

Phenomenal Mediumship: A Look at Physical Manifestations

By Rev. Simeon Stefanidakis



This feature article comes, in part, as a response to many requests that we offer a more comprehensive look at physical mediumship and some of its implications to the Spirit.

Let us begin by reiterating what we said in the final article of our series, ***Why Seek Spirit Communication?*** You may wish to read or review this [article](#):

"Physical mediumship is the process whereby someone, in Spirit, usually known as a spirit operator (as compared to a spirit communicator), works or operates through the mental AND physical energies of the medium and causes something physical to happen on the Earth plane. Physical mediumship is objective in nature; that is, when the phenomena occur, everyone is able to see and/or hear them."

The implications, here, are really quite staggering: Mind is capable of affecting matter. Perhaps this is the most pertinent implication lying at the foundation of physical mediumship.

So, let us look at some of the elements of physical mediumship. We shall do this, in part, through a question-and-answer format.

What makes a physical medium?

Mediumship is an inherent element of the Spirit. Therefore, to some degree, everyone can develop the ability to link with Spirit and, thus, be receptive to the influences coming from those in Spirit. But, not everyone can become a physical medium. Unlike evidential mediumship, which can, to some degree, be developed within most people, physical mediumship requires certain elements to be present within the physical organism of the medium. Either you have those elements or you do not.

First, there must be an abundance of what is known as etheric matter within the etheric vehicle. The etheric vehicle is a subtle counterpart of the physical body which performs two basic functions:

- One: It acts as a battery, or storehouse, for certain types of vital energies which come from the sun (prana) and from the earth (kundalini). This energy vitalizes the dense physical body, in a way which compliments the energy which we receive from the various foods we eat.
- Two: It acts as a bridge of consciousness between the spirit and the body. Specifically, it acts as a bridge of energy and consciousness between the astral body and the physical body. We will not discuss the astral body in this article.

The etheric vehicle is comprised of matter which is far more refined and subtle than the rarest of physical matter (hydrogen). To the clairvoyant, the etheric vehicle appears as a thin, luminous band of light and energy surrounding the physical body by approximately one inch. It tends to have a silvery-blue-grey color and varies in intensity and brilliance, depending upon the general health and energy disposition of the individual.

Illness and physical exhaustion tend to weaken the etheric vehicle, as do long periods of cloudy weather. On the other hand, good health and vigor cause the etheric vehicle to appear more brilliant and energized.

Anton Mesmer, the father of modern-day hypnosis, conducted a great deal of research on etheric energy-matter. He called it "animal magnetism." In his researches, he ascertained that certain people had an abundance of this vital energy-matter. Furthermore, this energy could be transferred from those who had an abundance of it to those who seemed lacking in it. They could do this through mentally directing this energy as they moved their hands over the individual's aura. He called this type of activity "magnetic passes." It forms the basis for the laying-on-of-hands.

Finally, he discovered that certain people could be put into a state of sleep, or trance, through these magnetic passes; and, in that condition, they exhibited paranormal abilities, such as clairvoyance, etc. This was called Mesmerism and, later, became the foundation for modern-day hypnosis.

A person who has an abundance of this vital energy-matter has the potential of becoming a physical medium.

How does Spirit work with a physical medium?

In physical mediumship, the Spirit operators use this abundance of etheric energy and matter in order to produce the various manifestations. They do this exactly as Anton Mesmer discovered: through the directed use of mind, they release this energy-matter from the physical medium's body and use it.

Most often, although not always, the medium must be in a state of rather deep trance. This helps place the medium's mind on the sideline, so to speak, thus allowing the intelligence of the spirit operator to work with and manipulate the etheric energy-matter. Spirit tells us that they assist the medium in attaining this trance state through a process not unlike that of Mesmer's magnetic passes.

During the manifestations, the physical medium usually sits within an enclosed area, called a cabinet. This helps focus the energies and creates a type of battery from which the phenomena can be built and energized. There is usually a curtain in front of the cabinet which can be spread apart in order for people to see what is going on within the cabinet.

Another condition which seems to prevail in physical mediumship is that of darkness. Most physical phenomena take place in darkened quarters, with a dim red light providing the only light source. Spirit tells us that white light tends to inhibit the phenomena, while dim red light energizes it. Unfortunately, this condition has, over the years, tended to foster an amazing barrage of cheating and fraud within the realm of physical mediumship. These conditions do not allow people to see very well and can create a psychological effect which fosters the seeds for figment of imagination.

Having said this, I should add that darkness is not a requisite for good phenomena to occur. Our founder, Marcellus Ayer, insisted that all demonstrations of physical mediumship, taking place within our Church, be performed in fully lit quarters. And some amazing phenomena occurred in his day.

