

Extracts from
MEMOIRS OF MY NERVOUS ILLNESS
Daniel Paul Schreber

The human soul is contained in the nerves of the body but about their physical nature I cannot say more than that they are extraordinarily delicate structures - comparable to the finest filaments – and that the total mental life of a human being rests on their excitability by external impressions. Vibrations are thereby caused in the nerves which produce the sensations of pleasure and pain in a manner which cannot be further explained; they are able to retain the memory of impressions received (the human memory) and have also the power of moving the muscles of the body which they inhabit into any manifest activity by exertion of their will power

The picture i contain of the nature of God and the continued existence of the human soul after death differs markedly in some respects from the Christian views on these matters. It seems to me that a comparison between the two can only favor the former. God is not omniscient and omnipresent in the sense that He continuously sees inside every individual living person, perceived every feeling of their nerves, that is to say that at all times "he tries their heart and reins." But there is no need for this because after death the nerves of human beings with all the impressions they had received during life lay bare before God's eye, so that an unfailingly just judgment could be reached. In any case it is always possible for God to get to know the inner person through nerve-contact, whenever the need arises. The picture I have experienced however lacks any of the features of severity, of the purposeless cruelty imprinted on some of the notions of the Christian other religions.

The whole Order of the World therefore appears as a "miraculous struc- ture/" the sublimity of which surpasses in my opinion all conceptions which in the course of history men and peoples have developed about their relation to God.

Over time, as the contact established with my nerves became more concrete; the more miracles were directed against me. In the meantime my Doctor had found a way of raising himself up to heaven, either with the whole or with part of his soul, and so made himself a manipulator of rays, without prior death and without undergoing the process of purification. In this way a plot was laid against me the purpose of which was to hand me over to another human being after my nervous illness had been assumed to be incurable. In this way a plot was laid against me, the

purpose of which was to hand me over to another human being after my nervous illness had been recognized as, or assumed to be, incurable, in such a way that my soul was handed to him, but my body-transformed into a female body.

Misconstruing the Order of the World by body was then left to another human being for sexual misuse and simply "forsaken," in other words my body was left to rot. It is hard to be exactly clear as to what was to happen to such a "forsaken" human being, nor whether this actually meant death.

On the other hand there was a time when souls in nerve-contact with me talked of a plurality of heads (that is several individuals in one and the same skull) which they encountered in me and from which they shrank in alarm crying "For heaven's sake-that is a human being with several heads!"

All kinds of extraordinary symptoms of illness appeared in my body in the course of time, especially in the repeated changes in my sex organ. Most nearly in consonance with the Order of the World were these miracles that were somehow connected with a process of unmaning me - carried out on my entire body. To them belonged especially the various changes in my sex organ: several times, particularly in bed, there were marked indications of an actual retraction of the male organ; frequently however, particularly when mainly impure rays were involved, the removal by miracles of single hairs from my beard and particularly my mustache;

These had the nature of souls and therefore were talking beings and they were distinguished according to their place of origin as "Aryan", and "Catholic" scorpions. However, these scorpions regularly withdrew from my head without doing me harm, when they perceived the purity of my nerves and the holiness of my purpose- this was one of the innumerable triumphs which I have often experienced since then in a similar way. In discussing them I must return again to the idea of the end of the world

I have no doubt in any way that my early ideas were ever "delusions" and "hallucinations" - because even now I still receive impressions daily and hourly and no they are real. These reinforced visions make it perfectly clear to me that, in Hamlet's words, there is "something rotten in the state of Denmark" - that is to say there is something rotten in the relationship between God and mankind. But how the present state of things developed historically, whether by sudden changes or gradual transition, and to what extent apart from the manifestations of life caused by the influence of rays [miracles], manifestations of life occur independently and uninfluenced by the rays, remains even for me an obscure point

I want to add something about the birds created by miracle; it is queer that the individual nerves or souls that are in them appear in the shape of different kinds of birds according to the season of the year. The same nerves are in the spring contained in the bodies of finches or other singing birds, in the summer in the bodies of swallows, and in winter in bodies of sparrows and crows. I have no doubt about the identity of the souls concerned because I know the tone of their voices well, and I recognize all the phrases I regularly hear from them. This naturally leads to the question whether they can possibly have a continual life or whether they have to be created anew by miracles every day or perhaps even at longer intervals of time. I can only raise but not answer this question. I observe that the miraculously created birds feed and empty themselves in the manner of natural birds; it would therefore be possible that the miraculously created state is maintained for a time by taking in nourishment; I have also repeatedly observed them building nests in the spring which appears to point to some powers of reproduction. I can only raise but not really answer this question. But I do observe that the miraculously created birds feed and empty themselves in the manner of natural birds; it would therefore be possible that the miraculously created state is maintained for a time by taking in nourishment; I have also repeatedly observed them building nests in the spring which appears to point to some powers of reproduction. Their language on the other hand makes it certain for me that in no other respect are they completely natural birds. They are very many; apparently appear in hundreds, so that I dare not give any definite estimate of their number.

The changes in my outward life during the past years and the forms the battle of annihilation assumed what kind divine rays are led against me. I will now add some more about the forms-also vastly changed - of the constant need for compulsive thinking. Compulsive thinking has been defined before as having to think continually; this contradicts man's natural right of mental relaxation, of temporary rest from mental activity through thinking nothing, or as the expression goes in the basic language, it disturbs the "basis" of a human being.

The purpose of not-finishing-a-sentence is consistent with God's attitude to me throughout: to prevent dissolution in my body that would necessarily result from its attraction. While conditions prevailed which were at least somehow in consonance with the false Order of the World. Many momentary uniform feelings are enough to make the freely suspended souls jump down from the sky into my mouth, thus ending their independent existence. This is an event I actually experienced repeatedly. But mere "intellectual" had the same effect; whenever the rays would be led to me, and entering my temporarily increases my body's soul. Not-finishing has apparently effect the rays have. In other a sentence held up half way could

therefore withdraw before voluptuousness. But the attraction to my body completely slows it down.

Voluptuous enjoyment or Blessedness is granted to souls in perpetuity and as an end in itself, but to human beings and other living creatures solely as a means for the preservation of the species. Herein lie the moral limitations of voluptuousness for human beings. An excess of voluptuousness would render man unfit to fulfill his other obligations, as it would prevent him from ever rising to higher mental and moral perfection.

From what I experienced of the restorative power of divine rays on my body, I believe that ordinary illnesses, even external violence cannot possibly cause my death. If for instance I were to fall into water or wished to put a bullet through my head or chest - ideas I of course no longer harbor - I would expect temporary signs corresponding to those of death by drowning or unconsciousness following a bullet wound which would be fatal in other people.

Even if many, particularly Christian dogmas hitherto accepted as true, would have to be revised, the absolutely certain knowledge that a living God exists and the soul lives on after death could only come as a blessing to mankind: and so I stop now in the hope that in this sense favorable stars will someday watch over the success of my labor.