

When We Die

“For long ages, one generation of Adepts after another has studied the mysteries of being, of life, death, and re-birth, and all have taught in their turn some of the facts so learned.” (H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*)

“He who holds the keys to the secrets of *Death* is possessed of the keys of *Life*.” (Master K.H.)

“The end of birth is death; the end of death is birth.” (Krishna, *The Bhagavad Gita*)

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

“There is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consequence of some sin in a preceding existence; on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, and therefore thinks he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death comes to our spiritual selves ever as a deliverer and friend.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 161

“At the solemn moment of death every man, even when death is sudden, sees the whole of his past life marshalled before him, in its minutest details. For one short instant the *personal* becomes one with the *individual* and all-knowing *Ego*. But this instant is enough to show to him the whole chain of causes which have been at work during his life. He sees and now understands himself as he is, unadorned by flattery or self-deception. He reads his life, remaining as a spectator looking down into the arena he is quitting; he feels and knows the justice of all the suffering that has overtaken him.

“*Does this happen to everyone?* Without any exception. Very good and holy men see, we are taught, not only the life they are leaving, but even several preceding lives in which were produced the causes that made them what they were in the life just closing. They recognise the law of Karma in all its majesty and justice.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 162

“...the man at the moment of death has a retrospective insight into the life he has led,...” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 163

“The breath leaves the body and we say the man is dead, but that is only the beginning of death; it proceeds on other planes. When the frame is cold and eyes closed, all the forces of the body and mind rush through the brain, and by a series of pictures the whole life just ended is imprinted indelibly on the inner man not only in a general outline but down to the smallest detail of even the most minute and fleeting impression. At this moment, though every indication leads the physician to pronounce for death and though to all intents and purposes the person is dead to this life, the real man is busy in the brain, and not until his work there is ended is the person gone. When this solemn work is over the astral body detaches itself from the physical, and, life energy having departed, the remaining five principles are in the plane of kama loka.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 99-100

“That feeling which is strongest in us at that supreme hour, when, as in a dream, the events of a long life to their minutest detail are marshalled in the greatest order in a few seconds in our vision, [That vision takes place when a person is already proclaimed dead. The Brain is the last organ that dies.] that feeling will become the fashioner of our bliss or woe, the life-principle of our future existence.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 246

“Although the doctors may have pronounced the death, so long as there is a spark of animal heat in the body, the brain still thinks. Because one cannot go forward, he must go back, and so the scroll is rolled up from the time of death or approaching death, and one reads the record of all his thoughts, words, deeds and impressions from the last moment back to the events of childhood.” – RC, [Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy](#), p. 168

On this note, the Master K.H. once wrote: “The man may often appear dead. Yet from the last pulsation, from and between the last throbbing of his heart and the moment when the last spark of animal heat leaves the body – the *brain thinks* and the *Ego* lives over in those few brief seconds his whole life over again. Speak in whispers, ye, who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have you to keep quiet just after Death has laid her clammy hand upon the body. Speak in whispers, I say, lest you disturb the quiet ripple of thought, and hinder the busy work of the Past casting on its reflection upon the Veil of the Future.”

KAMA LOKA, THE SECOND DEATH, AND THE GESTATION STATE

“When the man dies, his lower three principles leave him for ever; *i.e.*, body, life, and the vehicle of the latter, the astral body or the double of the *living* man. And then, his four principles – the central or middle principle, the animal soul or *Kama-rupa*, with what it has assimilated from the lower Manas, and the higher triad find themselves in *Kama-loka*. The latter is an astral locality, the *limbus* of scholastic theology, the *Hades* of the ancients, and, strictly speaking, a *locality* only in a relative sense. It has neither a definite area nor boundary, but exists *within* subjective space; *i.e.*, is beyond our sensuous perceptions. Still it exists, and it is there that the astral *eidolons* of all the beings that have lived, animals included, await their *second death*. For the animals it comes with the disintegration and the entire fading out of their *astral* particles to the last. For the human *eidolon* it begins when the Atma-Buddhi-Manasic triad is said to “separate” itself from its lower principles, or the reflection of the *ex-personality*, by falling into the Devachanic state.” – HPB, [The Key to Theosophy](#), p. 143-144

“The spirit is dazed after death and falls very soon into what we call “*pre-devachanic* unconsciousness”.” – HPB, [The Key to Theosophy](#), p. 151

“According to the Eastern teaching the state of the deceased in Kama-loka is not what we, living men, would recognise as “conscious.” It is rather that of a person stunned and dazed by a violent blow, who has momentarily “lost his senses.” Hence in Kama-loka there is as a rule (apart from vicarious life and consciousness awakened through contact with mediums) no *recognition* of friends or relatives, ...