What is ectoplasm?

When the spirit operators withdraw the etheric energy-matter from the medium's body, it is known as ectoplasm. It is through the use and manipulation of ectoplasm that the physical phenomena occur. Ectoplasm can be created in many different forms -- both visible and invisible; white and colored -- all depending upon what the Spirit people wish to do with this amazing substance.

Once created, the ectoplasm generally emerges from the medium through some bodily orifice (nose or mouth) or through a psychic center, located near the navel, known as the solar plexus.

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The Phenomena of Physical Mediumship

Spirit works with physical mediumship in a number of ways. Apparently, there is no limit to what Spirit can do, provided the proper conditions prevail. Here are some of the phenomena witnessed in physical circles:

Manipulation of Ectoplasm:

This is the most fundamental use of ectoplasm. The ectoplasm is released from the medium's body, and the operator demonstrates how it can be fashioned and directed. This becomes a demonstration of Spirit's ability to influence matter via the directed use of mind.

Movement of Objects:

Ectoplasm can be used to move objects. During a demonstration such as this, the spirit operator might mold the ectoplasm into hardened rods and direct these rods to the underside of an object and cause the object to be lifted. This is known as levitation and usually -- although not always -- involves the production of an invisible form of ectoplasm. Objects known to be levitated have ranged in weight from a few ounces to hundreds of pounds.

Whenever we conduct a program on physical mediumship at the Church, we conclude by sitting in circle around a table. In this, we have never failed to produce remarkable movements, which have ranged from tables swaying back and forth and in circular motion, to tables levitating off the floor.

Direct Voice:

Here, the Spirit operators create an ectoplasmic voice box, through which they can speak physically and audibly to all present. This is often done using a small conical device, known as a trumpet. The trumpet acts very much like the cabinet, in that the energies are focussed inside the trumpet. The trumpet is often levitated around the room, with the Spirit people speaking through it.

A very interesting phenomenon witnessed during direct voice is the shifting in the strength of the voice, as the energy level and harmony change. When the voice first begins, it is often very garbled and difficult to distinguish. As the energy is built up, the voice becomes more powerful and more easily understood. Toward the end of the session, when the energies begin to diminish, so, too, do the quality and clarity of the voice. In fact, this gradual peaking and diminishing of phenomena is quite common in all forms of physical manifestations.

Apportation:

Here, Spirit causes something to materialize in the sitting room, apparently from nowhere. The apported object sometimes does and sometimes does not remain. Often, the materialized object is dematerialized back to where it came from. Stones, gems, animals, ancient relics, and even people have been known to be apported into seance rooms.

Raps and Taps:

This is a common form of activity observed in circles for physical mediumship. The Spirit people cause sharp raps to be heard, often from within the table they are sitting around. A code can be established through the raps, thus creating a means of conveying specific messages to the sitters.

Spirit Lights:

This is another common occurrence in physical circles. Flashes or balls of light appear, often on or near the vicinity of the medium himself or herself.

Materialization: The *Creme de la Creme* of Physical Mediumship

In materialization, the Spirit people use ectoplasm to create an image or molding of themselves. The degree and strength of the materialized form varies quite a bit. A full-form, head-to-toe materialization of a spirit is, perhaps, the most amazing phenomenon witnessed in mediumship.

There are countless recorded cases where spirits have materialized fully, with full dress and facial features. Some have been as clear and solid as an earthly body. Spirit has even been known to go to the extent of creating fingerprints on their materialized hands. Materialized spirits have been known to walk among the sitters; talk to the sitters via direct voice; touch, hug, and kiss the sitters; allow the sitters to touch them; materialize in front of the sitters; pass through walls; and dematerialize before the sitters.

A most interesting phenomenon seen during materialization is the physical link between the materialized form and the medium. After a spirit materializes and walks away from the medium, there can be seen a cord of ectoplasm linking the spirit form with the medium. This ectoplasmic cord can be likened to the umbilical cord of a fetus. Through it, the spirit operator receives a supply of etheric energy-matter from the medium. The spirit may dematerialize by withdrawing the ectoplasm back into the medium's body via this cord.

A specific form of materialization, whereby the spirit operator uses the ectoplasm to mold his or her face over the face of the medium, is known as transfiguration.

These are a few of the more common means by which Spirit uses the energies of the physical medium for the production of phenomena. Again, there seems to be no limit to what Spirit can do through physical mediumship, provided the proper conditions prevail.

