia

- i. Aprons, sashes
- ii. Rings and jewelry of any kind
- iii. Shriner fezzes or regalia
- iv. Eastern Star stuff or stuff from other auxiliary bodies of Masons¹¹
- v. Books by Masons or ritual monitors

l. Occult or cult books

- i. Magick, new age, witchcraft or astrology books or materials.
- ii. Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, Doctrines and Covenants, other LDS books.
- iii. Jehovah's Witnesses literature or Bibles
- iv. Other apostate "bible translations" (NIV, NAS, RSV, etc.)¹²

⁹ See our tract "*Halloween: Tis the Season to be Evil*" for more information on our concerns with Halloween.

¹⁰ For a hexagram (six pointed star) to be magically effective, it must be inside a circle. The Magen David (Shield or Star of David), though often confused with the hexagram is not. It is actually a symbol of Judaism which goes back to at least the time of Messiah.

¹¹ This is not an exhaustive list, but it would include: Blue Lodge Masonry, York Rite Masonry, Scottish Rite Masonry, Knight Templar Commandery, Shrine, Job's Daughters, Rainbow Girls, DeMolay, Daughters of the Nile, Tall Cedars, etc.

- v. Literature from any other Eastern Thought group or “cult” group¹³

III. Pornography (self explanatory)

IV. Illegal drugs (self explanatory)

V. Occult Practices:

- a. Astrology
- b. Divination (fortune telling)
 - i. Tarot cards or playing card cartomancy
 - ii. Palmistry
 - iii. Tea-leaf reading
 - iv. Ouija boards
 - v. I Ching (coin or yarrow stalk method)
- c. Spiritualism (AKA spiritism), channeling or mediumship
- d. Visualization and some kinds of inner healing
- e. *Some* practices of alternative or holistic health:
 - i. Angel healing or therapy
 - ii. Psychic surgery
 - iii. Psychic healers¹⁴
- f. Some motivational or self-improvement cults
 - i. EST or the Forum
 - ii. Silva Mind Control
 - iii. Dianetics or Scientology
 - iv. Wayne Dyer

¹² This may come as a shock to some Believers, but there is genuine spiritual danger in these modern Bible versions. Most blatantly attack the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the inerrancy of Scriptures and the redeeming power of the blood of the Lamb. They often contain anti-Christ spirits. For more information, write for our tract, “*What’s Lurking in Your Home?*” or booklet, *Straight Talk on Bible Manuscripts*.

¹³ Obviously, to a degree, the question of what makes a cult a cult is a subjective judgment. But broadly speaking, for a religious movement to be true – it must believe these four things at the minimum: 1) In one true and living deity, YHWH; and in His Son, and in the Holy Spirit; 2) That Yah’shua or Jesus is His only begotten Son and is fully divine and fully human; 3) That the Holy Bible is the sole and final authority for divine truth and that no man or woman has the right to correct it; 4) That we are saved by grace through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Yah’shua on Calvary without works or good deeds; 5) That the reflection of that salvation is that we act as servants of Yah’shua and keep His commandments. If your church misses anyone of these, you may well be in a cult. Additionally, there are church groups that are (sociologically speaking) cults. They may have their doctrine right, but if they manipulate and abuse their people or try to rule every aspect of their lives, OR if they look to a single authoritarian leader that no one may question, then they are a cult in the sociological sense.

¹⁴ Again, there may be a fine line between true Believers that function with a Scriptural gift of healing and psychic healers. Typically the latter will NOT glorify Yah’shua or Jesus or if they do, they will not confess Him as come in the flesh and risen from the dead and as the only true way to salvation. Any healer that does not glorify Yah’shua in that sense is probably someone to be avoided.

- v. Roy Masters (Foundation for Human Understanding)
- vi. Napoleon Hill (Think and Grow Rich)
- vii. Shri Chinmoy
- viii. Possibility Thinking (Schuller)
- ix. “Four Temperament” teaching (La Haye)
- x. Much of what is taught in the extreme Word Faith branches of Christianity.

- g. Some stress reduction exercises:
 - i. Anything which advises you to empty the mind
 - ii. Visualization of “wise persons” or “counselors or even “Jesus”

Although there are Christians who teach that we should not have little figurines or statues of “unclean animals” like cats or owls, or any animal associated with the occult (toads, frogs, pigs, etc.), it has NOT been our experience that these things are spiritually dangerous. One can become out of balance in going too far in this.

Animals, *per se*, are good and a gift from our Creator to be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:3-4). Cats, owls, etc. are real animals made by Yahweh for our enjoyment. Mythic animals like the Pegasus are things man has devised out of his own imagination and many of them are (sadly) used to express or teach magickal practices.

We understand that some of the things discussed here are controversial and that people of good faith may believe that either:

- 1) We have been too severe or...
- 2) We have not been severe enough.

All we can say is that Yahweh has called us out to be a holy and separated people. To us, that means if we must err, we should err on the side of caution. In counseling with literally thousands of believers since 1988, we have found the items on these lists to be highly problematic and we believe that – in most cases – we have Bible verses to back up our warnings. But ultimately, YOU must pray about these things and take them before Heavenly Father with a sincere and broken heart and decide whether to practice them or keep them or

not. That is your job as a believer. All we can do is provide counsel and guidance. Your questions or comments are welcome.

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