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VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Degree 10

Number 265

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TAKING A POSITIVE APPROACH TO

S L E E P

Mayan Revelation Number 265

The Problem of Sleeplessness

Give Up False Pride

Plan Constructively

Seek Strength for One Day at a Time

Bring Your Regrets Into the Daylight

Accept the Gift of Sleep

Affirmation

Beloved Perfector:

All of us have times when we are troubled with sleeplessness. Tired in body, or in mind, we go to bed seeking rest, only to toss and turn, for some reason unable to slip into refreshing sleep. The following night we can catch up on the rest that has been lost if this happens only occasionally. If it is habitual, chronic fatigue lowers our efficiency. We may lose our perspective and let minor irritations assume gigantic proportions. Worry can get a strangle hold upon us when we are worn out by loss of sleep.

Insomnia is an enemy that can destroy health and happiness. If it has been troubling you, study this Lesson with special care so you can intelligently tackle the problem and break the habit that keeps you from being the composed and radiant person whom you desire to be. If you are one of the fortunate adults who is able to sleep like a child, still seek to grasp the principles that promote health-giving sleep. They will prove useful to you in some hour of stress, or of illness. Approach this Lesson by praying:

PRAYER

Dear Father, I thank Thee for the gift of work and for the gift of sleep. Show me how to accept them, and how to use both days and nights for their intended purpose. Open my mind so I can grasp the Truths presented in this Lesson and apply them to my own life. Save me from the pitfalls of anxiety and worry. Teach me to trust Thee for Wisdom, Guidance, and Security. In the Master's name,
Amen.

THE PROBLEM OF SLEEPLESSNESS

Recall that night when you put your head on the pillow, only to have all the events of the day march before your mind's eye. One or two incidents lingered to distress you because you saw that you had not acted wisely, or that you had failed to say the word that would have been helpful. Then you recalled several things you had meant to do, but had put off until tomorrow. The fear that you might forget some of them tortured you. Perhaps you arose to write down your intentions, but went back to bed as restless as before. Hour followed hour, and you still were wakeful. You began to worry lest loss of sleep make you unable to cope with the problems of the coming day. Insomnia had you in its grip.

There are few people in modern society who have never spent such a night. Our life, all too frequently, is set at a fast pace. This contributes to tension and makes it difficult to relax easily. Work that taxes the brain, but does not use body muscles, often keeps the mind active when it is time for rest. Then sleep comes slowly and is fitful.

The last half of life, and especially the years of retirement, brings less physical demands and fewer all-absorbing challenges. These situations, combined with opportunities for rest during the day, may foster the habit of chronic sleeplessness.

You should be concerned if you find that you have become a victim of insomnia. Sleep is not something you seek for its own sake, but because it enables you to be your best self. Sleep provides physical reserves of energy. It helps you to think clearly and to plan intelligently. If you would have a victorious life you need adequate sleep.

Physicians and druggists make sleeping pills easily available. Sometimes these are useful aids - as a crutch or cane can enable a man to favor a sprained ankle. A person who has been subjected to some unusual strain may benefit from medicine which induces sleep, but after the emergency has passed, he needs the courage to dispense with any artificial aid to relaxation.

We all know that tranquilizers dull perception and lower efficiency. Let us seek for a more positive approach to the problem of sleeplessness.

PLAN CONSTRUCTIVELY

Sleep frequently eludes us if we have tried to make decisions just before retiring or after going to bed. This stimulates the mind and promotes a mood of anxiety.

The first step in overcoming this unfortunate habit is to set aside another time - preferably early in the day - to evaluate your work and to plan for the future. When your mind is clear, important decisions can be made more intelligently, and all plans can be crystallized much more quickly. Why rob yourself of hours of sleep by going over and over some problem that you could settle in five or ten minutes the next morning?

A man entered the office and greeted the staff with the words, "I've

thought all night about this project and feel sure we should go ahead with it." "Wait a minute," said his partner, "the last time we launched a venture that came out of your dreams it was a total failure. Let's sit down at the conference table and consider whether this is advisable or not."

Be wary of decisions made during the night. When wide awake, you can be a better judge of what should be done than you can when tossing fitfully on a pillow. Include in your day's work a time for constructive organization. Then half-made plans will not torture you at night.

Set aside some time each day for self-evaluation. Check your successes and your failures and decide what efforts you should make for further advancement. Don't wait until you are in bed to see yourself in your mind's mirror.

If you have a definite time for morning devotions, your personal check-up should follow this period. Then you will not be unreasonably critical, but will see what you are able to do with God's guidance and help. You will visualize the man or woman you can be.

Consider how this works. You have been reading the parable of the Good Samaritan and hearing Christ's command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

You apply this to your business relationships. You ask yourself: "Have I treated those who work for me as unique persons, or as tools? Have I sought to use their particular talents and to encourage them to develop their full capabilities? Have I been fair with my co-workers, carrying my full share of the load, and giving them credit for all they have done?"