“We meet those we loved only in Devachan, that subjective world of perfect bliss, the state which succeeds the Kama-loka, after the separation of the principles. ...

“But the process of stripping off the lower, the fourth and part of the fifth, principles is an unconscious one in all normal human beings. It is only in very exceptional cases that there is a slight return to consciousness in Kama-loka: and this is the case of very materialistic unspiritual personalities, who, devoid of the conditions requisite, cannot enter the state of absolute Rest and Bliss.” – HPB, [Some Old Questions Answered](#)

“In chronological order we go into kama loka – or the plane of desire – first on the demise of the body, and then the higher principles, the real man, fall into the state of *Devachan*. After dealing with kama loka it will be more easy to study the question of *Devachan*. ... *Kama loka* – or the place of desire – is the astral region penetrating and surrounding the earth. ... It is called the plane of desire because it relates to the fourth principle, and in it the ruling force is desire devoid of and divorced from intelligence. It is an astral sphere

intermediate between earthly and heavenly life. Beyond any doubt it is the origin of the Christian theory of purgatory, where the soul undergoes penance for evil done and from which it can be released by prayer and other ceremonies or offerings. The fact underlying this superstition is that the soul may be detained in *kama loka* by the enormous force of some unsatisfied desire, and cannot get rid of the astral and kamic clothing until that desire is satisfied by some one on earth or by the soul itself. But if the person was pure minded and of high aspirations, the separation of the principles on that plane is soon completed, permitting the higher triad to go into *Devachan*. Being the purely astral sphere, it partakes of the nature of the astral matter which is essentially earthly and devilish, and in it all the forces work undirected by soul or conscience. It is the slag-pit, as it were, of the great furnace of life, where nature provides for the sloughing off of elements which have no place in *Devachan*, and for that reason it must have many degrees, every one of which was noted by the ancients. These degrees are known in Sanskrit as *lokas* or places in a metaphysical sense. Human life is very varied as to character and other potentialities, and for each of these the appropriate place after death is provided, thus making *kama loka* an infinitely varied sphere.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 99, 100-101

“After physical death, when the entity passes into *Kama-Loka*, the real struggle is confined to the fifth principle alone, that is, to the seat of consciousness together with the affinities generated in it during its earthly incarnation. In *Kama-Loka*, therefore, the fourth principle of *Kama-Rupa*, which is the *Upadhi* or seat of all earthly desires and passions, &c., drags towards itself those affinities of the fifth principle which are of a material nature, while the higher aspirations are attracted towards the sixth and the seventh principles. ... the struggle in *Kama-Loka* varies according to the nature of his affinities; until the *consciousness* being linked to the higher ones is entirely separated from the ‘astral shell’, and is ready to go into *Devachan*. If a person is highly spiritual, his *Kama-Loka* is of a very short duration, for the consciousness is quickly assimilated to the higher principles and passes into *Devachan*. It will thus be seen that in any case intercourse with the *Kama-Loka* entities is detrimental to the progress of those entities and also injurious to the persons indulging in such intercourse. This interruption is just as bad and even far worse than the disturbance in the death-chamber on this Physical plane. ... When the struggle between the lower affinities and the higher aspirations of the man is ended in *Kama-Loka*, astral death takes place in that sphere as does physical death on this earth. The shock of death again throws the entity into a state of unconsciousness before its passage into *Devachan*.” – T. Subba Row, *Thoughts on Kama-Loka*

“The length of this “transfer” [from *Kama Loka* to the state of *Devachan*] depends, however, on the degree of spirituality in the ex-personality of the disembodied Ego. For those whose lives were very spiritual this transfer, though gradual, is very rapid. The time becomes longer with the materialistically inclined.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 173

