

# Bible, Supernatural, Jews

(EDITORS NOTE: We remember McCandlish Phillips as a tall, gangling farm youngster working as a copy boy on the N. Y. Times. He captured the respect of veteran newsmen with a remarkable insight and outstanding reporting talent. He exposed a Bar Mitzvah boy as a violent American Nazi. His new book hits a vital menace to American young Jewry.)

A sudden and widespread increase of occult and mystical practices in the United States poses a particular danger to young Jews, a New York City newspaper reporter contends in a new book that examines the effects of these phenomena upon young people.

Examining the swift rise of public interest in such things as clairvoyance, psychicism, necromancy, astrology and witchcraft, the writer warns, "Young Jews, adrift from their heritage, need to become aware of the destruction that they may incur to their minds, their bodies and their souls by any traffic with these inventions."

So writes McCandlish Phillips in "The Bible, the Supernatural, and the Jews," published in December (1970).

The reporter undertook the book because of repeated encounters, in the course of his work, with young people who had suffered severe nervous and mental breakdowns because of their involvement--sometimes only a passing brush--with the drug culture and with one form of occultism or another.

Phillips, a reporter on the staff of The New York Times since 1955, has won four professional prizes for excellence in news writing, and is perhaps best known for his 1965 expose' of Daniel Burros, the Jewish Nazi, a young man who denied his heritage to become a member of the American Nazi Party and New York State head of the Ku Klux Klan.

Burros' career in spreading viciously anti-Semitic hate literature ended violently after the secret of his Jewish origin and upbringing was uncovered by the Times.

Phillips warns young Jews, "You should not permit yourself to be drawn into an involvement with occultism, even in a tentative and purely

experimental way, without knowing that it is possible for you to step over a threshold and past a door that will slam shut on you as soon as you stand on the far side of it--slam shut so tight that nothing you can do can get that door open again so that you can get back out."

"That does happen. I have seen it happen," he says. "For some, a single experiment, entered into in a casual or ignorant way, is enough to set them on a course of mental or spiritual ruination." Such an experiment can be particularly devastating to a young Jew, Phillips finds, because it represents a radical departure from Hebraic imperatives reaching back to Moses and the Law.

The writer explains that "the supernatural is an enormously potent realm" with powers at least as great and laws as severe as those governing electricity--therefore not at all safe for blind or uninformed tests.

The 363-page book, issued by the World Publishing Company (at \$8.95), is aimed primarily at persuading young people to see there occult practices for what they are and to turn decisively from them to the God of Israel and to the Scriptures.

A scholar has described the American college campus as "a disaster area for Judaism." Phillips explains why this is so, and he spells out what the supernatural and the occult have to do with the "generation gap."

For the book, Phillips searched the Torah and the prophets and he cites reference after specific reference from the Scriptures laying the most solemn prohibitions against occultism and false religious practices upon Jews.

"If Jewish students and Jewish parents knew what the Bible laid down concerning the supernatural, and why, it would help them to be on guard against that which is deadly in it," he writes.

The author does not ask readers to take his assertions at face value. By comparing Biblical accounts with the actual experiences of young people he has met, he helps the reader to see that what the Bible says is strongly confirmed by results in human lives.

"Two months ago I watched in closeup the disintegration of a young Jew who went out of his mind as the direct and traceable result of having watched and Indian yoga on television," he writes. "That gave him a mild taste of

the occult. He took a deep dive into it...tried some marijuana...suffered two nervous breakdowns. He lost his hold on reality, and the unreality that seized his mind was of an especially preposterous kind.

"Six months ago he was a rational, effective human being of more than ordinary capacity and initiative. Now he is a futile and oddly warped individual who cannot hold the job he formerly excelled at."

While warning against false supernaturalism, Phillips points out that the Bible places a strong emphasis on, and extends an invitation to, genuine supernatural experiences, as the prophet Joel declares in the promise, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

The Bible is a safe, sure guide to the supernatural," Phillips says. "By heeding its words we can distinguish that which will do us good from that which will do us evil."

Phillips urges a national return to the Biblical standard, warning that a continued drift from that standard will ultimately make the nation ripe for dictatorship.

"The psychic, occult and spiritual forces now at work in the United States, with a large degree of public acceptance, are sufficient to plunge this nation first toward anarchy and later into the grip of a Red or fascist tyranny," he writes in "The Bible, the Supernatural, and the Jews."

"For the 'Thou shalt not's...' of the Bible, we now have the 'Do what thou wilt' of the devil," the writer says.

In a chapter titled "Drugs and the Supernatural," Phillips traces what he calls "the direct and mysterious relationship between the use of certain drugs and the supernatural," a relationship so consistently observable that such drugs can accurately be called "chemical-supernatural agents" he says (among them, the so-called "sacred mushroom").

The author tells of "powers and forces that are causing rapid, degenerative changes in American society." Such changes, he says, "are unaccountable apart from an understanding of what lies behind them, unseen, but not unintelligible."

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