

SpiritistNews

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Edited by

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B Inc.

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In this issue

The SSB presents to you some background on what will be discussed in our next two workshops on Past Lives, Past Memories (April 24) and Sleep and Dreams (May 15). All the texts represent the Spiritist view on the topics above mentioned.

Enjoy it !!!!



PAST LIVES AND US

We do, of course, have hints of our past. On being reborn, we bring with us the progress we have attained before. In this sense, we are born exactly the way we have made ourselves. Yet in another way each life begins for us from a new starting point. Regardless of what we were in the past, we live today with the consequences of previous actions. In our frailties and bad dispositions, we have a glimpse of what we need to be working on. We should work hard at ridding ourselves of these problems until no trace of them is left. Here is where conscience serves us. The good resolutions we make are the voice of conscience, which both calls attention to what is right and wrong and gives us the strength to resist temptation.

Moreover, our forgetfulness of the past only occurs during the incarnate life. On returning to the spirit world, we regain our memory of the past. Our forgetfulness is temporary, a slight interruption that on Earth is analogous to a night of deep sleep from which we wake with an integral recollection of what we did the day before.

And it is not only after so-called physical death that the spirit can recover its memory of the past.

Past memory is never lost, even during the incarnate life.

This is demonstrated by the fact that during sleep - a period when we enjoy a certain amount of freedom - the spirit is aware of its past acts. It knows then why it suffers and sees that its suffering is just. Our forgetfulness of the past, then, only occurs when the spirit is re-immersed in the flesh for everyday life. But even though the spirit has no precise memory of its past lives - a remembrance that could prove painful and disrupting to personal relations - the spirit can draw strength from the fuller awareness it enjoys while the body sleeps¹. ■

Why cannot the incarnate spirit remember its past?

- "As human beings you cannot, and may not, know everything. God, being wise, has determined so. Without the veil that hides certain things from you, you would be dazzled, as if you had suddenly passed from darkness to light. Through the forgetfulness of the past you are more fully your essential selves." (*The Spirits' Book*, q392).

¹ *The Gospel Explained by Spiritism by Allan Kardec, -Chapter V Translated and Edited by AKES, 2003.*

Many Lives



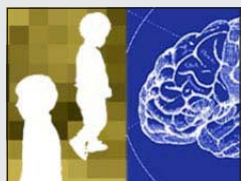
The fear some people have about ever-expanding circles of relationships as the result of having lived many lives is basically selfish. It shows that their ability to love is too limited for them to embrace a large number of people. Look at it this way: Would parents who have many children love them any less than they would love only one child? But selfish people can rest easy on this score: Their fear is groundless. The fact that a person may have had ten incarnations does not mean that in the spirit world that person will find ten fathers, ten mothers, ten wives, and a corresponding number of children and relatives. In all likelihood, we will meet there the loved ones we knew on Earth. In some instances they may assume the same roles they played here; in others they will not. (*The Gospel Explained by Spiritism by Allan Kardec, AKES -2003*)

SUCCESSIVE LIVES

Life in the flesh is the sleep of the soul. It is the dream, sad or joyous, and while it lasts we forget the preceding dreams; that is to say, past incarnations. Nevertheless, it is always the same individuality which persists under its two forms of existence. In its evolution it traverses alternatively periods of contraction and dilation, shadow and light. The personality is restrained or expanded in its two successive states, as it loses and finds itself in the alternating periods. The soul, arrived at its moral and intellectual apogee, finishes forever with dreams. In each one of us there is a mysterious book wherein all things are inscribed in ineffaceable letters; sealed to our eyes during terrestrial life, it opens in space. The advanced spirit reads these pages, and finds there instructions and impressions which the material man cannot comprehend. This book is what we call the etheric or astral form. The more it is purified and refined, the more precise are our memories. Our lives, one by one, emerge from the shadows and defile before us to accuse or glorify us. Then the spirit contemplates the formidable reality - it measures its degrees of elevation. How sweet to the soul in that hour are good actions accomplished! How bitter the works of selfishness and iniquity.