“The three higher principles, grouped into one, merge into the state of *Devachan*, in which state the Higher Ego will remain until the hour for a new reincarnation arrives; and the *eidolon* of the ex-Personality is left alone in its new abode. Here, the pale copy of the man that was, vegetates for a period of time, the duration of which is variable and according to the element of materiality which is left in it, and which is determined by the past life of the defunct. Bereft as it is of its higher mind, spirit and physical senses, if left alone to its own senseless devices, it will gradually fade out and disintegrate. But, if forcibly drawn back into the terrestrial sphere whether by the passionate desires and appeals of the surviving friends or by regular necromantic practices – one of the most pernicious of which is mediumship – the “spook” may prevail for a period greatly exceeding the span of the natural life of its body.” – HPB, *Theosophical Glossary* (Entry for “*Kamarupa*”)

“After a certain time in *kama loka* the being falls into a state of unconsciousness which precedes the change into the next state. It is like the birth into life, precluded by a term of darkness and heavy sleep. It then wakes to the joys of *devachan*.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 108

“We have translated this as the “gestation” period, and it lasts from a few days to several years, according to the evidence of the adepts. [The state of Devachan] lasts so long as the merits of the old *Ego* entitle the being to reap the fruit of its reward in its new regenerated Ego-ship. It occurs after the gestation period is over, and the new spiritual Ego is reborn – like the fabled Phoenix from its ashes – from the old one. The locality, which the former inhabits, is called by the northern Buddhist Occultists “Deva-chan,” . . .” –HPB, **Seeming “Discrepancies”**

“The gestation period is over, it has won the day, been reborn as a new out of the old ego, and before it is ushered again into a new *personality*, it will reap the effects of the causes sown in its precedent birth in one of the Devachanic or Avitchian states, as the case may be, though the latter are found far apart. *Avas'yam eva bhoktavyam kritam karma Shubhashubam*. [“The fruit of the tree of action, whether good or bad, must unavoidably be eaten.”]” – **An anonymous Initiate or Adept, Devachan: Reply II: Dream Life, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 24**

DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES FOR VICTIMS OF UNNATURAL DEATH

“The victim of accidental death, whether good or bad is irresponsible for his death. Even if his death were due to some action of his in a previous life or an antecedent birth, was, in short, the working of the law of retribution, still, it was not the *direct* result of an act deliberately committed by the *personal* Ego of that life during which he happened to be killed. Had he been allowed to live longer, he might have atoned for his antecedent still more effectually; and even now, the Ego having been made to pay off the debt of his maker (the personal Ego) is free from the blows of retributive justice. The Dhyana Chohans, who have no hand in the guidance of the living human Ego, protect the hapless victim when it is violently thrust out of its element into a new one before it is matured and made fit and ready for that new place. *We tell you what we know, for we are made to learn it through personal experience.*” – **Master K.H., Kama Loka – Suicides – Accidental Deaths, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 239**

“. . . the suicides and those *killed by accident*. Both kinds can communicate, and both have to pay dearly for such visits. And now to explain what I mean. Well, this class is the one which the French Spiritists call “les esprits souffrants.” They are an exception to the rule, as they have to remain within the earth’s attraction and in its atmosphere – the Kama-loka – till the very last moment of what would have been the natural duration of their lives. In other words, that particular wave of life-evolution must run on to its shore. But it is a sin and cruelty to revive their memory and intensify their suffering by giving them a chance of living an artificial life, a chance to overload their Karma, by tempting them into open doors, *viz.*, mediums and sensitives, for they will have to pay roundly for every such pleasure. I will explain. The *Suicides*, who, foolishly hoping to escape life, find themselves still alive, have suffering enough in store for them from that very life. Their punishment is in the intensity of the latter. Having lost by the rash act their 7th and 6th principles, though not forever, as they can regain both, instead of accepting their punishment and taking their chances of redemption, they are often made *to regret life* and tempted to regain a hold upon it by sinful means. In the *Kama-loka*, the land of intense desires, they can gratify their earthly yearnings only through a *living proxy*; and by so doing, at the expiration of the natural term, they generally lose their monad for ever.

