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# THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

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V.

## MAN AFTER DEATH

BY

A STUDENT

The Aryan Theosophical Press

Point Loma, California

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## PREFACE

**T**HE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it

their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc., into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accommodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.



Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches however to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely

unexplored, or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from goodwill than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer;

and it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teacher's statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But, as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.  
*Shakespeare.*

## THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

“IF a man die shall he live again?” How many myriad times has this question been asked since the days of Job, and how many times imperfectly answered! But in this age of transition an opportunity has been given the western world to obtain by the aid of Theosophy a more accurate view of Life, and what is called Death, than has been possible since the destruction of the Mysteries in Greece, Egypt, and western Asia.

The popular dread of death and the misconceptions concerning it arise from ignorance, the parent of evil. We are yet ignorant of our own true nature; humanity is a sealed book to itself; and no wonder, therefore, the future looks dark, uncertain, and forbidding.

We all, at least all who have begun to study their own natures impersonally, feel a



certain cramping bondage in our lives, a sense of limitation. We tremble on the brink of discovering that life contains far greater possibilities than we had dared to hope for, and that we are not living up to the height of our powers. We dimly suspect that there is a Higher Principle in us that must come out and take control, and our intuitions, timid and faint though they may be, and clouded by the materialism of the age, tell us that the death of the physical body cannot be the end of all things for us. Without a future existence for the larger Man that we feel stirring in our hearts at times, human life would indeed be "a discreditable episode on one of the meanest of the planets"!

How is it that our boasted intellectual progress has left us more ignorant, hopeless and bewildered than ever in respect to this supreme question? Why do we wear gloomy looks and black clothes, and entertain hopeless grief and dread in our hearts when this natural and inevitable shadow crosses our path? Our popular theology tells us "Death

is a mystery, we must hope for the best," and that the only *proof* of the resurrection is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and opened the gates of Paradise for the faithful! a "proof" which is no proof to the majority of people. But orthodoxy is undermined to-day by scientific criticism, and many of its leading exponents have abandoned what were believed to be its central features. Today the churches speak with mental reservation and quavering voices of Heaven, Hell, and the "plan of Salvation"; the ringing note of certainty is wanting, for the Huxleys and Spencers have thoroughly shaken the walls of the creeds with their trumpet blasts of criticism. Few persons honestly believe in the old orthodoxy or in any plan of salvation at all. Dispassionate study of the "Higher Criticism" and a judicious regard of the unspiritual career of Christendom during the past nineteen weary centuries have thrown back the more thoughtful and, necessarily, the masses who follow, into doubt or indifference. Acts speak louder than words and it

is not to be denied that the lives of men today show that they have, in the main, lost the simple enthusiastic faith that sent Ridley and Latimer to the stake, or fired the fine ladies of Florence to sacrifice their vanities at the bidding of Savonarola. It is even considered impolite to speak on such subjects as the future life in general society! The crudity of the teachings of the churches on the subject of what happens after death is well typified by the lines of the famous hymn of Dr. Watts, beginning:

When rattling bones together fly  
From every quarter of the sky.

The publication of such gross caricatures of the truth has led people to doubt, justly enough, whether their self-appointed teachers know any more of the mystery of death than they themselves; and, as a natural consequence, those to whom the future is all dark, either cling to lives of hopeless suffering with the tenacity of despair, or destroy themselves in reckless disregard of the warnings they despise. The increase of suicide is

one of the most menacing signs of the times.

Science on its part has nothing definite to affirm and refuses to answer the question of the possibility of a future life for man. The scientific world hardly dares to admit there is such a question at all, and prefers to devote its attention to researches of inferior consequence. No doubt this attitude of scientific thought is but a temporary reaction against the absurd and obsolete dogmas of theology, but the fact remains that the anxious truth-seeker receives no answer, and that in pursuing what is called the practical, Science strangely ignores the most practical question of all, *i. e.*, what are we here for; where have we come from; and where do we go? And in doing this Science today unscientifically disregards the testimony of a vast mass of facts bearing upon the question, and ignores the opinion of the greatest minds of the ages.

But if we shake off the preconceived prejudices we may have gathered from the vagaries of learned theological ignorance, or the negations of scientists, we will admit

that the importance of the subject is undeniable; it is only the possibility of gaining any certainty on the subject that is doubtful. What a different thing life is to one who realizes that "The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor have no limits,"\* and that it is in his own hands for weal or woe, from what it appears to one who thinks, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. How is the materialist going to confront the "King of Terrors" when the icy hand suddenly strikes the beloved one? Will not his pride of negation bend at that crisis?—for much of modern scepticism is born of conceit. It is not impossible that at such times a strange, wild hope, a flash from a higher source may startle him as he gazes down the street of tombs, the Appian Way of dead hopes and attachments!

The teachings of Theosophy, simple in their broad outlines, profound as nature in their details, have come as a revealer to those

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\* *Idyll of the White Lotus.*

who are seeking the way to Truth. Theosophy reconciles the conflict between science and religions; it is nothing new; the truths it brings forward are as old as the hills, but it puts them in a manner conformable to the temper of the age. William Q. Judge, the successor to Madame Blavatsky, the great teacher of Theosophy of the nineteenth century, says:

Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science. It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constituents of nature and of man.

There is nothing grotesque in Theosophy; it is a system which is scientific and not merely speculative. It is inevitable as the multiplication table.

But Theosophy demands one difficult thing from the student — an unprejudiced attitude of mind, for it takes a real effort to change our standpoint and to admit that our ignor-

ance has been perpetuated by sheer unwillingness to climb to the heights where a broader view can be obtained. But as we do know we have wandered in darkness it would be foolish in the extreme not to follow a gleam of light even if we have to abandon some of the cherished impedimenta of mental habits. Those who are willing to make the plunge and step out of the old mental grooves will find rich and unexpected reward.

The Manuals of this series are not written for the purpose of defending Theosophy against the attacks of the misinformed or the traducer. They are for genuine inquirers who come honestly with unprejudiced minds, willing to try to comprehend something new, and whose hearts seek the truth, even if it seem a little strange at first. Theosophy is essentially the philosophy which those who suffer, and who may have despaired in the confusion of thought and turmoil of the age, have yearned for. And it is for those generous souls who seek help that they may the better serve others. The self-satisfied and the captious

must pass on; this avenue of enlightenment is not open to them until later, when they have discovered their need and asked for help.

Though Theosophy opens a new realm of Nature to the student and unveils facts and their meanings that have been lost or buried, it is not dogmatic; it does not demand acceptance under penalties. By its reasonableness it attracts those who are not too deeply prejudiced to break free from preconceptions, and in time the proofs become too strong to be resisted. Theosophy could not be dogmatic and continue to be Theosophy, for it teaches man to look within himself for the truth and not to accept the testimony of another person, or of any book, as infallible. The real teacher is one who puts you in a position to find out truth for yourself. In Oriental Theosophy he is called the Guru, or guide and adjuster, and his duty is not to cram quantities of startling facts into the learner, but to show him how to travel from the known to the unknown. Theosophy tells us that if we follow the path of Brotherly conduct in



all our acts and thoughts, the path of self-discipline and self-purification, the royal and only road to the Higher Wisdom will be found. In the poetical words of H. P. Blavatsky:

There is a road steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the Heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that leads inward only and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer, there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onward there is reward past all telling, the power to bless and serve Humanity. For those who fail there are other lives in which success may come.

As we persevere in sincere altruistic effort for the uplifting of our "other selves," our Brothers, Theosophy promises us that the darkest shadows will be lifted, and the mystery of death be solved, for our vision will be so pure that we shall see things as they really are. Of course short essays like these

Manuals only deal with the initial steps, as they are but rudimentary and necessarily fragmentary, but they will be found to provide a few keys, derived from the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley, with which the reader may unlock some of the closed doors; H. P. Blavatsky herself said that she was instructed to put forward the teachings of Theosophy primarily "to break the molds of mind"; that is to say to give the brightest and most spiritual minds of this age the opportunity of finding for themselves the truth by showing them the line of search and the method of commencing.

