

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*What is a good way to connect the states of waking and dreaming so that there is no interval during which the sleeper is unconscious?*

The subject of this inquiry is one which is usually not considered. Those who have considered it have generally thought it to be not worth while. But the subject is important. Although the unconscious interval between waking and dreaming cannot be done away with as long as man is nothing more than man, it can be shortened considerably. In the waking state a man is conscious of the things about him, and in a certain way he is conscious of himself. In the dreaming state he is conscious in a different way.

The real man is a conscious principle, the conscious light within the body. He, as that conscious principle, contacts in the waking state the pituitary body, which is a gland embedded in the skull. At the pituitary body nature communicates to him information concerning the involuntary operations which are carried on in the body, such as breathing, digesting, secreting, and the results of these operations as pleasurable or paining the nerves. The senses, by means of the nerves, make the conscious principle aware of the things in the world. Nature acts on this conscious principle from within and from without. During the waking state, from within as to the condition of the man's body; from without as to the objects of sense perception in the world. Nature acts on him through the sympathetic nervous system, the recording station of which, in the brain, is the pituitary body. A human has his hold on his body through the central nervous system, the governing center of which is also the pituitary body. So the conscious principle is in contact with nature through the pituitary body, and reacts on nature and has its hold on the body through the same pituitary body.

The pituitary body is the seat and center from which the conscious principle receives impressions from nature and from which the conscious principle controls, acts with or acts against nature by means of the central nervous system. The flashes of contact in the waking state on the pituitary body interfere with and restrain the involuntary and natural functions of the body. That

flashing light on the pituitary body places a strain on the natural operations of the body, and prevents the life forces from repairing the tissues and organs and machinery of the body, and so keeping it in vigor. The light flashes keep the whole body in tension, and if the tension were continued long enough death would follow, as no life forces can enter while the body is in tension under the influence of these flashes. To keep the body going it is therefore necessary that the body has periods when it is not interfered with, and when it can rest and recuperate. For this reason a period of what is called sleep is provided for the body. Sleep furnishes a condition to the body where the life forces can enter, repair, and nourish it. Sleep is possible when the light of the conscious principle ceases to flash on the pituitary body.

The conscious principle is a part of the mind; it is that portion of the mind which contacts the body. The contact is made through the central nervous system and is governed through the pituitary body. Waking is the state resulting from the connection existing between the central nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system by means of the common center, the pituitary body. As long as the conscious principle flashes its light on the pituitary body a man is awake—that is, aware of the world. As long as impressions are given to the conscious principle through the sympathetic nervous system, the conscious principle keeps its light flashing on the pituitary body and so grips the whole physical body. When the body is too weary from exhaustion and is depleted of its vital force it cannot receive impressions from nature and can therefore not transmit them to the pituitary body, even though the mind would there receive them. That is the case where the body is tired but the mind wants to be awake. Another phase is that where the mind itself is indifferent to impressions it may receive from nature and is itself ready to withdraw. In both cases sleep will result.

Sleep sets in when the switch connecting the two sets of nerves in the pituitary body is turned so that the connection is broken.

After the connection is broken the conscious principle is in a state of dreaming, or in a state concerning which no memory is retained. Dreams occur when the conscious principle flashes, as it often does, upon the nerves of the senses, which are connected with the brain. If the conscious principle does not flash upon these nerves there are no dreams.

During the waking hours the conscious principle is in intermittent, flash-like contact with the pituitary body. This flash-

like contact is what man calls consciousness, but in fact that is not consciousness. However, as far as it goes, and inasmuch as it is all that man in his present condition can know of himself, let it, for the sake of brevity, be called consciousness. That is the basis on which he stands in his waking state. He would hardly be conscious or aware of anything if the exterior world did not act on him and stir him up. While he is stirred up by nature he is conscious in various ways, and the total of all the pleasurable or painful sensations is what he calls himself. The residuum of the total of the impressions furnished by nature he identifies as himself. But that is not himself. This totality of impressions prevents him from knowing what or who he is. As he does not know who he is, this mere statement will not give much information to the average man, still it will be of value if its meaning is realized.

There is, as a man goes to sleep, a dark period between being conscious in the waking state and being conscious in the dreaming state. This dark period, during which man is unconscious, is caused by the break in the connection when the switch is turned off and the light of the conscious principle no longer flashes on the pituitary body.

A man who is not conscious of anything apart from the impressions received through the senses in the waking state or the dreaming state, is, of course, not conscious of himself, as it is called, when no sense impressions are received, either in waking or in dreaming. The conscious light has to be aware of itself apart from the senses in waking or dreaming, in order that a man may be conscious. If the light is not conscious of itself and of a state entirely different from what it is known as in the waking and dreaming states, then it cannot have an unbroken conscious period between the two states. Although man cannot be continuously conscious, he may shorten the interval during which he is not conscious, so that it may seem to him that there is no break.

Before the answer to the question can be understood the existence of these facts has to be understood, even though the facts themselves may not be realized. When these facts are understood, one who wants to be conscious during the dark period between the waking and the dreaming state will understand that that conscious condition is not to be lived in merely at the time in view, unless that conscious condition exists during the waking and the dreaming states; in other words, that a man has to be more than a man who is conscious of what he calls himself, but who is in reality only the residuum of the sum total of the impressions which the senses make

on the conscious light of the mind. He should be conscious that he is the conscious light of the mind, as distinct from the perception of the things on which the light is turned.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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