“As to the victims of accident, these fare still worse. Unless they were so good and pure as to be drawn immediately within the Akashic Samadhi, *i.e.*, to fall into a state of quiet slumber, a sleep full of rosy dreams, during which they have no recollection of the accident, but move and live among their familiar friends and scenes until their natural life-term is finished, when they find themselves born in the Devachan, a gloomy fate is theirs. Unhappy shades, if sinful and sensual they wander about (not shells, for their connection with their two higher principles is not quite broken) until their *death-hour* comes. Cut off in the full flush of earthly passions which bind them to familiar scenes, they are enticed by the opportunities which mediums afford, to

gratify them vicariously. They are the Pisachas, the Incubi, and Succubi of mediaeval times; the demons of thirst, gluttony, lust, and avarice; Elementaries of intensified craft, wickedness, and cruelty; provoking their victims to horrid crimes, and revelling in their commission! They not only ruin their victims, but these psychic vampires, borne along by the torrent of their hellish impulses, at last – at the fixed close of their natural period of life – they are carried out of the earth's aura into regions where for ages they endure exquisite suffering and end with entire destruction.” – Master K.H., *The Worship of the Dead (Some of the Evil Consequences of Mediumship)*, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 236-237

“Suicide ... It is the worst of crimes and dire in its results. ... voluntary death would be an abandonment of our present post and of the duties incumbent on us, as well as an attempt to shirk Karmic responsibilities, and thus involve the creation of new Karma.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 227-228

“The rule is that a person who dies a natural death will remain from “a few hours to several short years” within the earth's attraction, *i.e.*, the Kama-loka. But exceptions are the cases of suicides and those who die a violent death in general. Hence one of such Egos who was destined to live – say 80 or 90 years, but who either killed himself or was killed by some accident, let us suppose at the age of 20, would have to pass in the Kama-loka not a few years but, in his case, 60 or 70 years as an Elementary or rather an “earth-walker,” since he is not, unfortunately for him, even a “Shell.” Happy, thrice happy, in comparison, are those disembodied entities who sleep their long slumber and live in dream in the bosom of Space! And woe to those whose *trishna* may attract them to mediums, and woe to the latter who tempt them with such an easy *upadana*. For in grasping them and satisfying their thirst for life, the medium helps to develop in them – is in fact the cause of – a new set of *Skandhas*, a new body, with far worse tendencies and passions than the one they lost. All the future of this new body will be determined thus, not only by the Karma of demerit of the previous set or group, but also by that of the new set of the future being. Were the mediums and spiritualists but to know, as I said, that with every new “angel guide” they welcome with rapture, they entice the latter into an *upadana* which will be productive of untold evils for the Ego that will be reborn under its nefarious shadow; that with every séance, especially for materialisation, they multiply the causes for misery, causes that will make the unfortunate Ego fail in his spiritual birth, or be reborn into a worse existence than ever; they would perhaps be less lavish in their hospitality. And now, you may understand why we oppose so strongly Spiritualism and mediumship.” – Master K.H., *The Worship of the Dead (Some of the Evil Consequences of Mediumship)*, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 237-238

“The majority of the “spiritual” communicants of the mediums are suicides and the victims of “accidental” death. For not always is there death when the body dies. Unless the death coincides with the end of the life-term, which is fixed at birth, a man is still tied to earth until the end of his term.” – RC, *The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 258

“In the state of *Kama Loka* suicides and those who are suddenly shot out of life by accident or murder, legal or illegal, pass a term almost equal to the length life would have been but for the sudden termination. These are not really dead. To bring on a normal death, a factor not recognized by medical science must be present. That is, the principles of the being as described in other chapters have their own term of cohesion, at the natural end of which they separate from each other under their own laws. ... Before that natural end the principles are unable to separate. Obviously the normal destruction of the cohesive force cannot be brought about by mechanical processes except in respect to the physical body. Hence a suicide, or person killed by accident or murdered by man or by order of human law, has not come to the natural termination of the cohesion among the other constituents, and is hurled into the *kama loka* state only partly dead. There the remaining principles have to wait until the actual natural life term is reached, whether it be one month or sixty years.

