

## **Historical Overview of Hypnotism**

Hypnotic or suggestive therapy has been used as a healing technique since the beginning of history. It was of prime importance in the “sleep temples” of Ancient Greece, which were places of pilgrimage and healing.

In the Middle Ages belief in miraculous cures associated with religious shrines was widespread. Healing was brought about by touch and prayer.

During the 18th century the theory of “Magnetism” was developed. Franz Anton Mesmer argued that the planets influenced mankind through their magnetic effects on the “fluid” which occupied all space. He discovered that he could induce people into a trance-like state and concluded that he himself must be a kind of magnet, hence the term “Animal Magnetism”. This idea was soon discredited by a French Royal Commission, which found that the magnetic fluids did not exist. James Braid re-examined Mesmerism in the 19th century and reached similar conclusions. It was he who coined the term “hypnosis” for the induction of a trance-like state through simple suggestion.

In the early part of the 20th century hypnosis was used almost exclusively by stage hypnotists, thereby projecting a hopelessly distorted view of the very powerful therapeutic tool. However, in 1955 the British Medical Association endorsed the practice of hypnosis in medical school education, and in 1958 it was recognized by the American Medical Association as a healing modality. Since then hypnotism has become a valuable addition to conventional medical treatment

**Celebrate World Hypnotism Day. Thursday, January 4, 2007.**