## II

### THE PLACE OF DEATH IN EVOLUTION

**W**HILE, as we must all agree, the purpose of man's evolution is to lead him to the complete knowledge of the Universe in its height and depth, and to the enjoyment of its glory, this cannot be done, according to Theosophy, until he becomes one with the Higher Self, the Divine Soul behind our separated human personalities, that Divine Soul which is the Christos, the true Vine of which we are the branches. To attain this godlike state we have to break down the wall of selfishness dividing one from the other; we have to identify our personal interests with those of the whole, and consciously to feel the unity of the race—that Brotherhood which is a fact in Nature, and which is not a

sentiment or a fanciful conceit of idle dreamers —

I am the Vine, ye are the branches. . . . If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. . . . and cast into the fire and burned.—*John* xv, 5, 6.

Those who are beginning to realize that the open door to all the powers of the soul is through actual, unselfish devotion to the interests of humanity; those who are seeking that which was lost, will find a certain spiritual comradeship in Theosophical work that nothing else can give, in rich, overflowing measure.

Physical science acts on the principle known as that of "*testimonium paupertatis*," i. e., that far-fetched and remote causes for appearances must not be sought when lesser and more obvious ones are sufficient. For instance, a weight rises the moment the precise amount of force necessary to overcome the resistance is put forth. It is not necessary to use a steam-hammer to crack a nut. So with the Theosophical teachings about

Man after Death — they are the simplest and most rational intimations that could be looked for on a subject of such profound obscurity to the ordinary human mind. Above all, they are not speculations as to what may be, like the poems of Dante or Milton. They are the results of the observations of millenniums by those advanced Helpers of the race who have pierced the veil and who have been able to enter consciously into many states of which we can hardly imagine the existence. Though the Teachers have not given out nearly all the knowledge in their possession, many teachings belonging to the regions of the higher Mysteries being reserved as they cannot be revealed yet in our present state of evolution, enough is plainly set forth to satisfy reasonable inquirers who have gotten away from the misleading prejudices and limitations of orthodox bigotry or materialistic science.

H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge left us a mine of valuable hints by which we can work out the thinly veiled clues with which the ancient philosophies and Sacred

Scriptures of the world are filled, and we have the inestimable advantage of having Katherine Tingley, our Teacher and Leader, with us to help us and to prevent us from wasting our time on unprofitable byways of speculation.

The teachings of Theosophy deal with such intimate subjects and are so sacred that it would be a profanation to bring them forward in anything like school text-book form. They pertain to the most serious matters that can touch us, to things closest to our hearts, to feelings which English-speaking people particularly have a great and almost unconquerable reluctance to discuss. The secrets of Death and the mysterious journey of the radiant immortal soul should, fittingly, be spoken of in Miltonic periods of stately verse, or suggested to the reverent ear by noble music. Feeling this so strongly, the subject of Man after Death will be treated without bringing in the text-book atmosphere; for we recognize fully that it has to do with our real selves, stripped of all pretense, as well as with our

more tender relations with those "We have loved and lost awhile."

For convenience, because the English language has not developed the suitable terms, we shall use the few Eastern words which H. P. Blavatsky adopted to save time in endlessly long explanatory sentences. The words may be found in Sanskrit or other Oriental languages, but the meanings attached to them by H. P. Blavatsky are not always precisely the same now-a-days in the original languages from which they were taken. As Theosophy is not *exoteric* Buddhism, Hindûism, nor Christianity, but is the deeper meaning behind all the world-religions, the special words selected naturally had to carry a deeper significance than is attributed to them by philologists. The special uses of the few terms used will become quite clear as we proceed. Every science requires a certain number of words of technical meaning and it would be curious if Theosophy, the Science of Life, were an exception.

As a necessary introduction to the Theo-

sophical teaching of what takes place after the last breath is drawn we must have a fair idea of what Man really is. In a previous Manual the complex nature of man's principles has been described at length, so it is needless to go into detail here. For our present purpose the following convenient arrangement of the principles or subdivisions of our nature as published by H. P. Blavatsky is sufficient, but we may notice in passing that several other slightly modified classifications were used by her as well.

The various Eastern Schools of psychology differ as to the best arrangement, for the principles can be grouped in different divisions. What we call the physical body — *i. e.*, the illusory appearance produced by the passing of material molecules through the ideal astral matrix — being so mutable can be safely ignored. Strictly speaking, it is not a "Principle" at all. The Egyptian and ancient Greek classifications are still other modifications, but H. P. Blavatsky decided that the following order was the most suitable for her pupils.



THE HIGHER  
SELF is

THE SPIRIT-  
UAL *divine*  
EGO is

THE INNER  
OR HIGHER  
"Ego" is

THE LOWER,  
OR PERSONAL  
"Ego" is

Ātmâ, the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God *above*, more than within, us. Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his *inner Ego* with it! the spiritual soul or *Buddhi*, in close union with *Manas*, the mind-principle, without which the former is no EGO at all, but only the Ātmic *Vehicle*.

*Manas*, the "fifth" Principle, so called, independently of *Buddhi*. The Mind-Principle is only the Spiritual Ego when merged *into one* with *Buddhi*; no materialist being supposed to have in him *such* an Ego, however great his intellectual capacities. It is the permanent *Individuality* or the "Reincarnating Ego."

the physical man in conjunction with his *lower Self*—*i. e.*, animal instincts, passions, desires, etc. It is called the "false personality," and consists of the *lower Manas* combined with *Kâma Rûpa*, and operating through the physical body and its phantom or "double."

The remaining "principle," *Prâna*, or "Life," is strictly speaking, the radiating force or energy of *Âtmâ*—as the Universal Life and the ONE SELF—Its lower, or rather (in its effects) more physical, because manifesting, aspect. *Prâna*, or Life, permeates the whole being of the objective Universe, and is called a "principle" only because it is an indispensable factor and the *deus ex machinâ* of the living man.

We must never fall into the vulgar error of thinking of these principles as entirely separate things, like the coats of an onion, so to speak; during waking life our consciousness is playing through the whole set of principles, *Âtmâ* excepted, as It really stands above everything else. The human consciousness can not be defined intelligibly; at best we can say it is the feeling of "I-am-I" and no other. The seven principles somewhat resemble the seven prismatic colors which appear to be one, white, when united, but when separated are found to have individual characteristics. Force and matter are admittedly indestructible, and conscious intelligence makes them coherent and orderly in their manifest-

ation; otherwise chaos would ensue. The power of feeling inherent in us penetrates the different principles; but in our present state the mental self-consciousness is what makes us man, though unfortunately with the rarest exceptions this is merely the lower intellection and not the higher mind or the complete Manas. When humanity is fully self-conscious on every plane of existence it will stand forth as the Divine Man it is destined to become.

After death the Higher Manas withdraws into itself its "Shadow," the higher aroma of the lower Manas, which has been prominent during life, and which we erroneously think is our real self; it is this dual Manasic principle, therefore, that we have to watch, chiefly, in its post-mortem experiences.

To get an adequate idea of the conditions after death we must realize that the center of feeling giving us the sense of I-am-I, our individual consciousness, is able to identify itself with each of the different aspects or planes of nature. These identifications are

usually, though inexactly, called *changes of consciousness*. It is a matter of common recognition that a person is in an entirely different state when concentrated upon the solution of some difficult mathematical problem from the one he is in while enjoying a Christmas dinner or listening to worthy music; the intuitive consciousness which directs right action as in a flash, heedless of the slow process of reasoning, is different again; and then there are the little-understood states of dreaming and dreamless sleep. Theosophy being essentially based upon the study of consciousness, follows the individual perception through these "states of consciousness" and many others not yet recognized by science, until the personal limitations melt away into the whole, and "the dewdrop slips into the shining sea." Throughout all the ramifications of this marvelous journey let us never forget that it is the conditions that change, not the perceiving, conscious Center.

