

adapt to their environments. –
(website.lineone.net/~williamjames1/).

Philosophy of Religion:

James undertook a lot of important work in the philosophy of religion. One significant claim he made in this regard was that religious experience should be the primary topic in the study of religion, rather than religious institutions, since institutions are merely the social descendant of the experience.

James also believed that the intense and even pathological varieties of experience, whether religious or otherwise, should be sought by psychologists because they show in drastically enlarged form, the normal processes of things.

In order to usefully interpret the realm of common, shared experience and history, James believed people must each make certain "over-beliefs" in things which, while they cannot be proven on the basis of experience, help people to live fuller and better lives. –
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_James#Writings).

Mystical Experience:

The investigation of mystical experience was constant throughout the life of James, which led him to experiment with several drugs. James concluded that while the revelations of the mystic hold true, they hold true only for the mystic, and for others, are only ideas to be considered and can hold no claim to truth without personal experience. James was a significant influence for the New Age movement of the 1960s and '70s. –
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_James#Writings).

Influence on Psychology:

Perhaps most important of all, William James transformed psychology from a "nasty little subject" and from an abstract science into a discipline that spoke directly to personal interests and concerns. –
(website.lineone.net/~williamjames1/).

Did You Know?

- James's younger brother Henry James went on to become a prominent novelist.
- His sister, Alice James became well known for her posthumously published diary.

- James established one of the first – he believed it to be the first – laboratories of experimental psychology in the United States in Boylston Hall in 1875.
- William James interacted with a wide array of writers and scholars throughout his life.
- Some of his more well-known associates included, Helen Keller, Mark Twain, H. G. Wells, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.
- William James's godfather was Ralph Waldo Emerson. –
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_James#Writings).

In Conclusion:

Just before 2:30 in the afternoon of August 26, 1910, William James passed away cradled in the arms of his wife, at his country home in Chocoura, New Hampshire. He was sixty-eight years old. An autopsy revealed that he had died of an enlarged heart. Two years after his death, a number of his articles were collected and posthumously published as *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

William's brother, Henry, said, "He suffered so and only wanted more and more, to go." William told his wife he longed to die and asked her to rejoice for him. Early in the afternoon of August 26, she came into William's bedroom and at first she thought he was asleep, but she suddenly realised that something had changed, and that he was unconscious. She cradled his head in her arms, listening to his quiet breathing and just before 2:30, he died. –
(des.emory.edu/mfp/jphotos.html).

"The stream of thought flows on; but most of its segments fall into the bottomless abyss of oblivion. Of some, no memory survives the instant of their passage. Of others, it is

confined to a few moments, hours or days. Others, again, leave vestiges which are indestructible, and by means of which they may be recalled as long as life endures." – William James. ©

Web References:

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Angela Waldron has been an integral part of our magazine team for over six years. Among other roles, she is also the official "investigative" columnist. Currently she is writing a series of articles that will cover some of the most notable spiritual thinkers - since the dawn of time until the present day - for Your Stars magazine. If you have a subject you'd love to know more about, email Angela and let her know. Send your idea to angela@top10readers.com

