

Clairvoyance in the Perspective of Modern Science

Man has been fascinated by the phenomenon of “Clairvoyance” since ages. Whether one believes in its reality or not, one is still attracted to the possibility of seeing beyond the physical senses and obtaining help from unconventional and supernatural powers.

The term “clairvoyance” comes from a combination of two French words; “Clair” meaning clear and “voyant” meaning vision. In other words, it refers to one’s ability to sense information without using any known sensory medium, hence the terms extrasensory perception (ESP), “sixth sense” etc. Clairvoyance or “Paranormal beliefs” relate to experiences that have not been scientifically analyzed or proven.¹

A poll conducted in 2005 in United States of America, having a sample size of 1002, found that 55% subjects had faith in spiritual healing of the body through mind, 41% believed in ESP and 31% believed in the existence of mental telepathy.²

Many people have laid claims to clairvoyant abilities. Parapsychology has searched for the possibility of clairvoyance, but this concept is widely refuted by the scientific community which considers parapsychology as a pseudoscience. Numerous studies have been conducted to establish some kind of understanding of this phenomenon. In this regard, scoring of belief measures have been carried out which link these beliefs with personal and demographic parameters. Belief scores have been found to be higher in individuals with neuroticism,³ while in people with higher levels of education lower belief scores have been found.⁴ Women and younger people have been found to have higher levels of belief scores but the reports related to gender and age are slightly inconsistent.⁵

Biofield science, a comparatively newer branch of science, aims to give scientific reasoning to complex biological processes involving “energy systems of the body.”⁶ The energy system or the human energy field (HEF) is defined as a shell of energy that encompasses the human body and extends beyond it to become one with the surrounding energy field. A balanced HEF has smooth, rhythmic, symmetrical flow with a gentle vibration.⁷ The concept of “energy medicine” cannot be explained by the currently dominant biomedical

theory of “life as a chemistry”. Instead, it works on the principle that every individual has a specific energy field which runs, maintains and adjusts the biological processes of the body. Understanding biofields will provide basic scientific foundations for the development of energy medicine. Energy medicine uses minute signals to the body either through the intervention of an energy healer, person who claim to use the energy field or aura of a person to “heal” diseased bodies, or by bio-electromagnetic devices. It is worth mentioning here that the energy healers believe that diseases cause a change in the aura of a person which is manifested as an abnormal energy flow that can, not only be perceived by the ‘healer’, but also be corrected by using his/her own energy field.⁸

A question often arises; why do people seek help from paranormal sources? It has been found that certain motives direct people to rely on unconventional methods in order to give meaning to uncertain situations in life as a coping mechanism. These include search for means of taking control over difficult situations in life, inability to move on after the loss of a loved one, overcoming disease and illness, diminishing the fear of death,¹ etc.

Although modern science has made tremendous advancements in comprehending the world around us, certain questions still fall beyond its realm, and it is unable to answer them fittingly and thus fails to quench man’s thirst for answers. The journey of man and faith in paranormal powers will continue to go hand in hand as the quest for unanswered questions is an innate characteristic of the human mind.

REFERENCES

1. Irwin HJ. The psychology of paranormal belief: A researcher's Handbook. University of Hertfordshire Press; 2009.
2. Moore DW. Three in four Americans believe in paranormal. Gallup News Service. 2005. [Internet]. Available at: <https://home.sandiego.edu/~baber/logic/gallup> (Accessed on May 24, 2025)
3. Lobato E, Mendoza J, Sims V, Chin M. Examining the relationship between conspiracy theories, paranormal beliefs, and pseudoscience acceptance among a university population. *Appl Cogn Psychol* 2014; 28(5): 617-625. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3042>

Clairvoyance in the Perspective

4. Bader CD, Baker JO, Molle A. Countervailing forces: Religiosity and paranormal belief in Italy. J Sci Stud Religion 2012; 51(4): 705-20.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/23353828>
5. Ward SJ, King LA. Examining the roles of intuition and gender in magical beliefs. J Res Personal 2020; 86: 103956.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2020.103956>
6. Kennedy J. E. Personality and motivations to believe, misbelieve, and disbelieve in paranormal phenomena. J Parapsychol 2005; 69: 263-292.
7. Rubik B, Muehsam D, Hammerschlag R, Jain S. Biofield Science and Healing: History, Terminology, and Concepts. Glob Adv Health Med 2015; 4: 8-14.
<https://doi.org/10.7453/gahmj.2015.038>
8. Shields D, Fuller A, Resnicoff M, Butcher HK, Frisch N. Human Energy Field: A Concept Analysis. J Holist Nurs 2017; 35(4): 352-368.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010116678709>

Corresponding Authors:

Prof. Palvasha Waheed
Professor of Biochemistry
Assoc Editor Pak Armed Forces Med J
Army Medical College
Rawalpindi

.....