

READERS' QUESTIONS

Morphine and Postmortem Consciousness; Sleepwalking: Its Cause and Cure

Question: *When a person who has been very ill for a long time and who, because of the severe suffering, is kept unconscious by morphine for many days, passes from earth life in that condition, does the released spirit become conscious when it leaves the body, or what is the condition compared to that of one who dies suddenly and in full possession of all his faculties?*

Answer: The use of morphine and other narcotics in very small doses has a deadening effect upon the nerves so that the spirit feels less sensitive in the body and more like the freed or released spirit which has left the physical vehicle. That is why, under such conditions, the mental faculties are better and the person feels such an ease of mind and body that it is like heaven itself until the reaction sets in, for at that time he begins to suffer the tortures of hell and consequently takes more in order to restore his previous sense of well-being.

But when morphine is given in such great doses as you describe, that of itself would constitute a case of fatal poisoning, with a condition similar to that of a person who passes out while under an anesthetic. The writer has met a number of the latter but has never seen one who has passed out under the action of morphine. Therefore he cannot give you the direct information you want. But those people who have died while under an anesthetic were just as conscious as the ordinary human being once the silver cord has been severed.

They went through their life panorama in about the same way as the person who passes out ordinarily and had no different experience. Therefore

we should say that the friend concerning whom you inquire has probably had no extra unpleasant experience on account of the morphine that was given him before his transition and the first feeling would be one of great relief that he had escaped from the suffering incident to the condition of severe illness which preceded death of the physical body. This feeling of relief is common to all who have suffered, no matter whether consciously or unconsciously. They are all exceedingly grateful that this is past and can scarcely realize that there is no sickness in the land of the living dead to which they go after leaving this world.

Question: *Please tell me what sleepwalking really is and if there is any way to help those who are subject to that condition.*

Answer: The *Rosicrucian Christianity Lecture No. 4* deals with dreams, sleep, hypnotism, mediumship and insanity; that is to say, the abnormal conditions of consciousness. In that Lecture a very thorough explanation has been given of the various conditions, with the exception of sleepwalking, which, however, resembles dreams in a great measure. We cannot give so full an explanation here, but suffice it to say that during the daytime the physical body which we call man is surrounded by an auric atmosphere composed of his finer vehicles, just as the yolk of an egg is surrounded by the white. But these finer vehicles interpenetrate the physical body and are the sources of power and sense perception. It is their activities which tire the physical body so that in the evening it, so to say,

collapses and the finer vehicles draw out of it leaving it helpless, sleeping upon the bed. When this complete separation has taken place the sleep is dreamless. But sometimes the ego becomes so intent upon the things in the physical world that it finds it extremely difficult to tear itself loose from the physical vehicle. It may then be half in and half out of the body. Thus the normal connection between the ego and the brain is wrenched but not fully ruptured. Under these circumstances the ego sees the things going on in the invisible worlds which it confuses with the things of the physical world and this accounts for those phantastic and foolish dreams which we sometimes have. Under such a condition the body may toss about on the bed; it may even speak and gesticulate and from that condition it is only a step to sleepwalking, where the ego compels the vehicle to leave the bed and wander about, sometimes aimlessly but at other times with a definite purpose in view.

If we remember that when the ego is outside its physical vehicle during the hours when that is left sleeping on the bed, the spirit moves with equal facility through the window or the wall as it does through the open door, and when we realize that it cannot be burned by fire nor drowned by water or fall from a house-top, we can readily realize that, being unconscious of the fact that its physical vehicle is with it, it may attempt to go out of a window and should that window be open, the physical body naturally drops to the ground and is hurt more or less according to the distance of its fall.

We can all walk a very narrow plank when it is close to the ground but if the same plank is lifted up only a few feet a sense of fear comes over us, and we would probably fall off a very wide plank were it placed hundreds of feet from the earth. But when the body is manipulated by the spirit from without it is itself unconscious and therefore fearless. Consequently it walks with impunity wherever it can get a foothold and the only danger is that the sleeper may awake, that is to say, that the ego may draw into its vehicle and assume the normal position. Then the fear will almost inevitably cause him to fall from whatever perilous position he may be in and in consequence there is an injury of more or less seriousness.

The Last Surety

The blood that burns so hot today,
And mists the mind with joy and pain,
Awakens echoes grave and gay;
The Fire is smelting us again.

But shaped anew the soul still clings
To melodies the dim past sings.

The other lives that live in us,
The mysteries of the deaths we died,
Beneath this surface of froth and fuss,
As sunken rivers slowly glide.

And murmurs from that hidden stream
Will sometimes echo through our dream.

'Tis then the cross we cannot bear
Is robbed of all its torturing load,
And joys that come not to our share
Lose all their power to tempt or goad.

For we who were 'ere time began,
Change ever through our fate as man.

—Vesta Wills Hancock

As to the remedy for this trouble we would suggest the practice of conscious relaxation of the body. It is the desire body which keeps a grip on the dense vehicle and during relaxation this desire body is taught to let go and leave the dense body inert so that if an arm or a limb is lifted it drops immediately to the bed. This practice will in time stop sleepwalking, but in the meantime if wet towels are placed on the floor, it will probably have the effect of awakening the person the moment he steps out of bed, for the higher vehicles are of a nature somewhat akin to electricity and we know that water has a wonderful drawing effect with respect to the electric current. Similarly when the feet of the body contact the wet towels on the floor, the finer vehicles are drawn into the central position with respect to the body and consciousness is restored. Thus the body is awakened and the danger of sleepwalking is averted for the time being. □