

Soule Proves the Soul
The Survival Files — Case 56 — ESS = 263

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Dr. James Hyslop, professor of Logic and Ethics at Columbia University, and one of the most distinguished American psychical researchers, reported the following incident.

Hyslop received a letter from a woman in Germany, a stranger to him, asking for the name of a medium near her, as she wished to confirm that her recently deceased husband's spirit lived on. Hyslop responded that he was not familiar with the mediums in Germany, but if she would come to America he would arrange for sittings with someone he trusted. The widow replied that she could not make the trip, but she suggested that a sister of hers (whose name was different from her own) lived in Boston and might take her place at a sitting.

Accordingly, Hyslop arranged for the sister to have a few sittings with Minnie Soule,¹ a medium who was working with the American Society for Psychical Research. He took the safeguards of not telling the sister the name or location of the medium, not telling the medium any information about the sitter, and being sure that Soule was in trance before the sister entered the room. Because of these precautions, Hyslop was satisfied that the medium did not even know whether her visitor was a man or a woman.

Automatic writing by Soule's hand began almost immediately and indicated that a man was present who was anxious to make his existence known to his wife. Throughout the sittings (spread over a period of 36 hours) numerous statements identifying the husband came through, including these:²

1. He was a philosopher.
2. He was a friend of the late Professor William James of Harvard.
3. He was greatly impressed by some documents which James had lent to him.
4. His mother was dead.
5. He had a missing tooth at a particular location.
6. He was fond of fixing things, especially clocks.
7. He liked to annotate his books.
8. He used to carry a small bag containing his manuscripts and reading glass.
9. He had taken a long railway journey shortly before his death.
10. He had died with a intense pain in his head.
11. He was mentally confused when he died.
12. He was at home, but felt away from home when he died.

In attempting to give his name, the spirit first wrote the letter "T" then the letter "h." Later, he wrote "Taussh," "Tauch," and "Taush"; all of which are phonetically close to the actual name of the widow: "Tausch."

Hyslop tried addressing the communicator in German (a language unfamiliar to Soule) and got replies in German, among them that the visitor was his "Geschwister,"³ which was correct.

¹ Then known by the pseudonym "Mrs. Chenoweth."

² The order and numbering are this author's.

³ Literally: "brothers and sisters."

Hyslop knew the name of the deceased husband but none of the other details. The sister would also have know the man's name, of course, and may have been acquainted with a few of the facts such as he being a philosopher and that his mother had died. Nevertheless, she claimed total ignorance of the various incidents (such as the train trip and the James papers) related by the spirit.

In response to Hyslop's written queries, Tausch's widow confirmed every statement to be accurate. Even the rather confusing number 12 was correct, she said, as Tausch had died in his old home in Germany and not in his preferred home in America.

Discussion

In addition to the 100-percent accuracy, three items are especially evidential. First is the reference made to documents loaned by Professor William James. Only one person alive knew about these documents. It stretches the idea of mental telepathy far beyond the breaking point for a psychic to read the mind of a sitter (whom she never even saw) well enough to link to the mind of the sitter's sister, an ocean away, and then pull out an obscure reference to that person's husband being impressed with some documents.

Secondly, it is noteworthy that the medium could not get the name quite right, even though Dr. Hyslop, who held the spelling of the name in his conscious mind, was right there in the room with her.

The most telling evidence is the conversation in German, despite the medium not knowing that language. As has been pointed out often in these case descriptions, no one has ever demonstrated the ability to acquire a skill via telepathy. And, it takes two to have a conversation. If we accept the presence of Mr. Tausch as a spirit communicator fluent in both English and German, than a conversation between he and the English- and German-speaking Hyslop is understandable. If such a spirit presence is denied, however, then we are faced with the question of how Ms. Soule could formulate a response she cannot comprehend to a question she cannot comprehend. Clearly, she would require the assistance of some other mind that is capable of reading the query (in German) from Ms. Soule's mind and then sending a proper and relevant response back to Ms. Soule. So, we would need not one, but two super-psychics, one of whom was performing as a perfect and immediate translating machine. This seems far more incredible than any theory of Survival.

As Sir William Barrett concluded in his review of the case: "The simplest and most reasonable solution is that the information was derived from the mind of the deceased person."⁴

For Further Information

See *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, Sir William Barrett, first published in 1918 by E.P. Dutton & Co., reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, pages 225-229.

END CASE 56

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⁴ Barrett, William, *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, 1918, p. 229.