There are many planes or conditions in Nature's marvelous storehouse, and the veh-

icles or sheaths that the soul has created in order that it may understand these planes by plunging into them, are limitations. As we get away from the physical world and the brain-cells of physiology, the vehicles of consciousness are found to be of more subtle matter than the terrestrial, more ethereal, in harmony with the new conditions. The most helpful method is to consider them as possessing higher speed and different qualities of vibration, and consequently, unfamiliar properties and energies.

The table of principles given on page 18 leads to an important point in connexion with consciousness after death. To understand this we must dwell upon the strange fact that a center of self-consciousness can apparently emanate or put out an "automatic" consciousness resembling the light thrown by a lamp on a wall. It lights up a dimmer sensibility latent in the atoms of the associated substance. So, after death, the "astral" man or ethereal double of the body, though intrinsically mindless, has an automatic memory, an induced or

reflected intelligence from its association with the lower Manas, which persists for a while, but must not be mistaken for that of the real Ego.

There are other separate persistences of consciousness after death which will be referred to later on, but the principle is the same. The full consciousness neither disappears into annihilation at death, nor does it exist in the same conditions as during life, but passes on to higher and "inner" states of being, leaving behind it sundry vehicles or emanations which have a reflected life and sensibility of their own, lasting for various periods according to the energy put into that part of the nature during life, and derived from their contact with the real Ego. To get even a dim appreciation of the release of the Higher Manas by death, the student is urged to dwell on this possibly novel conception to him of the temporary persistences of partial "reflections" and survivals of the lower passions of the human being now undergoing purification.

Perhaps this important point can be grasped more clearly if we watch the automatic department of our minds which intelligently, even if vaguely, answers questions, counts figures, and does other simple *mental* acts while "we" are profoundly absorbed in reverie. It is quite common to read a page without having the slightest recollection of a word, because the connexion between the real center of perception and the automatic consciousness has been temporarily separated. Some business men, again, devise their most important enterprises while the lower mentality is automatically occupied with a game of cards. The same part of our nature has the power to shut the doors of memory against the higher man, and prevent their being opened for a while. Many instances of dual consciousness in daily life will occur to the reader, without referring to the merely physical consciousness of the body, which we all know can be absolutely disregarded for a while, as in the case of soldiers not feeling their wounds in the excitement of battle.

From the knowledge that consciousness can be in more than one state at the same time, paradoxical though it seems, it is but a short step to see that a continuation of a lower order of intelligence in a subtle body, after the breaking down of the bond uniting the whole, is not by any means an extraordinary idea.

The instinctive intelligence, call it reflex action, or what you will, in a decapitated turtle or conger-eel, which will bite, if irritated, for hours after being cut up; or the automatic memory in a heart which keeps it beating for a long time after removal from the body, are illustrations of similar persistence; and the semi-animal sensibility of the Venus' Fly-trap or the Sensitive Plant is closely allied. The appreciation of the complex groups of semi-conscious subordinate "men" combining with the real Man to form a human being, is of similar nature to the comprehension of a solid geometrical figure from the study of its component faces laid out on a flat plane. Like the geometrical figure which at last combines



in the mind, as a solid, the unity of the principles has to be felt by the inner perception.

Observe carefully that Theosophy teaches that these semi-intelligent emanations — passions and desires — have bodily form to manifest in, however tenuous and ethereal it may be and however temporary. This point will be further dealt with later, but it is necessary to refer to it now for fear of misunderstanding.

The normal consciousness, composed of all the aspects of mental and emotional consciousness, added to the lower sensations of the physical cells and the organs of the body, we call our personal self. Theosophy calls this the “false” personality, and it is this that is greatly modified by death, which weeds out the impermanent and intensifies the self-consciousness of the Inner or Higher Ego.

Change is necessary for progress in the present condition of things. The feeling of Selfhood is partially induced from the element of change in the surroundings. Though we have obviously to advance beyond this attitude of

mind, which exists because of our incomplete development, yet at this moment each perceives his own existence by the relationship of himself to what is not himself; and that relationship, to be felt, requires friction or change. Although, philosophically speaking, behind all stands the Spectator, the Watcher, the *Ātmā-Buddhi*, yet from the standpoint of the lower mind, absolute changelessness of conditions would be equivalent to non-existence. We only feel the presence of still water by a difference of temperature; when the temperature becomes the same as that of the finger the water is not felt. We should lose all knowledge of our existence if there were no changes of consciousness. "Absolute" consciousness would be the same as non-existence to us as individual human beings, for the same reason that "absolute" light without the slightest shade or variety of color would be the same in effect as pure darkness, from want of contrast—or otherwise, from lack of change. "Death," therefore, is a necessary part of life for us at present, for it gives the greatest pos-

sible change of conditions, and ushers in a new order of existence for a while.

Carrying further the idea of change, Theosophy shows that the alternation of life and death — cyclic manifestation and repose — is a fundamental law of the universe; but what is withdrawal and dissolution from one aspect is the opening into keener life when regarded from the other pole of being. So the death of the body allows the soul to be born into a larger life, to seek spiritual refreshment until the inevitable periodic law draws it back into reincarnation again on earth — to be, like Adam, “clothed in skin,” in order to gain a further share of experience in the material world.

Earthly existence is, from the higher aspect, death, not only allegorically or mystically, but actually; for the higher Ego, when entangled with the brain mind, temporarily loses its celestial knowledge, and is only able to re-enter the higher spiritual states, in the case of the *normal* man, during “dreamless” sleep. Sleep is indeed the twin brother of

death, and in greater measure than modern thinkers suppose.

It must not be thought that man has to undergo rebirths on earth for ever, although a large number of such experiences are necessary under cyclic law. After material conditions and temptations have been mastered, other regions open out and physical incarnation, being unnecessary, is left behind. But, as this subject is touched upon in the preceding *Manual on Reincarnation*, we need not pursue it further here.

### III

## THE PROCESS OF RELEASE

**H**AVING gained from the teachings of Theosophy a broad idea of what man really is we are better prepared to understand the process of release from the prison of the body; for death is a deliverer in the present conditions of earth-life, with selfishness and animality rampant. Death is the friend to the higher spiritual nature. Life as led today is fraught with far greater suffering than death; to millions it is life that is the King of Terrors, judging by the terrible increase in the number of suicides. But the Theosophist who really feels the continuity of life, its indestructibility, and who has felt the heart-touch even for a moment, has no more fear of death than of any other natural process in the experience of the soul. The student of Theosophy knows that death is not an unprecedented catastrophe

or unlooked-for event, but a change natural to the state of evolution we are in at present. Doubtless it is a great and transforming change, and many strange portals and tortuous passages have to be traversed, but the real, immortal man knows the password — “Purification”— which will unlock the mystic doors.

After the last breath has been expired and all seems over, some time usually elapses before the inner man has absolutely finished with his earthly tenement. Concentrated for a while in the deepest centers of the brain and totally unconscious of the body he is now leaving, man reads the records of his past life, drawn from the imperishable register of the “astral light,” which nothing can modify; every event is presented in the startling vividness of life itself, long forgotten incidents are resurrected, and during the few moments before the loosing of the “silver thread” the past stands out in minutest detail and also as a whole, so that the complete chain of cause and effect is seen. This is the first Judgment Day, and there is no escape from this living picture gal-

lery; for the man, now the Spectator of his deeds as if they were those of another, is compelled to be honest and to recognize where he failed and where he succeeded, where the lower nature conquered or where the higher gained the day. No excuses can be made at this awful moment. In many cases of apparent drowning the sufferers have been able to recollect passing through a similar profoundly impressive experience; though no doubt it is far less vivid than the vision at the time of real death.