Why Physical Mediumship Is So Rare

During the last century, up until around the 1930's, physical mediumship was very common, and the strength and range of phenomena were amazing. Today, it is quite rare. There are two basic reasons for this:

- One: Earlier on, when modern Spirit phenomena was relatively new, people needed to see. They needed objective evidence of Spirit's presence; thus, the preponderance of physical manifestations. As people began accepting the reality of mediumship and, then, yearning more for teaching and philosophy, the occurrence of physical mediumship began to lessen, while mental mediumship began to predominate. In other words, the needs of Humanity dictated how Spirit would respond to those needs -- always the case with Spirit.
- Two: The development of physical mediumship can be a lengthy process; sometimes tedious, with nothing happening in the circle for months or even years; requires great commitment on everyone's part; and generally revolves around the development of one, maybe two, people in the circle, with the other people sitting to help them in their development.

Today, people are just not geared to putting this amount of time and effort -- sometimes totally selflessly -- into the development of any form of mediumship. In earlier years, sitting in circle was, often, what people did to socialize. Most of the great pioneer mediums began by sitting in a home circle. Today, this is simply not the case.

Thus, today, the occurrence, as well as the nature, of physical mediumship is nothing like it was a century ago. However, we have noticed during the last decade that there seems to be a resurgence of interest in physical mediumship and, consequently, a resurgence in the development of physical mediums. Where this will lead, only time will tell.

Spirit is Spirit is Spirit

As we stated: Mind over matter; that is what physical mediumship is all about. If this is so, and if we are all Spirit, can those of us in the body create such manifestations?

Traditionalists in Spiritualism will answer with an empathic and resounding, **"NO. Only Spirit out of body can create such manifestations."** My question is: why should that be the case? Spirit is Spirit is Spirit.

In the 1970's, this very question was put to the test by the Toronto Society for Psychical Research, in conjunction with the New Horizons Research Foundation. Their findings were published, in 1976, in the book **"Conjuring Up Philip: An Adventure in Psychokineses."**

Very briefly, the story goes like this: a group of people decided to meet regularly, just as they would if sitting for mediumistic development, with one major difference: they decided to create a fictitious character, whom they later called "Philip." Little by little, as the meetings continued, the character of Philip was being created by everyone present. More and more details were being woven into the life story of Philip. Finally, the group decided to put their experiment to the test. They wanted to see if phenomena -- attributed to "Philip" as the operator -- would occur. They got more than they bargained for.

Remember, they were sitting to experiment with psychokinesis, not mediumship. Psychokinesis, or PK, is the movement of objects via the directed use of INCARNATE mind. The most noted subject of research in PK is Uri Geller.



Not only did the Philip group get PK phenomena, they got levitation and direct communication, through raps, from Philip. But, they did NOT achieve any actual manifestation of Philip. The picture to the right is a drawing of Philip, as created by the group.

The debate is this: Were the phenomena a result of mass hallucination? Was this a genuine demonstration of the group's energy, collectively known as Philip, manifesting itself as Philip? Or was Philip actually a person, in Spirit, who decided to work with this group and telepathically fed the group information about himself and his earthly life and, then, through the power of physical mediumship -- with the group (or, perhaps, one person) acting as the medium -- physically materialized himself.

The conclusion of the Philip group, itself, was that it was strictly PK at work here. In other words, the combined mental energies of the group, focussed through the "person" of Philip, was the source of the manifestations.

What do you think? We would love to hear your comments on this.

Regardless of what actually happened with the Philip group, the results were amazing.

A full recording of the Philip group can be found in: ***"Conjuring Up Philip"*** by Iris M. Owen, with Margaret Sparrow. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, Ontario, Canada. 1976. ISBN 0-88902-003-5.

Thus it is with physical mediumship. Some mighty amazing phenomena have occurred through this vehicle of Spirit interaction and communication. As phenomenal as it all is, the implications behind physical mediumship are even more phenomenal. If spirit intelligence can do all this, what else can it do? If this is what the directed use of mind can produce, what other uses can there be for this tool of the Spirit, known as the mind? If we are Spirit in body -- and we ARE -- what are we capable of accomplishing, once we unlock the hidden mysteries of the mind? And, when we do unlock those mysteries, shall we have attained the maturity to use this knowledge wisely?

These questions go right to the very roots of mediumship in general, not just physical mediumship. This is why mediumship is so important for us all, today. This is why Spirit comes to us in the first place. Throughout human history, Spirit has come to reveal to us all one basic truth:

God is Spirit; We are Spirit; That is how we are all One

Put away the psychic hot lines; put away the crystal balls; put away the tarot cards. What Spirit wishes us to know and appreciate is very simple and very basic. Furthermore, it should be enough to unify us all, as brothers and sisters of the Spirit; all members of one family, with one God as our Parent.