

Sleep, Memory, and the Substance of Life

LONGFELLOW CALLED sleep the counterfeit of death. “We are such stuff as dreams are made of,” says Shakespeare. Sleep, although so common, is but little understood. Walt Whitman, in “Leaves of Grass,” tells us that when we shall know what a blade of grass is we shall know what the universe is. When we shall know the simple things of life, we shall know the greater, for the greatest is always present in the least.

Understanding sleep erases the fear of death, for they are one and the same thing. Sleep is but the younger brother.

*I have been across Death's span,
And have tasted its victories,
They lay like bright and sparkling jewels,
In a hand that shook like trembling trees.*

*I have drunk deep of Death's cold wine,
From a glass full wide and deep.
All this I did in the land of dreams,
All this I did in my sleep.*

*In sleep I tasted of food
That shall be a banquet in death.
Death and sleep are the selfsame dream,
But death draws a longer breath.*

The waking and sleeping states are like ice, water, and vapor—all of the same substance. But the sleeping state is more real than the waking. Sleep is man's great liberator. It opens the door to untold glories for a taste that shall some day be a banquet.

Science has never yet explained sleep, neither



From *Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy*, Gustave Doré (1833-1883)

Submersion in Lethe

Dante is forced to drink water from Lethe, the river in Hades, which induces forgetfulness. Memory of the ego's experiences during sleep and between lives will be consciously retained when man develops the requisite higher spiritual faculties.

can it produce an imitation.

Man is a giant and a pygmy, and for the most part the little fellow parades and the big man slumbers. Every man has a mountain within himself. The lazy man claims that he is overworked and the sluggard whines about his limited possibilities. The truth is that every man is an Atlas and carries a world on his shoulders.

Greeks and Romans believed that they touched something vital, divine, in sleep and were healed by it. In Rome there was a College of Inspired Dreams, dedicated to Aesculapius, where the sick were taken for healing.

The normal waking consciousness is only one phase of the All-Consciousness. If a person owes a bill before he goes to sleep, the same is true after he wakes. Reincarnation, the cycle of life and death, is but sleep and waking on a larger scale.

Thus we come to Memory, the connection between the different phases of life expression. Sleep shows how the persistence of physical life is maintained, notwithstanding periodical, frequent, and continuous lapses of consciousness. Memory leaps the chasm of sleep, and so we learn not to be afraid when we lose waking consciousness. After a while, when we have trained our memory to last in the longer sleep that is death, we shall remember and not be afraid. For certain hours during the day we are dead to the physical world. Among other things, we daydream.

Memory may be lost for a considerable period of time. The break in memory at the completion of physical existence is physical phenomena only; the spiritual processes are unaffected by death and rebirth. Qualities, tendencies, and attainments belonging to the individual are carried across the gap by a spiritual process. What we did yesterday is present today in effects.

The spirit is the preserver of the memory, and experiences of the soul are enduring not only within the boundaries of birth and death, but beyond death, where the soul exists. Memory is therefore a matter of soul development. Memory is the soul's remembrance.

And memory may operate either forward or backward, even as the soul can live atemporally. Even science today acknowledges the static or relative quality of time. The now keeps exfoliating out of itself yet never escapes. Plotinus said, "For that which sees is itself the thing which is seen." One could kiss his own lips if only he knew the trick.

Dreams, a part of sleep, are like faith. Both have



From *Die Bibel in Bildern*, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1789-1853)

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream

A skilled oneiromancer, Joseph is able to interpret desire world images (of mental archetypes) seen by the Pharaoh during sleep. Seven ears of grain and seven kine, in fat and thin forms, signify the years of plenty and paucity just ahead.

their substance in what is not seen. They may be intangible, but for all that they are no less real. Joseph interpreted a dream and saved millions from starving. God has always taught men through dreams, but because they are such a common experience man gives little or no thought to them. Concerning his experience on the road to Damascus, Paul said, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." To gain through dreams one must interpret them rightly—not literally but rightly.

There are dreams and dreams. We may merely repeat in the sleeping hours the thoughts we have had during the day, and the more spiritual the waking hours, the more spiritual will be the dreams, for all dreams represent some phase of the mental state of the dreamer. In the dream landscape people, places, and things represent ideas; so the language of dreams is always symbolical.

Every overcomer in Truth will master inharmony by paying attention to the things which are shown in the mind, while the conscious mind is still in sleep. Certainly there is more in mind than one is

consciously aware of, as dreams show. There is much need of cleansing, lighting up the deep subconscious mind. Explore every facet of consciousness and discover that dreams have a hidden meaning of deep value.

Interpretation of dreams is almost a forgotten art. Centuries ago much prominence was given to the work of the interpreter, for dreams were held of vital importance. Books cannot be written on the interpretation of dreams, for a dream is a personal message from the God-consciousness, giving instruction and meeting special needs. No symbol could cover such general instruction. Anyone can dream dreams, but it takes a Joseph to interpret them.

Generally speaking, there are three kinds of dreams: (1) those connected with physical suffering or mental unrest, caused chiefly by imprudent eating; (2) subconscious wanderings, vague, hazy, little-remembered upon waking; the subconscious mind is always busy—give it something worthwhile to work from each night before going to sleep; (3) direct messages from the God-mind, usually clear, often with pungent details, long remembered and sometimes recurrent.

Joseph was told in a dream to take the Babe into Egypt, and the Wise Men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. Jacob dreamed of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, and he came to the realization and illumination that God is always near man. "Surely Jehovah is in this place and I knew it not." His dream brought consciousness of the eternal nearness of God.

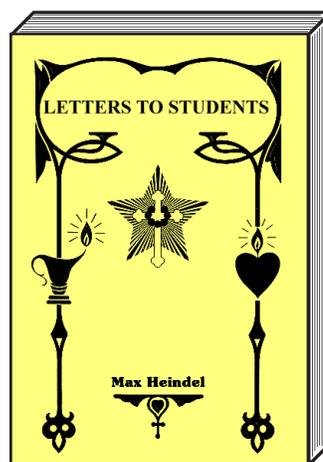
We dream things before they happen, and it could not be otherwise, for all things are created first in mind before they are made visible. If one dreams trivial things it is because greater things have not been created in mind. Yet Caleb's soldier saw a simple barley loaf in a dream, and was enabled by its correct interpretation to overcome the Philistine army.

The early Christian church owed much to a vision, the vision of St. Paul. Today men who are as receptive and obedient to the heavenly vision as Paul was are likewise receiving that vision. Our dreams do come true. Dream only the kind that you want to be true. □

—Marie Harlowe

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