

# Divination Practices and Occult Games

Excerpted from *The Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, Harvest House, 1996)

## INFO AT A GLANCE

**Description.** Divination is the attempt to predict or control one's future, or to gain access to hidden information (e.g., psychically) by the assessment of various "indicators" (such as the occult meaning of numbers), or use of particular implements (such as the Ouija board). Examples of divinatory methods include interpreting the positions of the heavenly bodies (astrology) or the symbols on cards (tarot), analyzing dreams (dream work) or the flight of birds or liver markings, casting stones or coins or other objects (I Ching), interpreting hand markings (palmistry), and seeking information from dowsing rods, idols, or oracles (Ezekiel 21:21). Occult games are not necessarily divinatory; however, they attempt to introduce players to occult philosophy or practice in a fun and exciting manner through playing a "game."

**Founder.** Varies; some are unknown.

**Scientific evaluation.** Science cannot evaluate claims to see into the future, although it can test the predictions of diviners. This often reveals fraud or a poor record of divining, or that psychic powers fluctuate greatly under stringent conditions of scientific assessment. This is not to say that these methods are never accurate; to the contrary, their persuasiveness is often found in their divinatory power.

**Examples of occult potential.** Psychic development, spiritism.

**Major problem.** Despite their frequent use as forms of social entertainment, divination practices involve serious occult pursuits that carry the same consequences as occult practices in general.

**Biblical/Christian evaluation.** Divination is rejected by name (Deuteronomy 18:9-12) as an involvement with spiritistic powers (Hosea 4:12; Acts 16:16-19). In certain ways, pagan divination is the occult counterpart to biblical divination or prophecy.

**Potential dangers.** Physical, emotional, or financial problems resulting from failed predictions, incorrect medical diagnoses, abuse in psychotherapy, occult bondage. Practitioners are characteristically warned to treat these implements with great respect and deference, lest the powers operating behind them be offended and the practitioner be harmed or perhaps even killed.