

PASSAGE FOUR (Questions 25–31)

Dissociative Identity Disorder

Paragraph

- 1▶ Dissociative identity disorder (DID), previously called multiple personality disorder, is a psychological condition in which a person's identity dissociates, or fragments, thereby creating distinct independent identities within one individual. Each separate personality can be distinct from the other personalities in a number of ways, including posture, manner of moving, tone and pitch of voice, gestures, facial expressions, and use of language. Personalities can even differ in gender, with a biological female exhibiting male personalities and vice versa. What is perhaps more astounding is that the alternate personalities, called "alters," may also have dissimilar physiological characteristics, displaying different allergies, right- or left-side dominance, or vision, which could mean that one person may require multiple eyeglass prescriptions to accommodate the varying alters.
- 2▶ A person suffering from DID may have a large number of independent personalities or perhaps only two or three. There is documented evidence of a single DID sufferer displaying 100 personalities, but that is uncommon; the average number of alters for a DID patient is around 10. These alternate personalities tend to become fixed over time, and may negatively affect a person's life for years. At times, alters develop that may have a tendency to be aggressive, either toward people in the sufferer's environment, or the other alters themselves.
- 3▶ Two stories of actual women suffering from dissociative identity disorder have been extensively recounted in books and films that are familiar to the public. One of them is the story of a woman with twenty-two separate personalities known as Eve. In the 1950s, a

book by Corbett Thigpen and a motion picture starring Joanne Woodward, each of which was titled *The Three Faces of Eve*, presented her story; the title referred to three faces, when the woman known as Eve actually experienced twenty-two different personalities, because only three of the personalities could exist at one time. Two decades later, Carolyn Sizemore, Eve's twenty-second personality, wrote about her experiences in a book entitled *I'm Eve*. The second well-known story of a woman suffering from dissociative personality disorder is the story of Sybil, a woman whose sixteen distinct personalities emerged over a period of forty years. A book describing Sybil's experiences was written by Flora Rheta Schreiber and was published in 1973; a motion picture based on the book and starring Sally Field followed, although the validity of the Sybil accounts later became contested.

- 4► DID is a controversial psychiatric disorder and consensus on its diagnosis and treatment has yet to be reached, with some critics claiming that many observed cases of DID in the latter part of the twentieth century may have been induced during therapy for other conditions. One dilemma is that the term "dissociative" does not have a precise, clear definition in the psychiatric community. Thus, the term "dissociative" has been used on people suffering from a range of symptoms: from periodic inability to pay attention, which may be quite normal, to prolonged episodes of amnesia, where the sufferer cannot remember anything that occurred in prior days, weeks, or months. There is also disagreement about the root of the disorder, though the most popular theories center around some sort of trauma or extremely upsetting incident that happened in the patient's life from which he must dissociate, or disconnect.
- 5► Sufferers of DID usually seek psychiatric help for other issues in their life, such as depression, anxiety, or loss of memory or time, and are not aware that they, in fact, have the disorder until it is diagnosed. The appearance of DID is not exclusive to adults; some research has shown that the average age for the onset of an initial alter is slightly less than six years old. Most children who acquire DID are believed to have suffered a trauma of some kind and used the dissociation to protect themselves from the pain. These children also exhibit depression, along with anxiety, behavior problems, and hallucinations, seeing things that aren't actually present.
- 6► Treatment generally revolves around psychotherapy and often includes some form of hypnosis. Frequently, the therapist's goal is to become familiar with each of the personalities and attempt to uncover the root of the dissociation or find a common thread that will allow all of the personalities to unite into a single, pervasive personality. As can be imagined, this is a difficult, often impossible task, and typically requires several years of treatment and a diverse combination of therapy and perhaps prescribed medicine to achieve. As with other disorders, the earlier it is diagnosed, the better the prognosis; children tend to respond to treatment more successfully than adults.

25. It is NOT stated in paragraph 1 that someone suffering from dissociative identity disorder has
- (A) a psychological condition
 - (B) a fragmented identity
 - (C) a number of independent identities
 - (D) has different vision in the left and right eyes
26. It is indicated in paragraph 1 that distinct personalities can differ in all of the following ways EXCEPT
- (A) manner of dressing
 - (B) manner of moving
 - (C) manner of speaking
 - (D) manner of gesturing
27. It is indicated in paragraph 3 that it is NOT true that Eve
- (A) suffered from dissociative identity disorder
 - (B) starred in the movie about her life
 - (C) had twenty-two distinct personalities
 - (D) had only three distinct personalities at any one time
28. It is NOT stated in paragraph 3 that *The Three Faces of Eve*
- (A) was based on the life of a real woman
 - (B) was the title of a book
 - (C) was the title of a movie
 - (D) was made into a movie in 1950

29. All of the following are mentioned in paragraph 3 about Carolyn Sizemore EXCEPT that she

- (A) wrote *I'm Eve*
- (B) was one of Eve's personalities
- (C) wrote a book in the 1970s
- (D) was familiar with all twenty-two personalities

30. According to paragraph 3, it is NOT true that Sybil

- (A) was a real person
- (B) suffered from dissociative identity
- (C) developed all her personalities over sixteen years
- (D) developed sixteen distinctive personalities over a long period of time

31. It is NOT mentioned in paragraph 5 that sufferers of DID

- (A) are often accurately diagnosed at the age of five
- (B) demonstrate periods of forgetfulness
- (C) likely experienced an emotionally disturbing event
- (D) are often unaware of their condition