

# Divination Practices: Palmistry, Part Three

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## Palmistry and The Occult

Palmistry is conceded by knowledgeable practitioners to be a form of occult divination and not the scientific practice many adherents say it is. Palmistry not only has strong associations to the occult, it is also believed to develop psychic abilities, and it has a relationship to spiritism. For example, if space permitted, a large number of parallels could be made to astrology.<sup>1</sup> We could also show how, in each case, the parallel disproves its validity.<sup>2</sup>

The correlation to astrology is conceded by all. In fact, “palmistry was a logical outgrowth of astrology.... [T]he palm reflects the same celestial influences as those shown in the astrological chart.”<sup>3</sup> As one encyclopedia points out, “As the palmist approaches the fingers individually, he keeps one eye carefully on the zodiac, for here is one of the points at which palmistry is correlated to astrology.”<sup>4</sup>

Not surprisingly then, many books on palmistry contain sections or chapters on astrology or numerology:

If you have a working knowledge of astrology, it helps in understanding the palm. And some knowledge is needed simply because certain areas of the palm and the adjacent fingers are named for planets and carry with them the connotations and qualities these planets are concerned with.... It is also helpful to know the astrological sun sign of the person whose hand is being read.... Each planet is also related to a specific area of the palm and various lines that accompany it.... The more you learn about the rulership of the planets and the signs... the easier it is to evaluate the hand and to assign the proper meaning to the signs you find there.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, palmistry is related to cabalism and other occult practices.<sup>6</sup> As one book asserts, “Palmistry, along with astrology, forms an integral part of the Cabalistic knowledge system.”<sup>7</sup>

In discussing the occult nature of palmistry, several texts reveal its mediumistic potential:

Palmistry... is one of the esoteric, or occult, sciences,... [and] to become a professional palm-reader... would take many years of devoted application to the occult arts.... Professional palmists are somewhat mediumistic and “see” events this way. As you pursue palmistry, you will find your own ESP sharpened—and will begin to “read between the lines” so to speak, perhaps even to see future events (clairvoyance) or to hear (clairaudience) things happen.<sup>8</sup>

Also, as is common for divination in general, palmistry develops psychic abilities. One text observes, it will “help you to develop not only insight, but also your E.S.P. faculties and sensitivity.”<sup>9</sup> While modern proponents may argue palmistry is a “rational science,” others concede the truth “that clairvoyance *must* be brought to bear when an interpretation is made.”<sup>10</sup>

## Dangers

The dangers of palmistry include those commonly associated with occult practice, including physical, psychological, and spiritual damage.<sup>11</sup> Other risks include false medical diagnosis and predictions of disaster or death based on what the palmist supposedly sees

in the hands. Although many practitioners confess it is “dangerous for a palmist ever to predict serious illness, and especially death, from a hand” (because “even palmists can make mistakes”<sup>12</sup>), this has not stopped many from making those predictions. This is especially true when considered historically. Although many modern palmists may attempt to avoid the fatalistic aspects, the tide of divinatory history is against them. Divination systems characteristically *reject* chance, otherwise accurate predictions would never be possible. So if palmists reject fatalism they must accept the final irrelevancy of their own art, for mere “indicators” subject to the qualifications of a thousand whims can never boast the accuracy necessary for credibility or trust. Thus, even those who downplay the certainty of a foreseen catastrophic event must nevertheless confess the minute odds that such an event will not come true.<sup>13</sup> Consider the following forecast of death. “When the thumb remains turned in under the balance of the fingers during the period of illness, I have found it to be a sure sign of death in the near future.”<sup>14</sup>

Palmists themselves are well aware of the destruction their occult craft has caused to many people. One book warns about the consequences of negative predictions. “More harm has been done... than can be truly assessed; often the professional palmist sees the sad results years later.”<sup>15</sup> And, “Another false reading which has resulted in a great deal of needless anxiety is that concerning a broken life line. Palmists of the 19th century, who seem to have looked mostly on the dark side in their interpretations, upon finding a break in this line, were prone to make a flat prediction of serious illness or major accident.”<sup>16</sup>

Palmistry today may be as popular as ever, but its lack of credibility and damaging consequences precede it. *Caveat emptor.*

#### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *Astrology: Do the Heavens Rule Our Destiny?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1989).
- <sup>2</sup> Martin Steinbach, *Medical Palmistry: Health and Character in the Hands* (Secaucus, NJ: University Books, 1975), p. 20.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Richard Cavendish, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Unexplained: Magic, Occultism and Parapsychology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976, p. 175).
- <sup>5</sup> Joyce Wilson, *The Complete Book of Palmistry* (New York: Bantam, 1978), pp. 118, 120, 124.
- <sup>6</sup> Comte C. de Saint-Germain, *The Practice of Palmistry* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977, rpt. of 1897 edition), p. 10; Wilson, *The Complete Book of Palmistry*, p. 125.
- <sup>7</sup> Steinbach, *Medical Palmistry*, p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> Joyce Wilson, *The Complete Book of Palmistry*, pp. 7, 10, 16.
- <sup>9</sup> Mary Anderson, *Palmistry* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1977, p. 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Richard Cavendish, ed., *Man Myth and Magic: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural* (New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 1970), p. 2118, emphasis added.
- <sup>11</sup> John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *The Coming Darkness: Confronting Occult Deception* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1992).
- <sup>12</sup> Cavendish, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Unexplained*, p. 177.
- <sup>13</sup> Steinbach, *Medical Palmistry*, p. 151.
- <sup>14</sup> Martini, *Palmistry* (Baltimore, MD: I & M Ottenheimer, 1929), p. 105.
- <sup>15</sup> Anderson, *Palmistry*, p. 12.
- <sup>16</sup> Steinbach, *Medical Palmistry*, p. 90.