INTEGRAL MEMORY

We must remember that, during incarnation, the astral body is covered by the material like a thick mantle. It compresses and smothers its radiations. That is the cause of its forgetfulness. Delivered from this restriction, the spirit rises and finds the fullness of its memory. The inferior spirit remembers little but its last incarnation, that is all that is essential for him, as it gives the sum of his progress, and by it he can measure his situation. Those souls who were not impregnated in this life with the idea of pre-existence remain long ignorant of their former lives. They have not interrogated the depths of their being: they have not opened the book wherein all is engraved. They retain the prejudices of earth, and these prejudices, in place of inciting them to search, turn them from it. The superior spirits, by a sentiment of charity, knowing the weakness of those souls, and knowing that the knowledge of their past is not yet necessary to them, spare them the painful picture. But a day comes when through suggestions from on high, their wills awake, and they turn the leaves and read the hidden pages of memory. There their past lives appear like a distant mirage. For the purified soul, memory is constant, and the awakened spirit has the power to revive at will his past, to see the present, with its consequences, and to penetrate into the mysterious future, whose depths are illuminated for a moment, and then are plunged again into the sombreness of the unknown. (Life and Destiny by Leon Denis, SAB 2002)



Does a spirit think as a child or as an adult during infancy of the body?

- "Because the brain is underdeveloped during infancy, the spirit cannot show the reasoning capacity of an adult. Its

intellectual range remains narrow until the infant grows older and its reason evolves. Furthermore, the perturbation the spirit experiences during the process of incarnating does not immediately stop at birth; it ends only gradually, as the body's organs mature."

- *The Spirits' Book* q 380



Reincarnation

by Dr. Ian Stevenson

The evidence for reincarnation that we have suggests that living human beings (and perhaps nonhuman animals also) have minds, or souls if you like, that animate them when they are living and that survive after they die. Most

biologists will stigmatize this suggestion as 'vitalism' and declare it to have been discredited decades ago. However, new evidence - and even examination of older, neglected evidence - may restore the credit of vitalism. I do not think scientists in other disciplines need lose anything except some of their assumptions - such as that a person is nothing but a physical body - if they examine open-mindedly the evidence we have of life after death. Reincarnation, at least as I conceive it, does not nullify what we know about evolution and genetics. It suggests, however, that there may be two streams of evolution - the biological one and a personal one - and that during terrestrial lives these streams may interact. How they might do this we can barely envisage at present, although in a later chapter I put forward some tentative speculations about processes that may occur.

The idea of reincarnation offers a contribution to the understanding of the uniqueness of individual persons. ■

(Book: Children Who Remember Previous Lives by Ian Stevenson, M.D. - 2001)

Feelings of Empathy



The sense of unity and affection that exists between relatives indicates prior feelings of empathy. This is why, when we see a family member whose character, tastes, and inclinations differ markedly from other members of the same family, we often say that the person doesn't belong to that family.

The remark expresses a deeper truth than we realize. In certain families, God lets spirits who are uncongenial, or strangers to each other, reincarnate together with the dual purpose of serving as a test for some members of the family, and as a means of progress for others. In this way, less enlightened spirits have a chance to improve themselves by living among higher-minded ones, and benefiting from the affectionate care they receive. Their characters grow milder, their dispositions become more refined, and their hostility disappears. In the end, this is how solidarity among the different orders of spirits comes about. In the same manner solidarity develops among the peoples and nations of Earth. ■

(The Gospel Explained by Spiritism by Allan Kardec, AKES)

S L E E P

The purpose of sleep is to rest the body. The spirit, however, doesn't need rest, so while the physical senses are in a passive state, it partly frees itself from the body and in this state enjoys all its faculties. Sleep allows us to renew ourselves both at the organic and the psychic level. While the body recovers the energy it expended during its waking hours, the spirit renews itself through contact with other spirits. From what it is given to see, listen, and learn in this state, the soul derives resolutions that afterwards will occur during the day as intuitions. Sleep, then, represents the temporary return of the exile to the true world; it is analogous to a moment of freedom granted to a prisoner.

But sometimes—just as in the case of an unrepenting prisoner—the spirit does not always use its moments of freedom for its own progress. If it is inclined to wrong-doing, it will spend its time in the company of like-minded spirits instead of in the company of good spirits and will go to places where it can give free rein to its desires.

Prayer

God, for a few short instants my soul will be together with other spirits. I beg the good spirits to come and advise me. Guardian Angel, please help me keep a lasting and beneficial impression of this encounter when I wake!

