

Can Science Prove We Survive After Death?

Strange Sensations Are Described By Patients Who Apparently Died, Then Returned To Life

By Peter Wolff

CAN it be proven that we survive after death—that our personal entities continue in a life about which we know nothing?

If people persist in committing suicide by carbon monoxide and cyanide poison as they have for the past few years, this question may be definitely answered. Indications are that it may be answered by "Yes! Individual lives continue, and death is merely a phase, a transition."

A year or more ago, medical science was helpless to aid a case of cyanide poisoning. Today there is evidence that a patient can be pronounced dead by all tests—and be revived within a few moments!

In rare cases the would-be suicide remembers his experience! He returns to life, and relates what happened to him: where he went, what he saw and did.

In the first case of this kind, the would-be suicide was Charles Riley. He was a young man disappointed in love. The girl he wanted to marry had turned him down, and he took the shortest route to forgetfulness—potassium cyanide.

He was rushed to the San Francisco Emergency Hospital. His pulse had stopped, there were no visible signs of life. Under ordinary circumstances his case was hopeless, but a new treatment was ready for exactly such a case.

Health Director Dr. J. C. Geiger was called.

"We can save him if we work quickly," he said. And they gave the boy an injection of dye—methylene blue. The patient's skin began gradually to turn a faint turquoise, and in an unbelievably short time he was brought back to life. Within a few hours he was able to leave the hospital, completely recovered.

Fantastic and impossible? It seemed to be at the time, but its authenticity is based upon hospital records. The case was so unusual that young Riley, a medical student, was asked to write down his experience.

WHAT he wrote and told was of more importance than the details of cyanide poisoning.

He remembered being conscious, somewhere—while his physical body was dead.

"The cyanide," he reported, "was painless. It paralyzed my arms and legs, and crept upwards. I became unconscious quickly, without pain. There was a strange sensation of floating, as if I were being lifted from my body. It is difficult to explain to anyone who hasn't experienced the same thing. It wasn't like dying

at all, but like floating off somewhere, being released from the world I knew."

To his friends he explained further, that although he knew his body had died, he hadn't died—but had simply entered a strange new life to which he hadn't time to grow accustomed before he was called back by methylene blue.

Another man "came back" the other day under similar conditions, but recalled nothing except that death—to him—was a dark, silent interval, during which he was conscious of nothing whatever.



Dr. J. C. Geiger, San Francisco's noted health officer, and an attendant making an injection of Methylene Blue into the arm of a patient who has attempted suicide.

An invaluable phial of Methylene Blue used by Dr. Geiger in restoring to life persons who have attempted suicide with certain types of poison.

Eugene Kratzer was "tired of it all," and took a deadly dose of cyanide. Again the ambulance clanged to the hospital, and again Dr. Geiger injected methylene blue. Kratzer was snatched from the grave, and one hour later was embracing his daughter and deciding that life wasn't so bad after all, that now he "wanted to live again". But death had been an utter blackness.

"There wasn't anything," he said. "I remember swallowing the acid. The light went out for me. I didn't feel or see or sense a thing until I woke up in the hospital. It's a great pity I can't tell about it, but—there wasn't anything to tell."

Kratzer's case proved again that methylene blue "brings you back". It did not answer the question of survival after the body had ceased to function, but the simple fact that he "came back" raised a logical query.

Presumably a spark of life had been called back to inhabit his physical body. What was that vitalizing force during the brief period of death? If it had not existed as an entity, how could Kratzer have lived again? Because the patient met blankness when he passed away proves only that he was unaware of his experience—much as many people drop off to sleep for hours without dreaming. His lack of awareness did not prove that he had

stertorous and irregular respiration and other definite physical signs of poisoning had appeared. A mixture of 95 per cent oxygen and 5 per cent carbon dioxide ("carbogen"), was administered at the same time the dye was given intravenously. Recovery was complete and rapid without remarkable incident.

The effects of the dye in cyanide poisoning are seen within a few minutes following the beginning of the intravenous injection, and are so definite that they may be described as truly dramatic."

A MUCH discussed case is that of William Pelley, author and mystic, whose experience with death is perhaps the most remarkable of modern times.

Pelley had spent many years in reading occult literature, religious tracts, and the beliefs of other men—laymen and scientists. He wanted very much to believe something definite regarding personal survival, but he ended by doubting the value of everything he had read relative to an after life.