That this solemn retrospect may bring forth its deepest results, that the facing of the calm dispassionate judgment of the Higher Ego may not lose its full efficacy, a peaceful atmosphere in the chamber of death is most important. Though the senses have ceased to convey their messages to the brain, and the inner man can give no sign of his presence, any extreme agitation in his surroundings, such as excess of grief in the survivors, is felt by him through other channels and produces a retarding effect upon his rightful progress toward more and more inward states. Abandonment to the ex-

tremity of woe by those to whom the departing soul is closely attached is a positive injury to it, and should never be allowed. It is really a form of self-indulgence, and is not characteristic of true unselfish love, nor suitable for a moment fraught with such momentous consequences. It is necessary to speak very plainly on this point, for it is one of primary importance to all who love their fellow-men. Many persons seem to take a morbid kind of enjoyment in the over-indulgence in grief, a pride in being able to display supreme emotion. All the great religious teachers and philosophers of the world have censured extreme abandonment to sorrow, and Theosophy demonstrates why they objected. They knew it injures both the living and the dying. The solemn trial the loved one is passing through while re-living the past at the time of death and for a while after, should not be interrupted, nor should the soul be embarrassed by the despairing grief of the bereaved ones who often seem at those times to have utterly lost all hope or trust in the Higher Law.



This is a very delicate and sacred subject and in trying to help those who are in severe pain a sympathetic though firm touch is needed. Here is a time when Theosophy comes like a breath of fresh air, with its gentle message of healing to the stricken mourners. To all who have realized, even a little, the principle of Universal Brotherhood in their lives, the way quickly opens out of the close atmosphere of self-centered grief into the healthy air of generous service. Tears? yes, if you must; but let them be transmuted from tears of despair to tears of tender sympathy. Theosophy does not check the faintest breath of heart-love that might help and strengthen the departed in the effort he is now commencing, under circumstances of extreme novelty and bewilderment, to break off with the lower things of earth and to enter into the new life through the gates of the mystic "second death."

Excess of grief on the part of the bereaved is an unbrotherly yielding to personal emotion. It is a subtle form of self-gratification. Besides the obvious weakening and disheartening

after-effect on the survivors it seriously retards the pilgrim soul on his dark journey. But trust in the higher Law; tender reminiscence; combined with a loving desire for the purification and progress of the lost one, and a firm putting down of uncontrolled and sentimental lamentation, help to build a bridge of light for the friend who is crossing the mysterious river. Dignified self-control on the part of the survivors generates the atmosphere of peace, and surely it is a great comfort to feel that high spiritual and sympathetic feeling can really give help in the time of trial, though no external sign may be shown in return.

The touching Bible story of David's conduct when his son was threatened with death is a beautiful illustration of the Theosophical teaching. After doing everything in his power to ward off the danger while the child still lived — fasting and weeping, as soon as there was no further hope he calmly returned to his duty, chastened and purified, saying, "Now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can

I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (II Sam. 12)

Once we realize the inner spiritual unity of the whole of humanity, embodied or disembodied, *i. e.*, the deeper meaning of Universal Brotherhood, there is no room for hopeless grief, which arises from the implicit denial of the great truth that the kingdom of God is within us and that we are the temples of God.

While the retrospect of the past is taking place and the brain-mind is yielding up the minutest recollections forgotten since the moment which saw them born, the bodily form is breaking up under the pressure of a change in polarity. H. P. Blavatsky puts it thus:

When a body dies it passes into the same polarity as its male [positive] energy, and repels therefore, the active agent, which, losing hold of the whole, fastens on the parts or molecules, the action being called chemical. (*Secret Doctrine*, I, 572.)

The active energy is *Prâna*, the vital solar force which animates all things, permeating everything, like water in a sponge. In life the body is polarized oppositely to this, and

so, by the well-known law of nature, a healthy interplay exists between the two. It is a case of manifestation through the action of the "pairs of opposites." In electric action for instance, every output of positive electricity has to be balanced by a corresponding display of negative energy. During the day the solar Prânic energy has been accumulating and by the hour of bedtime this positive flood begins to overpower the resisting negative forces of the body, which is then actually too full of vitality. It can no longer stand the strain and sleep is necessary to restore the balance. In death the body is completely overpowered by Prâna, we die from an excess of life, for the tremendous force rushing through the cells tears them apart, and destroys them in consequence of there being no opposing force strong enough to resist the pressure. William Q. Judge says:

When we awake we are in equilibrium as to our organs and life; when we fall asleep we are yet more full of energy than in the morning; it has exhausted us; it finally kills the body. Such a

contest could not be waged for ever, since the whole solar system's weight of life is pitted against the power to resist focussed in one small human frame.

A time comes in the life of every man when the mysterious disintegrating tendency increases rapidly and the body succumbs to what often seems an insufficient physical cause. The existence of this cyclic period of breaking-up is derived from the past and is largely hereditary. Man is a creature of habit and there is a strong hereditary tendency for successive generations to do the same things at the same periods of life. The development of the unborn child, the various physiological changes in the body, the arrival of the teeth, beard, etc., follow recognized cycles. Further still, evil tendencies, such as a craving for drink, have been observed to break out at exactly the same age in father and son, extending sometimes over several generations. Likewise a period when the body gives up the fight against the natural pressure of the Solar System comes to every one,

the length of normal life seldom exceeding seventy years.

Can this change be overcome and healthy life be lengthened indefinitely? If we lived wisely and were pure in act and thought we should not be the sport of this habit, which is of our own creation. Once this critical time is tided over there is no reason why life should not be prolonged. If we were truly selfless we should be able to lay down or take up the body at will, and not as now have it wrenched from us. But as the human race will obviously continue to perpetuate present conditions for a long time to come, we may dismiss further consideration on this point, as it would carry us beyond the scope of this essay. Very few persons would care to live on after the death of all their friends into new circumstances for which they had not been prepared in early life. The lesson contained in the legend of the Wandering Jew, an ordinary man who can never find rest but has to carry about the horrible memories of his past, is not encouraging to those

who may fancy an immensely long life in their present consciousness would be a desirable thing. We are irresistibly reminded of the Greek story of the love of Eos (the dawn) for Tithonus, son of Priam. The goddess succeeded in gaining immortality for her human spouse, but forgot to ask for eternal youth, and so the poor man became decrepit and miserable in course of time.

Eternal youth in the legend of course typifies the child-state we have lost, for without that, eternal life would be a terrible infliction. Jesus put the matter very plainly when he told the people that they could not enter the kingdom of heaven until they had become as little children. Fortunately the merciful law of Reincarnation gives the mind a complete break, as the memory of former lives is not contained in the new brain, and the man of desire does not know how to evoke it. Those few exceptional persons who have attained the power of safely passing through the dangerous cyclic period are, by the very nature of the case, qualified to endure the new condi-

tions which greatly prolonged life must bring.

The disintegrating impulse would be easily resisted and the average length of healthy, useful activity increased if it were not that the selfish passional nature has been allowed to grow inordinately strong. The passions, coalescing into one dominant force in later life, form an enemy which takes advantage of the hereditary tendency to dissolve, and at last, as if with glee, gives the fatal blow. The final disintegration of the physical body is only the accentuation of the process of breaking up which is continually in action throughout life.

Consider for a moment what is this body which seems so firm and stable. Is it the material molecules? Hardly, for they are in a constant state of flux, passing into the frame and out of it ceaselessly. Not for one minute is the body in the same condition; as each particle yields up its quota of energy it is hurried away to be re-vivified by the sunshine; man's body is the least permanent of all his principles; in fact, so evanescent is



it that some schools of Eastern philosophers have declined to call it one of the principles at all! It is like a river. How can we define a river accurately? Is it the bed, or the water? Both are forever changing; the sparkling drops never stay one moment, but glide along to their ocean home, not, however, to remain there long, but to rise again in vapor and unite into some other stream. The river bed itself changes in shape, in position, and in depth. In fact the river in itself is really the persisting "Ideal form" behind the everchanging particles. When the ancients named their rivers "Father" Tiber, or the "Son" of Brahmâ (Brahmâputra) they were allegorizing this point in poetical language. The matter of our bodies is as unstable as the water in the rivers, and as a further resemblance, on leaving the body to pass into the outer air it is not quite the same, for it has been impressed with some of the reflected consciousness of the man, it has been raised or lowered as the case may be. The water of the river is colored by the geological strata

it has passed through, the vegetation that it has supported, or the refuse that has been shot into it. The molecules leaving an alcoholic victim are in a very much lower condition than those from a pure, self-controlled person. The impress the molecules receive does not pass off quickly, and in fact, as like attracts like, the grosser ones are continually finding their way into the bodies of the more coarsely minded people and helping to keep them back; the more refined and spiritually impressed particles cannot be retained except by those persons with whom they are harmonious. From the standpoint of universal Brotherhood this fact impresses upon us the importance of pure thought and clean living; it shows that the Theosophic teaching of the unity of the race on every plane has a scientific basis. None of us can escape the influence of the rest, and no one is without the power of helping or degrading his fellows, consciously or otherwise, not only by his actions and his thoughts, but by the very complexion he gives to the atoms of his body.

## THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASTRAL FORM

As the mortal frame begins to decompose in the grave, or better still, in the reverent and sanitary flame of the crematorium, the "Astral Body" is released. The astral body is practically a second human form, mortal and perishable, a semi-material mold holding the particles of the physical body in their places; it is the ethereal matrix of the molecules, the Double or the *Eidolon* of the Greeks. It changes little during life, after the body reaches maturity; differing in that respect greatly from the physical body, but after death it immediately begins to dissolve into its own grade of matter. It is not spiritual at all, and it has no proper consciousness of its own; it has little to do with the progress of the soul, unless it is "artificially stimulated" or vivified, when it normally becomes a hindrance. As a rule, it fades out like a smoke-ring from a pipe, which has a definite form for a while. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the eminent biologist, was surprised

to find the great tensile strength of this principle during some experiments he once made with a medium. The astral double has occasionally been seen by sensitive persons near graves, for it cannot get far away from the body, and many ghost stories have probably originated from this. After the complete destruction of the physical body the astral form entirely disappears, and cremation has great power in breaking it up rapidly.

Now we are coming to one of those teachings of Theosophy which, though eminently reasonable in themselves, and perfectly in harmony with our highest intuitions and strongest common sense, require a complete change from the ordinary theological method of considering the things of the inner world, or from the materialistic notions we have in so many cases consciously or unconsciously imbibed from the atmosphere of doubt and sarcasm and controversy regarding the existence of the soul which is so prevalent today.

## IV

### THE "SECOND DEATH"

**T**HEOSOPHY teaches that the death of the body is not the only great change that occurs at the close of life; there is a "second death," a death of the lower passionate nature, the *Kâma Rûpa* or Body of Desire. This mystic death sets free the higher principles, which then rise to sublime heights of spiritual existence, from whence they do not return until the next incarnation.

To understand this more clearly we must regard the Higher Ego or Manas as the center of *self*-consciousness, overshadowed by the potentiality of *Âtmâ-Buddhi*, but during life partly incarnated in this molecular existence, where for experience and for the elevation of lower states of being, it has identified itself in that limited bodily condition where passion and desire have great power. The Lower Man-

as is an Emanation, a portion sent out from the Higher Ego; we may call it for convenience the reflection or the Shadow; and, while in the body, it becomes fully identified with terrestrial existence, after the first few years of life, when, as Wordsworth says:

Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But He beholds the light and whence it comes,  
He sees in it His joy;  
The Youth who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it pass away  
And fade into the light of common day.

It has forgotten "heaven which is its home." The "false personality," the compound of the Lower Manas — this Emanation of the Higher — the passions, and a number of sensory impressions derived from a long train of daily experiences strung together by the thread of physical memory, is what we call our personal self; Mr.—, or Mrs.— as the case may be; but all the time the

real Reincarnating Ego, the higher "Individuality," is behind, watching, guiding, and helping, whenever the lower self will allow its voice — the Conscience — to be heard. It is the "Guardian Angel."

At death the body, the astral, and the physical vitality or Prâna, return to their own molecular or atomic states, and for the present we need say no more about them; the inner man now stands freed from his physical sheath, but he is none the less a personality; he is still entangled in those passions he has been weaving around himself since infancy. He is now on the *Kâmaloka* plane, the natural home of desire and passion. The *perfectly legitimate normal* existence of other states of being, "beyond and within" the ordinary terrestrial plane, blending into and interpenetrating it, is a conception beginners in Theosophy find difficult to realize in some cases. Even the lowest of these planes are invisible to our embodied senses except under very unusual circumstances, and though they shade into each other like the colors of the

spectrum, each one is distinct and characterized by a dominant state of consciousness.

Most people are in the habit of thinking of everything on terrestrial lines, of supposing that the higher as well as the lower feelings disappear utterly with the destruction of the brain, or else of putting the whole question aside as a hopeless mystery. But to see the truth the student must look upon the things of the mind and the soul from higher ground. Reasoning which does fairly well for the things of the body and the mechanical forces will not apply to super-mundane conditions without modification. So when we speak of the plane of passion and desire whereon a being may live, we must not look upon it as if it were another material planet like ours, but rather as a subtle condition of matter, within, or interpenetrating our world; the Kâmalokic condition of consciousness partly resembles the state the mind is in when dreaming an ordinary dream. Even this comparison is very incomplete, for most of our dreaming is done through the brain cells. Speaking



of Kâmaloka H. P. Blavatsky says that it is the semi-material plane, to us subjective and invisible, where the disembodied "personalities," the astral forms, called Kâma Rûpa, remain, until they fade out from it by the complete exhaustion of the effect of the mental impulses that created these *eidolons* of human and animal passions and desires.

H. P. Blavatsky here uses the words *astral* and *eidolon* for a much more subtle and ether-eal principle, so to speak, than that almost physical astral which perishes as the body decays. The *Kâma Rûpa* is the subjective being, (subjective from our terrestrially objective position but objective enough on its own plane) composed of the whole of the passional nature of the man that was; and for a while the Higher Ego cannot withdraw the Shadow, the Emanation or lower Manas which has gotten entangled in it. In some cases the lower consciousness absolutely dominates the position and the Higher Ego is compelled to break off from its Shadow. This terrible fate for the lower Manas even happens occasionally during life, and then we see the awful

spectacle of a seemingly human being entirely destitute of conscience — a soulless being — although often highly intellectual. The Kâmalokic plane has many divisions, each one in harmony with the grade of materiality of the being passing through it. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* they are symbolized by the many portals the soul has to pass through before being finally allowed to enter the Elysian fields of Aanroo. At each gateway he has to give the password, showing advance in spirituality and purification.

As the departed soul progresses in purification it approaches nearer and nearer the Father in Heaven, the Higher Ego, and at the same time the Kâma principle fades away, only leaving behind it the seeds of future action, the seeds that have been sown in the life just passed and which have to come to fruiting in some later incarnation. Nothing but the highest thoughts and feelings of the past life can enter into the final state of heavenly bliss, but before this can be attained the gradual change called the Second Death has to be faced.

The *general* Theosophical teaching of the second death is nothing new, and, being a fact in the orderly progress of the soul, the most enlightened of the ancient philosophers knew of it and have handed it down to us, who have greater difficulties in investigating for ourselves. The sacred Knowledge of the mysteries of death cannot be found by the invocation of the fading Kâmarûpic shades of the dead in séance rooms or by any ordinary means known to science. Penetration behind the veil of illusion that wraps us so closely can only be done with faultless vision by those who have passed entirely beyond the entanglements of selfish desire. Only those Masters of Wisdom who have attained perfect Compassion, the "perfect love that casteth out fear," can venture into and return safely from those regions "from whose bourne no (uninitiated, or untrained) traveler e'er returns." The visions of such imperfect seers as Swedenborg, Scipio Africanus, St. Theresa, and the like are often quite unreliable, for they are colored by preconceptions arising from their

own particular school of theology acting through self-hypnosis, as well as by gigantic personal limitations. Plutarch puts the ancient Theosophic teaching very clearly, though of course, he could not explain anything fully because the whole detail belonged to the inner Mysteries. He says:

Now of the deaths we die, the one makes man two out of three and the other one of (out of) two. The former is in the region and jurisdiction of Demeter, whence the name given to the Mysteries, *τελειῶν*, resembles that given to death, *τελευτῶν*. The Athenians also heretofore called the deceased sacred to Demeter. As for the other death, it is in the moon or the region of Persephone. . . . And as with the one, the terrestrial, so with the other celestial Hermes doth dwell. This suddenly and with violence plucks the soul from the body; but Proserpina mildly and in a long time disjoins the understanding from the soul.\* Now both the one and the other happen according to nature. It is or-

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\* Proserpina, or Persephone, stands here for post-mortem Karma, which is said to regulate the separation of the lower from the higher "principles"—the soul, as *Nephesh*, the breath of animal life, which remains for a time in *Kâma-loka*, from the higher compound *Ego*, which goes into the state of *Devachan*, or bliss.

daigned by Fate [Fatum or Karma] that every soul, whether with or without understanding [mind] when gone out of the body should wander for a time, though not all for the same, in the region lying between the earth and moon [Kâmaloka]. For those that have been unjust and dissolute suffer then the punishment due to their offences; but the good and virtuous are then detained till they are purified, and have, by expiation, purged out of them all the infections they might have contracted from the contagion of the body, as if from foul health, living in the mildest part of the air, called the Meadows of Hades, where they must remain for a certain prefixed and appointed time. And then, as if they were returning from a wandering pilgrimage or long exile into their country, they have a taste of joy, . . . etc.

#### CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONALITY

BEFORE passing on to the consideration of the region of Paradise where the Higher Manas and the spiritual aroma of the lower Manas become one and unite with the Higher *Self*, it will be well to take another glance at the question of reflected or emanated intelligence, the greatest stumbling block to beginners. The superficial materialism of

this age, not only the theoretical disbelief in the existence of immortality, but the modern ideals of practical life, have brought so many millions into such a settled way of thinking of themselves as nothing but this body and brain-mind, that it requires some exercise of will to break up the hypnotic illusion and to see things in a larger way and with a broader view. But when this is done, what a relief to find it is not necessary to believe, as the theologians have indoctrinated us in their ignorance, that our present limited personalities will continue to exist in Heaven or Hell throughout all Eternity; nor to have to take refuge in a natural, instinctive horror of that wearisome belief—in the melancholy hope of annihilation!

All things possess self-consciousness in potentiality; every atom on each plane of being has it in latency if not in action, and the principles that the Ego builds round itself in order to come into touch with the many phases of earth-life receive a partial awakening from its contact. Think of a light shin-

ing through differently colored panes of glass, some of which remain phosphorescent for a while after the withdrawal of the inner light, a physical fact which partly illustrates the super-physical condition of the lower states of consciousness when the Higher Ego has passed on. The whole of Nature is ready at the first favorable moment to acquire self-conscious existence; the greater object which man is struggling to reach (and all things are tending to become man on their way upward) is to "enjoy the Glory of God," in the language of the theologians. We would prefer to put it — *That all things should become aware of the plan of the Divine Oversoul of which they are expressions.* Observe that the word God is not used in Theosophy with any "personal" signification — unless the ordinary, limited meaning of the word "personal" is set aside — as so many theologians try to do by their desperate attempts to combine the incompatible, in their efforts to define "the Nature of God." By this almost creative power of a higher consciousness to light

the fires in less evolved substance, the illusion is produced in the mind that it can divide and subdivide itself; but actually the original consciousness must remain a unity and does not lose its identity. The basis in which it works will change, or more exactly, it will pass through many fundamentally distinct states, but once having arrived at that feeling, the sense of I-am-I exists through all the changes of form and growth during earth-life. Even during the states of so-called unconsciousness (unconsciousness to the waking mind, such as when the brain is under the effect of hypnotism) there is no real blank, for when the subject is again hypnotized the lost memory of what has taken place during the hypnotic state returns and can even be made permanent. Even the character of the personality may change, but the "Spectator," the inner Man "for whom the hour shall never strike," looks on and recognizes the changes and profits by the experience gained through the lower self. Back of all there is That which is still more spiritual than



the Higher Ego: the Higher SELF — the Divine Breath, *Buddhi* illuminated by *Atmâ*, That which is ONE, the Oversoul.

“Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?”

“I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it.”

“Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou find it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?”

“It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, ‘Thy soul and my soul.’”—From an eastern esoteric Catechism, quoted by H. P. Blavatsky.

Now we have traveled in our imaginary journey a long way with the advancing soul, and though many mysteries have been left yet unexplained by the Teachers of Theosophy, and many gaps remain to be filled as the student makes progress in impersonality, still the broad outlines of the coherent system that has been given us are now apparent.

## V

### DEVACHAN

**W**ITH the disappearance of the Kâma principle, the radiant glories of the Heavenly World open on the purified soul, now freed from the taint of everything that held it from the realization of the Christos, the true Vine, of which it is but one branch. As a tree puts forth twigs and leaves, withdrawing into itself by degrees the virtue it has gained through the existence of the leaves, now mere skeletons, so the higher has withdrawn all that was useful, noble and of good report from the terrestrial. The state of "Devachan" has now been fully entered upon, the final state preceding the next plunge or rebirth into earth-life for further development.

As this Manual is concerned only with the broader aspects of Man after Death, we

must leave for separate treatment the consideration of many undesirable hindrances that interfere with the orderly progress of certain souls in passing through the planes of Kâmaloka and disengaging themselves from the stains of passion. These hindrances are caused by an overmastering desire for the pleasures of the senses enjoyed during life, by such events as suicide and accidental death, or by the efforts of misguided people to get into communication with the departed, through the necromantic practises of mediumship.

To get an approximate idea of Devachan,\* the highest state between earthly incarnations, we must not allow ourselves to dwell too much on form. No doubt it is difficult for our brain-minds to separate the idea of conscious existence from definite form of some kind; probably the easiest way to open the intuitive faculty in this direction is to meditate on — and then act out — such attributes of the divine nature as Justice, Mercy, Love and Compassion. These are as actual as anything else we con-

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\* Pronounced *Dayva-kan*.

tact; nay, they and their like are the only actualities, for they are changeless and everlasting; but they are *formless*, they can not be laid out on the dissecting table or analysed with spectroscopes! They are the Eternal Verities shining behind the veil of illusion created by the Spirit of the Universe to manifest them. It is impossible to put these high and sacred matters into words to be understood by the brain-mind in its ordinary condition, for the mind partakes too much of the nature of matter itself to do more than grasp faint glimpses of what is meant by spirit. The caricatures the laboring minds of men have drawn in their futile efforts to explain the meaning of spirituality have disgusted many thoughtful seekers who were just turning towards the light, and have sent them back to materialism as a lesser evil than superstition. Attempting to explain spiritual consciousness to one who has no glimmering of intuition is like discussing the colors of the rainbow with a blind man.

But Theosophy does not leave any one without hope. It teaches that if even the least ef-

fort is made to break away from the clogging things of personal selfishness, a little spiritual knowledge will come, and that if the struggle is continued without slackening, the light will get brighter until the full daylight of what is called in the East "Nirvâna," and in the Christian mysticism the "Beatific Vision," will flood the soul. The heat of aspiration transmutes the lead of the lower nature to the Gold. Spiritual fire begins to work the instant a high aspiration is entertained.

But Devachan is not this state of perfect knowledge and wisdom; it is a high and exquisitely refined condition, but even in its purity the soul is bound to a certain extent by illusion. Although Devachan is nearer the One Reality than the physical plane, it is not that divine region where all things are plain to the view of the illuminated Seer and are known in their *real* essence. We have not yet gained our freedom, for the life-cycle of humanity is only partially completed and ages must elapse before perfect liberation is achieved by the race as a whole.

In the Theosophical teaching of Devachan an entirely new conception of life after death has been offered to the western world. A dismal materialism has woefully misunderstood the meaning of our environment; it can see nothing but that Nature is "red in tooth and claw," and thinks that with the disappearance of the brain, annihilation is the end of consciousness; while the vague and inconsistent ideas of Heaven and Hell of the ecclesiastics, or the "Summerland" of the spiritists, are the only alternatives. No wonder there is so much negation and rejection of all but what pertains to the life of the senses; no wonder that the highest ideal of large masses of the people is that "Honesty is the best *Policy*."