GOSPEL EXPLAINED BY THE SPIRITISM by Allan Kardec – AKES 2003

D R E A M S

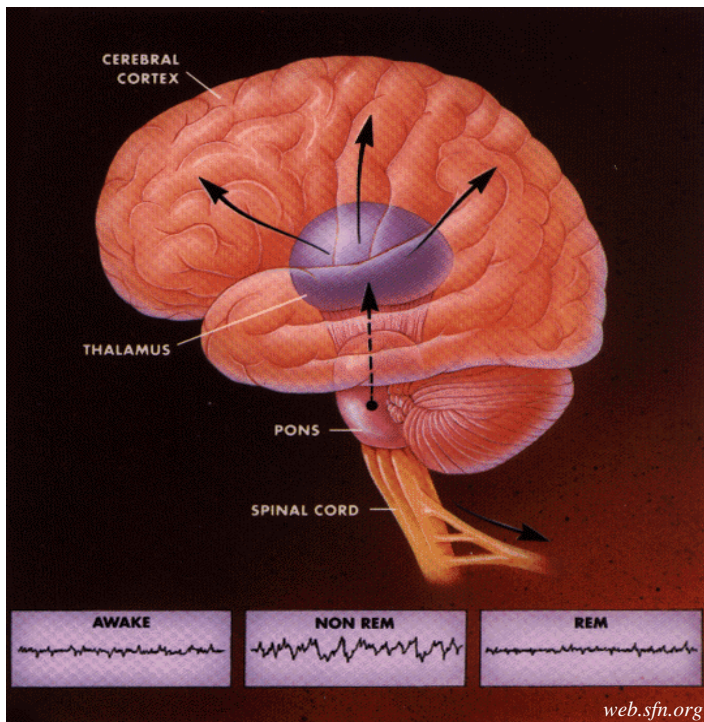


Dreams are a product of the freeing of the soul, which becomes more energetic as the activities of daily life are suspended. In the dream state, the soul enjoys an all-penetrating clairvoyance which extends to far away and unknown places, and even other realms of life. This state of freedom may also produce the recollection of events from present and prior lives.

However, many times we are struck by a fantastical jumble of incoherent images. These images result from the mixing up in the memory of extravagant scenes observed in other domains and the lively impressions of incidents of our earthly lives.

The incoherence of dreams can be explained still further by limitations in our ability to remember them clearly. The situation is somewhat similar to that of a story from which sentences and parts of sentences have been accidentally deleted. Place the deleted parts of those sentences back into the story at random and you will find that all intelligible meaning has been lost.

-The Spirits' Book by Allan Kardec, Cap XII. AKES 2003



When people sleep, they experience periods of Rapid Eye Movement. During this stage, which is associated with dreaming, the brain becomes very active. REM sleep and dreaming are triggered by the pons and neighboring structures in the brainstem. The pons sends signals to the thalamus and the cerebral cortex — which is responsible for most cognitive activities. The pons also sends signals to shut off the neurons in the spinal cord. (Illustration by Lydia Kibiuk)

Why don't we always recall our dreams? - "In what you call sleep, it recovers parts of its freedom and contacts those closest to it, on this or other realms. But the body's matter is heavy and it is difficult for the spirit, on waking, to retain the impressions it received during sleep, since these did not come through its physical organs." (SB by Allan Kardec, q. 403)

What happens while we are sleeping?

Physically...

- The brain is active.
- There are different sleep stages
- REM (Rapid Eye Movement)



Dreams phase!

Important for:

1. Stability of brain synapses;
2. Memory consolidation;
3. "Almost all synaptic activations in embryonic circuitry in some animals occur during sleep states";
4. "A marked increase in the excitability of the brain's internal communication systems occurs during REM sleep."

Spiritually...

Importance:

-The spirit is never inactive!

-We have continuous thought.

-Our abilities are expanded while the body is resting.

-The body does not need his presence, then the spirit travels through space.

- To keep in touch with the spiritual plane.

- It is a way to offset our close contact with earthly energies.

- To replenish ourselves in the sources of higher good.

- It is a time of leisure before returning to our tasks.

- Reinforce our goals for this reincarnation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2004 WORKSHOP SERIES

Apr 24 – Past lives, Past memories
May 15 – Sleep and Dreams
Jun 05 – We are never alone
Jun 26 – Our mediumship, Our Sixth Sense
Jul 17 – Spiritual Treatment
Aug 07 – Astral cities: Our spiritual homes
Aug 28 – Peace at work
Sep 18 – Photography of the Thought
Oct 16 – America and its role on Earth's spirituality
Nov 13 – SOS Family
Dec 04 – The Spiritist View of Jesus, the Christ

Activities for CHILDREN are provided, while parents are at the workshop !!!!

