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## Dreams

by *Henri Bergson (1859 - 1941)* Translated by *Edwin E. Slosson*

Read by: D. S. Harvey                      Language: English  
 Translator: Edwin E. Slosson              Style: Solo  
 Length: 1 hour 10 minutes              Genre: Philosophy

Product Formats and Options				
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Since the beginning of time human beings have been seeking to understand the mystifying nature of dreams. A dream is a puzzle. I see objects but there is nothing there. I see people, I speak with them, yet there is no one there and I have not actually spoken. What is going on? In *Dreams*, first published in 1913, French philosopher Henri Bergson analyzes the phenomenon of dreaming as a product of the mind attempting to interpret what happens physiologically during sleep. Our eyes respond to light and shapes. We hear sounds. Our bodies move and we have the sensation of touch. Bergson explains that we relate these phenomena to the vast reservoir of experiences stored in our memory, which he believes stores each of our experiences in detail in perpetuity. The brain seeks to associate the perceptions in our dreams with those memories that most closely that data. The result may be disconnected, illogical, incoherent, and absurd, but that is likely because during sleep we have relaxed from the labor of making sense of connections when we are awake. In this short essay he manages to elucidate the profound metaphysics of dreaming and suggest new areas of inquiry in disciplines such as psychoanalysis that promise further understanding.

**Henri Bergson** (October 18, 1859 – January 4, 1941) was a major French philosopher influential in the first half of the twentieth century. He was born in Paris the son of a pianist from a prominent Polish Jewish family and the daughter of a Yorkshire doctor. He lost his faith in his early teens and discovered Darwin’s theory of evolution. He won prizes at the Lycée Fontanes for science and for his solution to a mathematical problem, which was published in *Annales de Mathematiques* in 1878. He entered the prestigious *École Normale Supérieure*, earning two degrees. Upon graduation he taught first in Anjou and then Auvergne, and published a critical study of the materialist cosmology of Lucretius in 1884. His dissertation, *Time and Free Will*, earned him a doctoral degree from the University of Paris and was published in 1889. He published his second major work in 1896, *Matter and Memory*, an analysis of perception and memory with a focus on the biological function of the brain. In 1898 he became a professor at the *École Normale Supérieure*. *Introduction to Metaphysics* was published in 1903 in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*. *Creative Evolution*, his third major work and the best known, appeared in 1907. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1927 “in recognition of his rich and vitalizing ideas and the brilliant skill with which they have been presented”. In 1930 he was awarded France’s highest honor, the Grand-Croix de la Legion d’honneur.