“But the degrees of *kama loka* provide for the many varieties of the last-mentioned shells. Some pass the period in great suffering, others in a dreamy sort of sleep, each according to the moral responsibility. But executed criminals are in general thrown out of life full of hate and revenge, smarting under a penalty they do not admit the justice of. They are ever rehearsing in *kama loka* their crime, their trial, their execution, and their revenge. And whenever they can gain touch with a sensitive living person, medium or not, they attempt to inject thoughts of murder and other crime into the brain of such unfortunate. And that they succeed in such attempts the deeper students of Theosophy full well know.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 107-108

DEVACHAN – ITS NATURE, PURPOSE, AND EXPERIENCES

“*But what is Devachan?* The “land of gods” literally; a condition, a state of mental bliss. Philosophically a mental condition analogous to, but far more vivid and real than, the most vivid dream. It is the state after death of most mortals.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 100

“Devachan is the idealized continuation of the terrestrial life just left behind.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 133

“The Ego is, so to say, wedded to the memory of its last incarnation. Thus, if you think over what I have said, and string all the facts together, you will realize that the Devachanic state is not one of omniscience, but a transcendental continuation of the personal life just terminated. It is the rest of the soul from the toils of life.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 156

“If our physiologists find the cause of dreams and visions in an unconscious preparation for them during the waking hours, why cannot the same be admitted for the post-mortem dreams? I repeat it: death is sleep. After death, before the spiritual eyes of the soul, begins a performance according to a programme learnt and very often unconsciously composed by ourselves: the practical carrying out of *correct* beliefs or of illusions which have been created by ourselves. The Methodist will be Methodist, the Mussulman a Mussulman, at least for some time – in a perfect fool’s paradise of each man’s creation and making. These are the *post-mortem* fruits of the tree of life.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 165

“We ourselves create our Devachan, as also our Avitchi, while yet on earth, and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our intellectual, sentient lives.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 246

“What goes into Devachan? What reincarnates? It is certainly the ego, the Manas, the higher portion of Manas. ... It is the reincarnating Manas that goes.” – HPB, *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*, p. 621

Mr Old: What is Devachan – a state, a place, or both?

Mme. Blavatsky: A state. It is no more a place than your dreams.

Mr Old: Has it any corresponding loka?

Mme. Blavatsky: No, it has not. ... It is a state, not a locality. ... It is a dream – the most vivid, so vivid that even in this life there are dreams that sometimes you awaken and are not sure whether it was reality or not. You just imagine yourself a dream as vivid as life.” – *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*, p. 589

“What we believe in is a *post-mortem state* or mental condition, such as we are in during a vivid dream.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 138

“All those who have not slipped down into the mire of unredeemable sin and bestiality go to the Devachan. They will have to pay for their sins, voluntary and involuntary, later on. Meanwhile they are rewarded; receive the *effects* of the causes produced by them.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 245

“There is no transforming power in death; as a tree falls, so must it lie. It is during the life-time that we must recognize and awaken our true natures. Death opens no door to knowledge.” – RC, *The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 255

“Every Ego which after the period of unconscious gestation is reborn into the Devachan, is of necessity as innocent and pure as a new born babe. The fact of his being reborn at all shows the preponderance of good over evil in his old personality. And, while the Karma (of Evil) steps aside for the time being to follow him in his future earth re-incarnation, he brings along with him but the Karma of his good deeds, words, and thoughts into this Devachan.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 244-245

“Physical existence has its cumulative intensity from infancy to prime, and its diminishing energy to dotage and death; so the dream-life of Devachan is lived correspondentially.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 242

“As in actual earth life, so there is for the Ego in Devachan the first flutter of psychic life, the attainment of prime, the gradual exhaustion of force passing into semi-consciousness and lethargy, total oblivion and – not death, but birth, birth into another personality, and the resumption of action which daily begets new congeries of causes that must be worked out in another term of Devachan and still another physical birth as a new personality. What the lives in Devachan and upon earth shall be respectively in each instance is determined by Karma.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 243

