

# S L E E P A N D D E A T H

By

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It is a common experience among Those who have attained the Realization to find that the fear of death passes. In my own case for some time death has possessed more the value of an interesting adventure than of something to be feared, save in the sense of dreading physical pain that might be connected with the process. In fact, heretofore I have had to put forth an effort to resist a desire for death in the physical sense, not because of a great personal pain in this life, but for the reason that I sensed very clearly that physical embodiment acts like a brake on Consciousness, so that death is in some measure a kind of liberation for all men, save in the case of some very low types. But Recognition has brought to me a reconciliation with life in the world-field; or, in other words, It has brought me to a point where I can willingly accept a brake, since I see that it serves a useful purpose. In addition, I know that release will come in its own time when the particular work here is finished, and thus all that is required is to be faithful to a duty which will not be of unreasonable duration. So actually I am more concerned now with the well-being of the physical personality than at any time previously. But my for it is like the artisan's care for a useful tool, plus a certain feeling that it is meet to do justice to the child — the personality. But so far as death itself is concerned I find it quite devoid of grave dramatic significance. For I realize clearly that what we commonly call death is but a shifting in the modes of life or consciousness, and most emphatically not a terminus. I cannot say that I feel any personal yearning for immortality, as I am attracted rather by the Bliss of pure impersonal Consciousness. However, I do accept the responsibilities of indefinitely continued individuality, as I realize that there are very important reasons for doing so. Thus, today,

I stand in this position: I know that, in the real sense, there is no death or birth; that, in the individual sense, I can maintain continuation indefinitely; and finally, that physical death is merely a passing incident which effects but a transformation in the mode under which Consciousness manifests. In all this there is no room for any real fear.

In a profound sense, I have already died, though the body still persists, and I did not have a hard time in the essential dying. The organism very soon acquires more from the Transition than it lost, and it is now clearly becoming stronger. But it is a fact that I cannot too strongly emphasize that the essence of dying is not the dissolution of the physical body. Fundamentally, it is a change of level of perception and apperception. Now, we come to a point of the very highest practical importance. If a man, while embodied, has not learned to integrate consciously the embodied with the disembodied levels of perception, then so far as the personal consciousness is concerned, death involved entering a state like dreamless sleep. In the higher sense it is not an unconscious state, but it is unconscious for the personal man, except that he may experience a sort of dreaming consciousness constructed along the formal lines of his embodied experience. Let the reader keep it well in mind that this is not a matter of an arbitrary or imaginative eschatology but, rather, a necessity that must be clear from purely epistemological considerations. The point is simply this: If a conscious being has integrated self-consciousness in a given kind of complex mode, such as the five-sense perceptive consciousness of man, and if it is familiar with no other mode of consciousness, then if it is suddenly severed from that mode ~~of consciousness~~ and thrust into one utterly different, no matter how bright the Light of the latter may be, it will seem to this being as unconsciousness. After a time self-consciousness may awaken to function in the new mode, but there will be no basis for recognizing the new entity as being the same individual who experiences in terms of the former mode.

on the physical plane, but it remains active on other levels with the continuity of self-consciousness remaining unbroken. It is, in addition, possible to correlate at least some measure of the inner state with the brain-mind so that the outer memory will retain something. But this memory is not the essential mark of the continuity of the self-consciousness.

The dream-state is so important that something more should be said concerning its nature. Just as it is true that man can be essentially dreaming while active in the physical body — and most life here is in this state — it is likewise true that some of the states entered while the body sleeps are far more truly waking-states than any which are possible while in the physical body. The experiencing of these states with most men is very rare, but they do occur more or less frequently with some individuals. They have certain noble earmarks. The most important of these is the effect they have on waking life. They may enrich, deepen, or give new direction to the outer life. They tend toward an increase of genuine rationality. These are Adumbrations of the Real Life.

In contrast, the dream-state casts a glamour, which may be painful or pleasant, but in any case tends to produce a drug-like effect both upon the will and the reason. In addition to drugs, the light of the moon produces a somewhat similar effect. The hypnotic state is a dream-state par excellence. This consciousness has the property of possessing a man, instead of the individual possessing and commanding it. It tends to lead him away from the decisions made in the light of clear and discriminating judgment. It is very characteristic of the consciousness found in psychological crowds and affords the reason why the control of crowd-consciousness is effected most successfully by psychological devices rather than by appeal to rational judgment.\*

Dream-consciousness, characteristically, has a quality which may be called 'blurred' or 'smudged.' It is quite lacking on crystalline sharp-

ness or the quality of precision. The logical capacity is weak in the dreaming states. There is also a lack of firmness of will. The dreamer floats along in his consciousness, instead of being an achiever in it. He may dream in terms of ideality and beauty and be highly freed from the gross and the sensual, but the dreamer, as such, lacks character and strength. On the whole, his equipment is peculiarly poor for breaking from bondage to subject-object consciousness. He may be a good man and earn long periods of dream-like bliss, but all this is less than the Liberated State. So, all in all, it should be quite obvious that for him who would attain the Higher Consciousness one of the first necessities is the mastering of dreaming tendencies. To effect this mastery there are several useful disciplines that can be devised, all of which cultivate are the opposite of the dream-like consciousness. Thus, all activities that the qualities that require a strong, positive, and incisive use of the mind, and all will-directed efforts, particularly if in directions that are more or less distasteful, are highly helpful.

Strong intellectuality affords one of the best resistances to the dream-like state. Its danger is that it may develop egoism to such an degree that it becomes a serious barrier. But my judgment would be that it is easier to master an overly developed egoism — for here we have strength to work with — than it is to build the necessary strength in the too dreamy consciousness. So I should place somnambulism, rather than egoism and evil, as the first among the problems that must be mastered in this humanity if it is to progress toward Liberation.

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\* Incidentally, this affords an explanation of the fatal defect in all popular governments. Democracy can succeed in an effective sense when, and only when, the mass of the electorate have become awakened in the real sense. Otherwise, folly has the advantage with respect to wisdom in casting the glamour that appeals to mass-consciousness.