7:30 - 9:00 PM

Ruscombe Mansion Community Health Center
 4801 Yellowwood Avenue - Community Hall
 Baltimore - MD

JOIN OUR ACTIVITIES !!!

SPIRITIST THOUGHT STUDY GROUP

These meetings take place every **Thursday** from 8:00PM to 9:30PM for the study of the Spiritist Doctrine. They are open to the general public. For more information, please contact us.

Phone: 410 - 837-0991 or 410-382-5328
 e-mail: ssb@ssbaltimore.org
<http://www.ssbaltimore.org>

FRATERNAL COUNSELING & SPIRITUAL TREATMENT

These services are offered every **Monday** from 7:00-7:45PM. Please, contact us for more information.

Phone: 410 - 837-0991 or 410-382-5328
 e-mail: ssb@ssbaltimore.org

Mediumship Educational Meetings (by invitation only)

These meetings take place every **Monday** from 8:00 PM to 9:30PM for the study and practice of mediumship according to the Spiritist Doctrine.

Phone: 410 - 837-0991 or 410-382-5328
 e-mail: ssb@ssbaltimore.org

Message

GOD LOVES YOU

God loves you,
and you know it.

His tenderness
caresses your face,
and His hands sustain
you.

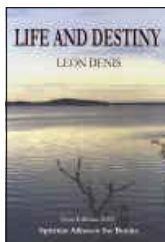
His breath vitalizes you.
His silent voice
reaches your ears
with blessings,
with hope,
and guidance.

God seeks for you
and finds you.
Now that you feel Him
let yourself be
permeated
and be guided
to the happy destiny
awaiting you.

God lives,
and manifests Himself,
and extends His love
through you.
You know this...
And wherever you are,
God is with you

Child of God - Divaldo
Franco - by Joanna de
Angelis (Spirit)

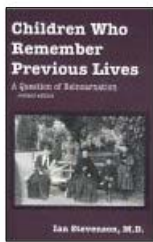
RECOMMENDED BOOKS



LIFE and DESTINY by Leon Denis

This book is the crowning work of Mr. Denis's three score years and ten of life - the ripe fruit of more than half a century of continual study and research. It can be said of Mr. Denis (which cannot be said of all authors), that his personal life accords with his beautiful philosophy. From a troubled and painful youth, he has slowly climbed an ascending path of difficulties, overcome obstacles and surmounted sorrows, attained profound knowledge and a wide education, and put into daily practice the lofty principles he sets forth in this volume. It is rarely that a mind of such an analytically scientific bent, as that of Leon Denis, is at the same time so poetical. This, together with the writer's profoundly reverential nature, makes his work of threefold value. He appeals to those who pursue psychological research in a purely scientific manner; he appeals to those who value noble and moving literature; and he appeals to every soul that loves and believes in a God great enough to be the Supreme Creator of this magnificent universe.

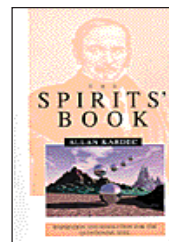
Edited by SAB-2002



Children Who Remember Previous Lives by Ian Stevenson, M.D.

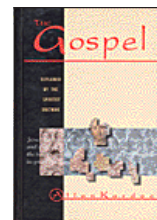
Can human personality survive death, to return in another body? Here, in a newly revised edition, is a classic work on an intriguing phenomenon: children who claim to remember previous lives. Following an overview of reincarnation beliefs and evidence, author Ian Stevenson discusses representative children and the stories they tell. He examines the research methods, analyzes the cases (including how they are influenced by culture), and considers the implications of reincarnation for some unsolved problem in psychology and medicine. Covering 40 years of experience, including new replication studies and investigations, this is a work that opens the reader's eyes and mind to ever more fascinating possibilities.

Published by McFarland and Co.-2001



The Spirits' Book by Allan Kardec

"The Spirit's Book contains the basic tenets of Spiritism. But whether one is a Spiritist or not, this book is a must-read for every spiritually-inclined person. The "dialogues" between Kardec and the spirit instructors reveal a wisdom that challenges many of our preconceived notions about our spiritual reality, as well as about the causes and purposes of many things and events that are seemingly inexplicable.



The Gospel - Explained by the Spiritist Doctrine by Allan Kardec

"The Gospel rediscovers the richness of the New Testament. Allan Kardec's selection of the timeless moral teachings of Jesus is the rock on which we are called to establish our spiritual houses and to build a new human community. It reintroduces us to a work that has shaped our thought for thousands of years."

Edited by AKES-2003