One evening in his cabin in the Sierra Madre mountains of California he went to bed early, intending to rest. He had been smoking his customary dozen cigars and pipe during his writing day, but felt no ill effects. He was, in fact, particularly healthy and well, mentally and physically. His mind was untroubled by worry, and he lay back to plan the next day's work. Gradually he dropped off to sleep.

At four in the morning he suddenly awoke—he tried to move, but found that he was suffering unaccountably from what seemed to be a heart attack.

"I'm dying," he murmured, and was convinced that the end had come. He was startled, somewhat frightened, and then—

Helping hands seemed to lift him up, as if taking him from his body. When he had lost consciousness he felt as if he were spinning toward the earth in a swirling spiral. This sensation ceased, and he "awoke" in a portico surrounded by friends he had known on earth before they had died.

Nearby was a Roman plunge. As he began to recognize his friends, they suggested that he take a dip. He stood up, found himself naked, and was a little embarrassed. Then he sank into the pool of clear water. When he came out he was strangely refreshed, and no longer noticed his lack of clothes. He felt, in fact as if he were fully dressed.

The atmosphere in the portico was turquoise blue, and further away he discerned a blue haze which reached out endlessly into the distance.

He felt, gradually, quite at home—it did not seem strange to be there, any more than it had seemed strange to live on earth.

Seven minutes later, by the clock, he lost his consciousness of the new world into which he had spun, and opened his eyes in his own room. He looked out of the window, where a moon had come up to dimly light a pale sky. He rose, and felt perfectly well—the heart attack having passed and left him stronger than ever. He felt like "a new man", mentally and physically.

No further experiences of that

nature occurred to him, but he was convinced from his "seven minutes in eternity" that the human identity is not lost by death.

TIME will inevitably answer the age old question of "do we survive?", but meanwhile several research investigators are not content to wait.

Hereward Carrington, who has probably witnessed more interesting psychic manifestations than most men, wrote several volumes on the subject. He does not deny the phenomena which occurred through various mediums, but his conclusion (due possibly to Scotch caution) was that the case for survival is "not proven".

There is one certain test, which to most investigators would be satisfactory. Through some source let a person who has died make known a fact heretofore known only to himself. Let that fact be proven. It may be foretelling an event, locating an article lost, or make himself known by a sealed message which he (like the late magician Houdini and others) had left behind.

A tremendous reward was offered to anyone able to read the message left by Houdini, but so far no medium has succeeded, although many attempts have been made.

Perhaps, as scholars and investigators sometimes think, we are not intended to learn the answer to this question.

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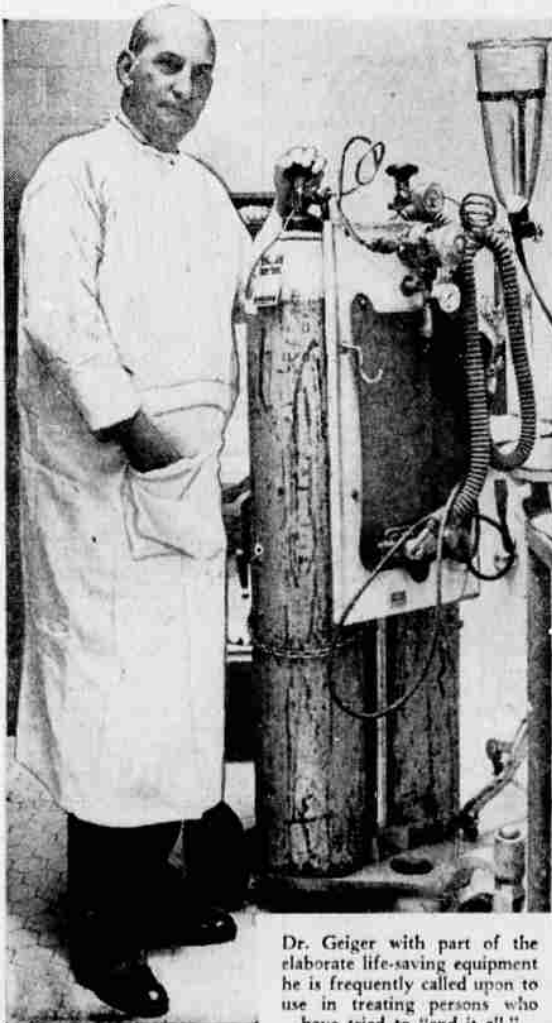
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