You apply this to relationships with your neighbors and friends. You ask yourself: "Have I seen the needs and longings of others? Have I been truly kind, overlooking their shortcomings, as I would like them to overlook mine? Have I stifled my urge to gossip and been generous with my praise?"

You apply this to your church and community responsibilities. You ask yourself: "Have I been using my talents and taking full part in religious and civic activities? Have I tried to ignore unjust practices, or to remedy them? Have I helped to lift standards and to create a better society?" Perhaps you must answer some definite question as, "Should I accept the invitation to become leader of the Scout Troop?"

Don't wait until you have gone to bed and then face these questions. Take a positive approach to life. Realize that any honest seeker for Truth must give some time to meditation. He must seriously consider important issues. Decide when is the best time for you to do this, and then resolutely come to grips with the issues that are before you. Avoid the temptation to be "busy" all day and leave your thinking until night.

Let love of your family be more than a vague impulse. Seek for fresh ways to draw out the capabilities of each member, to develop intellectual and spiritual capacities as well as manual skills. Ask yourself: "Does my conversation encourage the children to be prejudiced, or to be broad-minded? Have I been cheerful, or filled with nagging and complaints? Have I made a real effort to listen to the children, to give complete fulfillment to my husband or wife, and

to make older relatives feel they are welcome and needed?"

Take time to formulate your answers. Make your resolutions and endeavor to carry them out in all your contacts. This will relieve the anguish of struggling with them at midnight.

Also, plan constructively for your personal well-being. A well-balanced life promotes natural sleep. Ask yourself such practical questions as:

"Have I been approaching my work intelligently?

Have I taken sufficient time for fun?

Have I selected diversions that bring true recreation?

Have I been temperate in eating and drinking?

Am I reaching up to become the noble man or woman I long to be?"

These questions can bring torture if you wrestle with them when you should be sleeping. Face them in the daytime, preferably when you have been in prayer. Having acknowledged that all you have and all you are comes from God, it should not be difficult to then trust Him to lead you and to guide you as you strive for self-improvement. Remember, daytime is for planning, for struggling, for doing. Nighttime is the time for rest and for sleep.

BRING YOUR REGRETS INTO THE DAYLIGHT

The second step toward conquering sleeplessness is to bring your regrets into the daylight. It is an error if you try to forget your mistakes. Your failures as well as your successes help to make you the man or woman you are. You do yourself harm whenever you relegate remorse to your subconscious mind. You encourage insomnia whenever you fail to acknowledge your mistakes, to endeavor to learn by them, and to quickly make recompense if you know that you have harmed someone.

Suppose you feel that you have made an error in judgment and have hired the wrong man. You can refuse to think about this during the day and then keep mulling it over in your mind during the night. But how much better to clearly look at the alternatives in the light of day! See that the other man whom you considered for the position might have been no more efficient than the one whom you did hire. Think of ways in which you can help your new employee to do better. Take a positive approach to your present problem instead of dwelling upon what might have been.

Or suppose you think a recent investment was unwise. In the light of day, analyze what your alternatives would have been. Consider the fact that human judgment is never infallible and that if you are patient, time may work in your favor. More likely than not, what you have done is not serious enough to cause you or your loved ones real privation, so why worry about it? Hold up the thought that you did what you believed was best. Your other choice might have been even less advantageous. In any case, let bygones be bygones.

It is far easier to take this positive approach when you are wide awake and alert. This is why you should always bring your mistakes into the daylight, face up to them, and learn from them. Then do the best you can in the existing situation. Don't spend half the night in remorse.

Some sleeplessness stems from a sense of guilt, and, although the evil we have done may be negligible, or even imaginary, there is no use trying to suppress it; and it is useless to attempt to transfer the blame to someone else when in our hearts we believe that we have made a serious mistake.

There is only one way to tackle the problem of guilt:

First: BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF. Don't indulge in the foolish habit of self-torture. Don't take secret satisfaction in reviewing the wrong that you have done. While it is praiseworthy to aim for perfection, it is useless to destroy your peace and lose sleep by magnifying your mistakes and dwelling upon them.

Second: BE HONEST WITH GOD. He sees you for what you truly are. There is no place to hide. If you have done something wrong, ask for the Lord's forgiveness, and then accept it. This is necessary for peace during the day and for sleep during the night.

Third: BE HONEST WITH OTHERS. If you have borrowed something that belongs to someone else, return it. If by careless conversation you have harmed another's good name, say some word that will raise his reputation. If you have hurt someone - even unintentionally - don't go to bed until you have done all you can to heal the wound. The effort spent on a friendly visit, a phone call, or a note of apology will sweep regret out of your mind and will pave the way for peaceful sleep.

GIVE UP FALSE PRIDE

Sleeplessness often starts from a chain of thoughts anchored in false pride. If so, it can be cured only by acquiring a new set of personal standards and a deeper trust in God.

