

An Early Near-Death Experience

By Michael E. Tymn

“What are we to make of it?”

That question was put to members of the Royal Medical Society by Sir Auckland Geddes, a British surgeon turned statesman, at the Society’s bicentenary celebration in 1937. Sir Auckland was referring to the strange experience of a man who had seemingly “died” and then returned with a detailed memory of all he had seen and done. The “near-death experience” phenomenon, which strongly suggests a spirit or etheric body in addition to the physical body, was for the most part unheard of then.

Sir Auckland explained that while the man (the experiencer) wished to remain anonymous, he had no doubt as to the man’s credibility. “Of one thing only can we be quite sure,” he said. “It is not a fake. Without certainty of this I should not have brought it to your notice.” Although not clear, it might be inferred from Sir Auckland’s preliminary comments that the experiencer was another physician.

The complete account of the NDE was read by Sir Auckland and was recorded in the *Scotsman* and in the June 1937 issue of *The Edinburgh Medical Journal*.

The experiencer reported that on November 9th, a few minutes after midnight, he began to feel very ill. By 2 a.m., he realized he was suffering from acute gastro-enteritis, which kept him vomiting and purging until about 8 a.m. By 10 a.m., he concluded that he had developed all the symptoms of a very acute poisoning, including intense gastro-intestinal pain, diarrhea, and with “pulse and respiration quite impossible to count.” He wanted to ring for assistance, but could not. Realizing that he was very ill, he quickly reviewed his financial position.

“... at no time did my consciousness appear to me to be in any way dimmed, but I suddenly realized that *my* consciousness was separating from another consciousness, which was also me,” the experiencer reported. “These for purposes of description we could call the A and B consciousness, and throughout what follows, the ego attached itself to the A consciousness.”

The experiencer recognized that the B personality belonged to the body. As his condition grew worse, he noticed that his heart was fibrillating rather than beating. “I realized that the B consciousness belonging to the body was beginning to show signs of becoming composite, that is, built up of ‘consciousness’ from the head, the heart, the viscera & c.

“These components became more individual, and the B consciousness began to disintegrate, while the A consciousness which was now me, seemed to be altogether outside my body, which it could see. Gradually I realized that I could see not only my body and the bed in which it was, but everything in the whole house and garden, and then I realized that I was seeing not only ‘things’ at home, but in London and Scotland, in fact wherever my attention was directed it seemed to me; and the explanation which I received, from what source I do not know, but which I found myself calling to myself my mentor, was that I was free in a time dimension of space, wherein ‘now’ was in some way equivalent to ‘here’ in the ordinary three-dimension space of everyday life.”

The experiencer then realized that his vision included not only “things” in the ordinary three-dimensional world, but also “things” in the four

or more dimensional places in which he found himself.

“From now on the description is and must be entirely metaphorical,” he continued, “because there are no words which really describe what I saw, or rather appreciated. Although I had no body, I had what appeared to be perfect two-eyed vision, and what I saw can only be described in this way, that I was conscious of a psychic stream flowing with life through time, and this gave me the impression of being visible, and it seemed to me to have particularly intense iridescence. I understood from my mentor that all our brains are just end organs projecting as it were from the three-dimensional universe into the psychic stream, and flowing with it into the fourth and fifth dimensions.”

Around each brain, as the experiencer saw it, there seemed to be a condensation of the psychic stream, which appeared as a small cloud. “While I was just appreciating this, the mentor who was conveying information to me explained that the fourth dimension was in everything existing in the three-dimensional space, and at the same time everything in the three-dimensional space existed in the fourth dimension, and also in the fifth dimension, and I at the time quite clearly understood what was meant, and quite understood how ‘now’ in the fourth-dimensional universe was just the same to all intents and purposes as ‘here’ in a three-dimensional view of things.

“I then realized that I myself was a condensation, as it were, in the psychic stream, a sort of cloud that was not a cloud, and the visual impression I had of myself was blue.”

Gradually, the experiencer began to recognize a number of people he knew and saw the “psychic condensation” attached to them. He also saw a number of people who had very little psychic condensation attached to them. He saw different colors – blue, purple and dark red, pink, grey-brown, pearly, apricot, and brown around various acquaintances. As he was observing all

of this, he saw the woman with the purple and dark red condensation enter the room and hurry to the telephone to call his doctor.

Upon his initial examination, the treating physician commented, “He is nearly gone.” The experiencer heard him clearly speaking to him on the bed, but could not reply. “I was really cross when he took a syringe and rapidly injected my body with something which I afterwards learned was camphor,” the experiencer continued his account. “As the heart began to beat more strongly, I was drawn back, and I was intensely annoyed, because I was so interested, and just beginning to understand where I was and what I was ‘seeing.’ I came back into the body really angry at being pulled back, and once I was back all the clarity of vision of anything and everything disappeared, and I was just possessed of a glimmer of consciousness which was suffused with pain.”

The experiencer went on to say that the “dream, vision, or experience has shown no tendency to fade like a dream would fade, nor has it shown any tendency that I am aware of to grow or to rationalize itself as a dream would do.” Further, he had had no repetition of any sort or kind of the experience of clear understanding that he had experienced while “free from the body.”

Indeed, what are we to make of it?

