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Sleep Paralysis

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SLEEP PARALYSIS

Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives

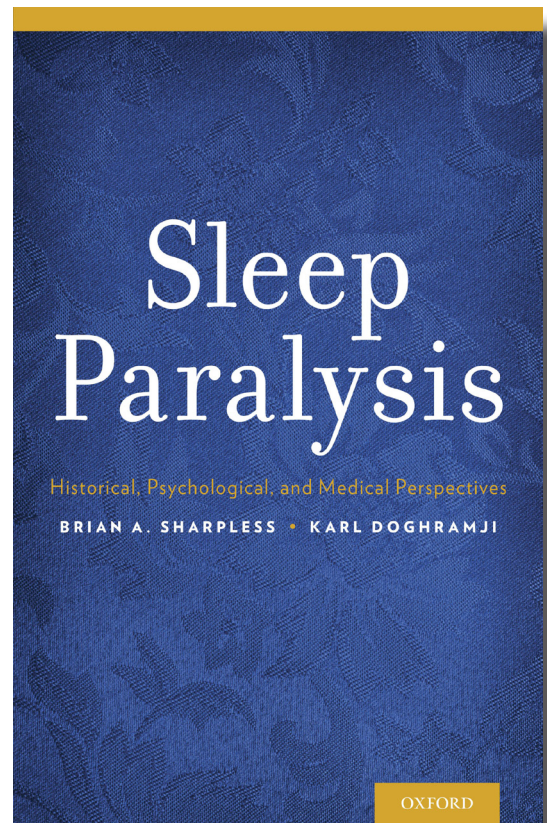
By Brian A. Sharpless and Karl Doghramji

Humans throughout history have described a peculiar state between wakefulness and sleep during which they are consciously aware of their surroundings, but physically paralyzed. Sleep paralysis is also commonly accompanied by high levels of fear, feelings of suffocation, and hallucinations (i.e., waking dreams). Early interpretations of this event were that it was an actual attack by malevolent and supernatural entities such as demons, ghosts, or witches. Some of these beliefs persist to the present day in the form of nocturnal visitations by extraterrestrials and shadow people.

Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives offers the first comprehensive examination of sleep paralysis from scientific and cultural perspectives. Drs. Brian A. Sharpless and Karl Doghramji synthesize the many literatures while providing practical guidance for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep paralysis. Included are medication suggestions and a new psychotherapy manual for mental health professionals. The result is a volume that illuminates the cultural, medical, and intellectual importance of this understudied phenomenon.

Brian A. Sharpless, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Psychology Clinic at Washington State University

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