“Of course it is a *state*, so to say, of *intense selfishness*, during which an *Ego* reaps the reward of his unselfishness on earth. He is completely engrossed in the bliss of all his personal earthly affections, preferences and thoughts, and gathers in the fruit of his meritorious actions. No pain, no grief, nor even the shadow of a sorrow comes to darken the bright horizon of his unalloyed happiness: for it is a *state of perpetual “Maya.”* ... the happy Ego is unable to see through the veil of evils, sorrows, and woes to which those it loved on earth may be subjected. It lives in that sweet dream with its loved ones – whether gone before or yet remaining on earth; it has them near itself, as happy, as blissful, and as innocent as the disembodied dreamer himself; and yet, apart from rare visions, the denizens of our gross planet feel it not.” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 245

“There are great varieties in the Devachan states ... As many varieties of bliss as on Earth there are of perception and of capability to appreciate such reward. It is an ideal paradise; in each case of the Ego’s own making, and by him filled with the scenery, crowded with the incidents, and thronged with the people he would expect to find in such a sphere of compensative bliss. ... and altho’, as actual Egos, children prematurely dying before the perfection of their septenary entity do not find their way to Devachan, yet all the same, the mother’s loving fancy finds her children there without one missing that her heart yearns for. Say, it is but a dream, but, after all, what is objective life itself but a panorama of vivid unrealities?” – Master K.H., *Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 245-246

“It is sometimes asked, what of those we have left behind: do we see them there? We do not see them there in fact, but we make to ourselves their images as full, complete, and objective as in life, and devoid of all that we then thought was a blemish. We live with them and see them grow great and good instead of mean or

bad. The mother who has left a drunken son behind finds him before her in devachan a sober, good man, and likewise through all possible cases, parent, child, husband, and wife have their loved ones there perfect and full of knowledge. This is for the benefit of the soul. You may call it a delusion if you will, but the illusion is necessary to happiness just as it often is in life. And as it is the mind that makes the illusion, it is no cheat.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 115

“. . . the mental joys of Devachan, where every man has his paradise around him, erected by his consciousness.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 99

“When, therefore, it is stated that the “personality” dies with the body it does not state all. The body, which was only the objective symbol of Mr A. or Mrs B., fades away with all its material Skandhas, which are the visible expressions thereof. But all that which constituted during life the *spiritual* bundle of experiences, the noblest aspirations, undying affections, and *unselfish* nature of Mr A. or Mrs B. clings for the time of the Devachanic period to the EGO, which is identified with the spiritual portion of that terrestrial Entity, now passed away out of sight. The ACTOR is so imbued with the role 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.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 185

“During every Devachanic period the Ego, omniscient as it is per se, clothes itself, so to say, with the reflection of the “personality” that was. I have just told you that the ideal efflorescence of all the abstract, therefore undying and eternal qualities or attributes, such as love and mercy, the love of the good, the true and the beautiful, that ever spoke in the heart of the living “personality,” clung after death to the Ego, and therefore followed it to Devachan. For the time being, then, the Ego becomes the ideal reflection of the human being it was when last on earth.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 147-148

“The Conscious *Individuality* of the disembodied *cannot materialize*, nor can it return from its own mental Devachanic sphere to the plane of terrestrial objectivity.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 28

“Such a return to earth [as proposed by the Spiritualists] would be incompatible with any state of *unalloyed* bliss after death, as I am prepared to prove. We say that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the fault of others with whom he is associated, or because of his environment, that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss, before taking up again the burden of life.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 34-35

“We say that . . . that individuality which is now all impregnated, for the entire Devachanic period, with the noblest feelings held by its late *personality*, . . . we say that it is now entirely separated from the “vale of tears,” that its future bliss consists in that blessed ignorance of all the woes it left behind. . . . we say that the bliss of the *Devachanee* consists in its complete conviction that it has never left the earth, and that there is no such thing as death at all; that the *post-mortem* spiritual *consciousness* of the mother will represent to her that she lives surrounded by her children and all those whom she loved; that no gap, no link, will be missing to make her disembodied state the most perfect and absolute happiness.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 146