But Theosophy shows that between the extremes of denial and credulity the truth is to be looked for. Neither will the Intelligence of man sink into the abyss of nothingness, its existence having been to no purpose; nor will the narrow brain-mind of Mr. A. or Mrs. B. drag on a wearisome career in eternity

cramped by the limitations of personality as we know them. No indeed; in the Theosophical teaching of the existence of a Devachanic interlude between incarnations on earth, an entirely new conception of the greatness of life and the object of death has been projected into the western world. Once we realize that the real Man is a part of the Oversoul; is immortal in past and future; that he has to understand the various planes of existence in this illimitable universe by embodiment in forms of different degrees of materiality; that for the Inner Man there is no alarming shock at death flinging him into painfully new conditions — once we grasp these sublime conditions we shall comprehend the mercy of the Higher Law in a new way. The Theosophist rejoices in the knowledge that Devachan is at least a partial release from the bonds of personality, a perfect rest for the soul after the strife of earth-life, when it assimilates the worthiest experiences of the past, and gains strength for the next battle. William Q. Judge puts the case tersely:

Nature, always kind, leads us soon again to heaven for a rest, for the flowering of the best or highest in our natures.

In Devachan, the Imagination, one of the highest faculties we have, is given full play. This godlike creative power, the inspiration of the artist, the musician or the inventor, has for its materials experiences of the past life, memories of antecedent states, unknown to the brain-mind of the previous incarnation, as well as knowledge of things entirely veiled from us by the limitations of the senses. Who knows what creations of poetry or of invention have not been worked out in Devachan, which afterwards seemed to shoot into the brain of the personality in his next incarnation? The following arrangement will help the student to understand something of the changes produced by the journey through the portals of death. This classification is not set forth as the authoritative teaching of Theosophy, but is the writer's deduction from the little that the Teachers have given out about the changes of consciousness after death.



MORTAL MAN  
IN TERRESTRIAL LIFE.

The *Feeling* of "I-am-I" and no other, the Self-consciousness, permeating the whole man, but mainly centered in the Lower Manas and the Brain-mind.

*Imagination*, weak in most cases; great geniuses possible exceptions.

*Reason* strong; the principal faculty in action. Uses the brain and is mainly stimulated from the out-

MAN AFTER DEATH.

The same *Feeling* of "I-am-I," but at first chiefly concentrated in the lower Kâma-Manasic pas-sional principles. Afterwards centered in the Higher Manas and illuminated by Bud-dhi after the "second death" — when the withdrawal into the Devachanic state takes place.

LATER, IN DEVACHAN

*Imagination* strong and active,— the principal faculty working.

*Reason* in abeyance as a rule; when it is active it uses internal or subjective stimuli from higher planes.

side; rare flashes come from a higher source for it to work out.

The *Emotions* of the Passional nature, usually physically dominated and self-centered.

Lower animal *Desires*, and intense Desire for Sensuous existence. (Suicides are seeking happier conditions — not extinction.)

Brain-memory of events of the present incarnation: materials for reasoning and, in a small degree, for the imagination to use.

The higher *Unselfish Emotions* and *Heart* feelings.

“*Tanhâ*,” the Desire for Sensuous Life latent in Devachan at first, but grows steadily stronger as the karmic time for reincarnation approaches, and the forces keeping the soul in the Devachanic state are becoming exhausted.

Memory of the permanently valuable spiritual thoughts and deeds: materials for the imagination to work with.

## THE "PRINCIPLES"

## IN LIFE

The whole of the  
"Seven Principles."

## AFTER DEATH

The Astral body for a short time; the Lower Manas entangled with the passional nature, forming Kâma Rûpa; afterwards the Higher Ego, or Reincarnating Ego, united with the spiritual part of the Lower Manas or Shadow and illuminated by the overshadowing Light of Buddhi and Âtmâ; the "Skandhas," or seeds of the actions performed in the past life, ready to be vivified under favoring circumstances in the next life.

## VI

# THE PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT INCARNATION

**I**N Devachan the higher energies or causes set in motion in earth-life are carried to their completion. The very nature of the Manasic principle requires the time and peaceful conditions provided in Devachan to work out the effects of what it has stored. While in a body these higher fruitions cannot manifest themselves, for the environment and structure of the brain are too material. In Devachan the Higher Ego, overshadowed by *Buddhi* — the *Buddhi-Manas* — by the assimilation of the Lower Manasic Personal ideations and such consciousness of the better things like compassion, patience, the higher side of Art and Music, ideals of service for humanity, — draws up the enduring part of the Personality that was, to itself. The Higher Ego is the

bearer of all the "alter egos" threaded on its silver line of successive incarnations, which blend into one at last; but in the Devachan immediately succeeding any one life, the spiritual "aroma" of the events of that particular lifetime is what colors it with the greatest distinctness. Personal immortality for the "alter ego" is so far conditional that it depends upon the quality of its aspirations to make its union with the Father, the True Vine, possible. Like to like is the rule in all worlds, and the law of least resistance bears sway everywhere; it would be obviously as preposterous to imagine an utter sensualist in the higher and more refined degrees of Kâma Loka or (until purged) on the spiritual plane of Devachan, as to expect a cannibal savage to enjoy a classical concert.

The descent of the Higher Ego through its Shadow is symbolized in the Christian story by the incarnation of the Christos in Jesus of Nazareth and his subsequent ascent to his Father, after being crucified on the Cross of Matter. The penitent thief stands for the

higher aspiration of the past life, as he is promised paradise with the Christos, but not so the other who represents the unredeemable passions which go to the pit.

The Ego in Devachan, now a Trinity in unity, is not omniscient nor free from illusion; it has ages of necessary experience to go through first. We ought really to regard Devachan from the standpoint of the Lower Manas, or more properly, and more correctly, from the standpoint of the Bridge, or "*Antaskârana*," the part of the Higher Ego that has been the connecting link between the two Manases in life, and which now bears all that essence of the late personality which can be united with its Father in Heaven. From this position, looking *up*, the mystic union with the Higher Ego in Devachan will be, to the purified *Antaskârana* — all that we can recognize as worth preserving of the Personality — a tremendous increase of Life and Light, of Glory, of Bliss beyond anything in our most exquisite dreams. The Imagination comes into action with a thousandfold the power it

ever had before, and the rich and satisfying Dream, which is more than a Dream, abundantly rewards the Pilgrim for those distressing events on earth for which it may not have been responsible *in that particular incarnation* and which had left a sense of injustice.

Although Devachan is much nearer the reality of things than any ordinary dream, yet it is sufficiently illusory for the soul to be able to build up its castles in the air without fear of disturbance by anything outside. It is surrounded in imagination by friends, relatives and all it held dear; as the creative imagination builds exactly what it desires so vividly as to appear more real than the most intense experiences while embodied, every one gets precisely what is to him the highest joy. The soul in the Devachanic state is, in fact, practically in that wondrous condition of rapture that the Poet or the Musician or even perhaps the Mathematician enjoy when absorbed in their highest creative states, states in which the body, the earth and all other persons absolutely cease to exist for the time.

The actor [in Devachan] is so imbued with the rôle just played by him that he dreams of it during the whole Devachanic night, which vision continues till the hour strikes for him to return to the stage of life to enact another part.—(*Key to Theosophy*)

Glorious as the state of Devachan is, *it is not equal in importance to the condition of earth-life.* Necessary it is, joyous exceedingly, but it is on earth that Liberation from the chains of illusion and passion has to be gained. Here, where the whole nature of man is crying to be used wisely, is the real school, here it is that the Perfected Man must arise. When this is done the time spent in the spiritual state of Devachan will be unnecessary; that condition is now needed by the soul for recuperation, for without it the strain of earthly existence could not be endured; but when the whole nature has been purified in the fires of trial, and absolute impersonality is gained, the Divine Man will be as one of the Gods and will in his turn become a fully conscious Creator and Guide to the unprogressed beings below him on the upward march.