As an advanced student of Mayanry you have set your goals high. You aim to be kind and generous, to be intelligent and efficient, and to be calm and serene. If you do or say something unworthy of your best self, naturally it disturbs your complacency, but if this leads to gnawing anxiety and disturbed sleep, you must seek a different viewpoint.

No man or woman is expected to have a 100% batting average. A noble life requires knowledge, ideals, courage and faithfulness. It also involves disappointment, errors, and constant improvement of one's techniques for playing the game of "give and take."

Recognize the fact that the greatest men and women have made mistakes and then learned from them. Don't worship the false god of personal perfection. Admit your frailty. Do your best and find daily satisfaction in improving upon your old habits.

This calls for humility. Recognize your own weakness and God's greatness. If you have spent night after night worrying about your limitations and failures, you are putting too much faith in your human power. If you have been lying awake, struggling vainly to see how you can surmount your weaknesses or difficulties, you have been ignoring the available help from God.

Never attempt to live victoriously while relying upon your own strength alone. This is evidence of false pride. Ask God to guide and support you, and He will.

The Master said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" (Matthew 7:7). You can rely upon this promise.

Don't toss all night as you strive to find the answer to your problem. Ask God for guidance, and you will receive it. Don't worry for fear you will be unable to cope with your challenge. Seek Wisdom and Strength, and you will find it. Don't despair when a door of opportunity is closed. Be patient, keep an open mind, and another door will be opened for you.

Recognize your own limitations and put your trust in the all-wise and ever-loving God. If you have done what is wrong, He will help you to make a fresh start. If you feel too frail to climb the path ahead, lean on Him and He will undergird you.

Don't let anxiety plague you all night long. Go to sleep with the assurance that God is working for you. Place your life in His care and you will do far better than when you try to manage alone.

SEEK STRENGTH FOR ONE DAY AT A TIME

Trust in God should bring the willingness to ask for strength for tomorrow only. Don't be anxious about next week or next year. Live one day at a time.

Victims of insomnia frequently spend half the night worrying about what they would do if they were left alone, or if their money gave out, or any one of a hundred things they never really have to face. Why brood over a situation that may never arise?

The future need not frighten us if we remember that it will be given to us a day at a time. Thomas Carlyle wrote: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." When we take this

attitude our worries are minimized.

Let each day become a compact unit of life. If it has been a rewarding day, praise God for it. If it has been a difficult day, be thankful that you have been able to get through it, and that now it is at an end.

It may help you to follow an old custom of marking on a calendar each evening, the day just gone, and letting this mark be a symbol that the day's trials and disappointments are over. Then recall Jesus' words: "Take no thought for tomorrow. Today's cares are enough for today." (See Matthew 6:34)

Of course you will want to plan ahead, but endeavor to live one day at a time. Do your best; and then each night put yourself in God's care. When tomorrow comes, He will give you strength to carry whatever burden is placed upon you.

Believe this and you will not find it difficult to let go of the day, to release consciousness, and to sleep peacefully. Trust in God dispels any anxiety that might disturb you. Seek His presence, and the demons of fear will vanish. You will be refreshed by sound sleep.

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ACCEPT THE GIFT OF SLEEP

Shakespeare spoke of "Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care." Sleep should do just that. It should mend the torn places of our lives and smooth the frayed edges.

Sleep, when it does this, is a priceless gift. It is more precious than diamonds, yet it is freely offered to all who will accept it.

You know that in many areas of life the early Mayans were wiser than we are. More of their hours were spent in the open; less indoors. More time was given to work that required physical exercise; less to sedentary occupations. Their recreation involved body movements, and not merely observation. These habits made for a balanced life.

While you can never be completely free of the shackles imposed by the ways of modern living, it is frequently possible to spend part of each day outdoors, to get some physical exercise, and to seek recreation that calls for personal participation. All these help to prepare the mind and the body for sleep.

A walk will serve as well as a round of golf. A game, or stimulating conversation, can drive out thoughts of business, or anxiety.

In the evening, consistently avoid controversy, or writing a difficult letter, or preoccupation with some problem. On the other hand, reading a few pages of a good book can help you to relax. Surely it is unwise to grimly determine I WILL SLEEP TONIGHT, but you can consistently follow a pattern of activity that puts you in a mood to accept God's gift of sleep.

Find the rhythm that makes restful sleep a natural part of the pattern of your life.

- Use all the techniques presented in this Lesson.
- Hold fast in your mind the fact that sleep is natural, while insomnia is unnatural.
- Spend the hours of the day in such a way that your mind and your body will be prepared to accept the gift of sleep.

As you put your head on the pillow, let go of your cares. Thank God for His goodness. Trust Him to guide you and to support you tomorrow. Remember that your Heavenly Father is watching over you every one of the twenty-four hours. At night you can drop your planning and your worries for "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

If sleep doesn't come immediately, quietly relax - holding in your mind the thought that rest, too, has restorative powers. This will prepare you for deep sleep.

AFFIRMATION

I will do my planning when I'm fully awake and alert.
When sleep eludes me I will relax, trusting that God
will guide and support me throughout the coming day.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.