“As to the ordinary mortal, his bliss in it is complete. It is an absolute oblivion of all that gave it pain or sorrow in the past incarnation, and even oblivion of the fact that such things as pain or sorrow exist at all. The Devachanee lives its intermediate cycle between two incarnations surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth. It has reached the fulfilment of all its soul-yearnings. And thus it lives throughout long centuries an existence of unalloyed happiness, which is the

reward for its sufferings in earth-life. In short, it bathes in a sea of uninterrupted felicity spanned only by events of still greater felicity in degree.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 148

“After the great change known as “the second death” all connection with earth is broken off. A pure-minded living person by his aspiration and love may *himself ascend* to a heavenly place and there seem to speak and feel and be with those he loved, but that speaking and feeling do not disturb the one there. The very essence of the spiritual state would exclude all disturbance, though we can obtain the kinds of feeling which exist in that condition.” – RC, *The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 257

“We say that in such cases it is not the *spirits* of the dead who *descend* on earth, but the spirits of the living that *ascend* to the pure Spiritual Souls. In truth there is neither *ascending* nor *descending*, but a change of *state* or *condition* for the medium. The body of the latter becoming paralyzed, or “entranced,” the spiritual Ego is free from its trammels, and finds itself on the same plane of consciousness with the disembodied spirits.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 30

“Although there is hardly a human being whose Ego does not hold free intercourse, during the sleep of his body, with those whom it loved and lost, yet, on account of the positiveness and non-receptivity of its physical envelope and brain, no recollection, or a very dim, dream-like remembrance, lingers in the memory of the person once awake.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 30

“Q. Surely, then, if we could raise ourselves to the devachanic state, we could be with those loved ones who have gone? A. We should then be in the same state of vibration with them, and undoubtedly, experience something of their bliss, as their happy dreams would include us. The strength of the bond of love cannot be limited. In our nightly passage into deep sleep, on the plane corresponding to their *devachan*, something of this occurs – the memory of which is brought back in dreams.” – RC, *Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 172

“Let us take an instance: a son loses a much beloved father. In his dreams he may see and converse with him, and for the time it lasts feel as happy and unconscious of his death as though the father had never left this earth. This upon awakening, he will regard with sorrow as a mere dream that could not last. Is he right to so regard it? The occultist says that he is wrong. He is simply ignorant of the fact that his spirit being of the same essence and nature as that of his father, – as all spirits are – and the inherent property of mutual attraction and assimilation being in their special case strengthened by the paternal and filial love of their personal *Egos* – that they have, in fact, *never separated from each other*, death itself being powerless to sever psychic association there, where pure spiritual love links the two. . . . Thus it becomes more correct and proper to call the son’s ignorance during his waking hours a “dream” and “a delusion,” than to so characterize the *real* intercourse. For what has happened? A Spiritualist would say: “the spirit of the father *descended* upon earth to hold communion with his son’s spirit, during the quiet hours of sleep.” The Occultist replies; “Not so; neither the father’s *spirit* descended, nor has the son’s triad ascended (strictly and correctly speaking).” The centre of Devachanic activity cannot be localized: . . . the higher human triad, drawn by its affinity to those triads it loved most, with *Manas* in its highest aspect of self consciousness helping, it is ever associated with, and enjoys the presence of all those it loves – in death, as much as it did in life. The intercourse is *real and genuine*.” – An anonymous Initiate or Adept, *Devachan: Reply I: The Real and the Unreal, Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 22-23

“We are with those whom we have lost in material form, and far, far nearer to them now, than when they were alive. And it is not only in the fancy of the *Devachanee*, as some may imagine, but in reality. For pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity. Spiritual holy love is immortal, and Karma brings sooner or later all those who loved each other with such a spiritual affection to

incarnate once more in the same family group. Again we say that love beyond the grave, illusion though you may call it, has a magic and divine potency which reacts on the living. A mother's *Ego* filled with love for the imaginary children it sees near itself, living a life of happiness, as real to it as when on earth – that love will always be felt by the children in flesh. It will manifest in their dreams, and often in various events – in *providential* protections and escapes, for love is a strong shield, and is not limited by space or time. As with this Devachanic “mother,” so with the rest of human relationships and attachments, save the purely selfish or material. Analogy will suggest to you the rest.” – **HPB, The Key to Theosophy, p. 150**