## VII

### THE INDIVIDUALITY AND ITS IMPERSONATIONS

**T**HEOSOPHY urges upon students to make the greatest distinction in their own minds between the Immortal Individuality, the divine Christos, called in the East "the Ishvara that dwelleth in the heart of every creature," and the fleeting personality. Man in his ordinary state believes that he is nothing more than the lower mind. Even the greatest intellectual thinkers of the age do not dare to break through this hypnotic veil, well symbolized by the teaching of the creeds that men are "miserable sinners," a depressing nightmare; or the similarly depraving notion that a man is no more than "a monkey shaved," of the biologists. Theosophy recognizes the backward state of mankind to the full and makes no attempt to flatter his vanity with false

praise; but it gives him hope, and by showing him that there is the Higher Ego overshadowing his personality, that it is ever trying to call his attention to those things which are pure and of good report, and that he can enter into the Mansion that is waiting for him if he will only try the right means, it destroys the fear of death.

In gaining the Real Life of the soul, of which the Devachanic interlude is a pale reflection, we really shall not be gaining any *new thing*; if we go about it rightly we find that we have but to remove the obstructions that are in the path, most of which we have built up for ourselves. If we give up the lower desires and turn our energies to those which are in harmony with the highest aspirations of the race we at once find ourselves partaking of a larger consciousness; we begin to hear the mysterious whisper in the heart, — the voice of the greater humanity of which we are all a part, but of which, alas! we are so little aware. Without going more deeply into metaphysics here, it suffices for practical purposes that as

we remove the obstructions, the glories of real life and the existence of the true Self break in upon us. This is the only way to triumph over death. All the greatest teachers of the ages have brought the same message, but the Teachers of Theosophy in this age have shown how to train the young by the Râja Yoga system in such a perfect balance of the faculties and joyous self-control that they will be able to say fearlessly, "Death, where is thy sting?"

The terrestrial body is not the only River of Lethe, plunged into which, as Plotinus says, the soul forgets all, but Devachan partakes of the same nature, for in that blissful state the celestial body with which the soul is united causes it to lose sight utterly of the painful events and thoughts of the past life. Although the real cause of Devachan is ignorance of the Higher Ego, yet in our present state of evolution it is a necessary and desirable experience; we see how necessary by the very fact — a profound mystery to physiology — that to keep going and preserve sanity the Higher Ego has to abandon its communication with the body

for a large part of each twenty-four hours. The Higher Ego never entirely quits the spiritual realms, and although the materials used by the imagination in Devachan with which to build its ideal life are only derived from the most sublimated thoughts and acts of the past incarnation, yet the totality of events of that and all the previous lives is indelibly recorded so that when real Self-knowledge arrives the veil will fall and access be gained to the records, and the course of evolution be plainly seen. We are taught that the soul is able to look back with purified sight a little way into the past as it re-enters earth-life. It then sees the causes that have led it irresistibly to the new incarnation, good or bad, and recognizes the justice of the Law of Karma; it takes up the cross again with willingness.

“Devachan is a spiritual gestation within an ideal matrix state,”\* and as we emerge from it into the light of earthly day, complete in all our potentialities for good or evil, we again have the opportunity of keeping the simplicity

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\* *H. P. Blavatsky.*

of the spiritual life. Of all the poets, Wordsworth has given us in his *Intimations of Immortality* the most inspired vision of pre-existence in the Devachanic state. In the haunting sweetness of his word-picture we catch evanescent glimpses of that which we have lost:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath elsewhere had its setting  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in utter forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close, (etc.)

And this:

Hence in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither;  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Some have been fortunate enough to retain the "vision splendid" longer than others; *some have revived it*, after recollecting how they once lost it in early childhood; pity those who never had it, to whom everything is commonplace and drab. They have been the materialistically minded, worldly-wise folk who have not sown any seeds in their past life for the reaping in Devachan, and have therefore passed the time while waiting for a suitable incarnation in a semi-torpid state. They may even have reincarnated immediately, without any Devachanic break.

The subject of Necromancy, the attempt to raise the shades of the dead, must be treated in another Manual; it is merely necessary to mention here that the purified soul in Devachan does not respond to artificial means taken to revivify the *astral shell* (the residue of the Kâma Rûpa) with a factitious vitality derived chiefly from the medium and the sitters in the séance-room. But though the soul in Devachan is so far removed from the physical plane, and so fully occupied with the wondrous

inner experiences for which it needs to be temporarily sequestered, that it can not return to earth — in the true sense of the word it has not lost touch completely with the loved ones left behind. A mother's love is a protecting shield for her children long after she has passed away, though she does not have the pain of seeing them suffer the vicissitudes of life. And at times of great spiritual exaltation a person in earth may sense the bliss of the one in Devachan; but we are taught that this is of very rare occurrence, and is poles asunder from the alleged return of the souls of the dead in the séance-room — apparitions which, *when genuine*, are almost invariably caused by the astral body of the medium or the shell of the deceased, the *Kâma Rûpa*, or something else which is not the *real man* — by which we mean, of course, the Higher and Lower Manas, united at last.

The length of time spent in Devachan is a question of difficulty; little direct information has been given on that point, but a general average is said to be about fifteen hundred

years. In the case of persons having led an ordinarily creditable life and having a fairly large store of lofty experiences to be assimilated, the time will be much longer than in the case of those who have pursued none but ignoble aims, or materialists who utterly deny the possibility of any existence but the physical. The latter will return to earth very soon. A study of the cyclic periods of history gives some light on the subject; it is seen that there is a distinct tendency for the repetition of similar events in a period of between twelve hundred and two thousand years; witness the Renaissance of Art in the fourteenth and later centuries, which followed about 1600 years after the great period of Art in Greece. But we have not yet sufficient historical data to be able to follow out this line of research in detail, though as new discoveries are constantly being made, future historians will find this a profitable study, clearing up many otherwise inexplicable difficulties.

The question of the existence of heaven or hell presents no great difficulties to the Theo-



sophical student. Hell is mainly here on earth, where we have made the horrible conditions of existence for ourselves; after death there is a period of purification in which many earth-bound souls must necessarily have suffering. Heaven is the long blissful ecstasy of Devachan, terminating in the awakening to earth-life in a new personality, formed by the just law of Karma from the seeds of action, the Skandhas, carried on as seeds by the Immortal Reincarnating Ego after the break-up of the Kâma Rûpa, and in which we have a fresh chance of undoing the mistakes of the past and gaining that real spirituality rendering the semi-illusions of Devachan, lofty as they are, unnecessary. The two procedures of purification on earth through lives of effort, and the trials for entrance into Devachan have close points of resemblance, and were condensed into one in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, and *Job*. H. P. Blavatsky tells us:

During the sacred Mysteries the candidate for Initiation enacted the whole drama of death and the resurrection as a glorified spirit.

Though we may have lost the key to the profounder teachings of the Egyptian and Greek Mysteries, we have not lost the key to the only method of regaining our high estate. William Q. Judge, the second Leader of the Theosophical Movement, to whose teachings we are indebted for much of our information concerning Devachan, in pointing the way to reach the Higher Ego, the "Warrior," says:

It is selflessness, unselfishness, altruism, pure love of the light for its own sake, not for what it will confer—these things bring the candidate face to face with the "Warrior."

Katherine Tingley is teaching the people to discover and make manifest that "You have within you the ceaseless flow of living Fire." She has further said the following:

According to my knowledge, when a soul is leaving its earthly Temple, however dark and gruesome the circumstances may be, it knows its own path. So in moving out of the body, long before the pulse has ceased to beat or the breath is stilled, it finds itself born into a New Life, an unspeakable joy. Something new has been fashioned for that soul in

that sacred moment, and then it comprehends the enormity of its mistakes and wills itself to higher things in the next life. There are different experiences for different souls according to their evolution, but at last each one rests in the arms of the beneficent Law, free from the limitations of earthly life. The ordinary mind cannot fully conceive what has happened; the soul is judged by the Law, not by any man, and when it is reborn it not only takes with it the experience of the past, though without the memory of details, but it takes something else that has happened at that wonderful time when it is born into the New Life, when it is reborn in more ways than one.

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\* \* \*

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