“The states after death are merely the *effects* of the life last lived. We step through from the place of our endeavor to reap what we have sown – first casting off the evil, and then experiencing the highest and best of all our aspirations. In all of these states each being realizes himself to be the same person; never for an instant does it enter one's perception, or consciousness, that he is any other than the one who was on earth; nor does he know that any such thing as death has occurred at all. In his highest state he has with him all those whom he loved, and in just that condition which he would desire to have for them. He has his bliss, because the balance between cause and effect, even for his sufferings on earth, is struck straight and true for the spirit. All those states are within us, not outside; in those states, we meet first, last, and all the time OURSELVES – first as we think we are, and finally as we really are.” – **RC, The Friendly Philosopher, p. 257**

“*Mr B. Keightley*: The three higher principles, at any rate, have some sort of Upadhi, or basis. Where is the Upadhi of the three higher principles during the Devachanic period?

Mme. Blavatsky: Upadhi is the consciousness of it and nothing else. It is the Manas.

Mr Old: Is there no form under which this Monad is identified?

Mme. Blavatsky: No form at all. It has a form in your own consciousness, and everything else that it sees are forms, created by the consciousness. ... During the Devachanic period, the personality becomes, for the time being, so to say, merged in the individuality. ... the individuality plays the part of that personality that he or she was during the life period. And this is the Upadhi. This is the basis upon which the whole Devachanic experiences and thoughts of bliss go and act.” – **The Secret Doctrine Dialogues, p. 590-591**

“*Rupadhatu* is the celestial world of *form*, or what we call *Devachan*. ... the Esoteric Philosophy teaches that though for the *Egos* for the time being, everything or everyone preserves its form (as in a dream), yet as *Rupadhatu* is a *purely mental region*, and a state, the *Egos* themselves have *no form* outside their own consciousness. Esotericism divides this “region” into seven *Dhyanas*, “regions”, or states of contemplation, which are not localities but mental representations of these.” – **HPB, Theosophical Glossary (Entry for “Trailokya”)**

“Two sympathetic souls will each work out their own devachanic sensations, making the other a sharer in its subjective bliss, but yet each is dissociated from the other as regards actual mutual intercourse; for what companionship could there be between two subjective entities which are not even as material as that Ethereal body – the *Mayavi Rupa*?” – **Master K.H., Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 243**

“The dream of Devachan lasts until Karma is satisfied in that direction, until the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin and the being moves into the next area of causes.” – **Master K.H., Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 242**

“The stay in Devachan is proportionate to the unexhausted psychic impulses originating in earth life. Those whose attractions were preponderatingly material will sooner be drawn back into rebirth by the force of *Tanha*.” – **Master K.H., Notes on Devachan, Theosophical Articles and Notes, p. 243-244**

“*Tanha* is the thirst for life. He therefore who has not in life originated many psychic impulses will have but little basis or force in his essential nature to keep his higher principles in *devachan*. About all he will have are those originated in childhood before he began to fix his thoughts on materialistic thinking. ... And this sort of materialistic thinker may emerge out of *devachan* into another body here in a month, allowing for the unexpended psychic forces originated in early life. But as every one of such persons varies as to class, intensity and quantity of thought and psychic impulse, each may vary in respect to the time of stay in *devachan*.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 113

“*How long does the incarnating Ego remain in the Devachanic state?* This, we are taught, depends on the degree of spirituality and the merit or demerit of the last incarnation.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 145

“It must be borne in mind that each ego for itself varies the length of stay in the *post-mortem* states. They do not reincarnate at the same interval, but come out of the state after death at different rates.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 77

“It is known that many persons emerge from the Devachanic state very soon after entering it. ... And those who have but little aspiration here, who indulge in act more than thought, lay but little basis for Devachan, and hence emerge from it sooner than others.” – WQJ, *Forum Answers*, p. 57

“*Mr Old*: What is the impulse which determines the Devachanee to incarnate?

Mme Blavatsky: It is Karma that makes him incarnate. He won't have more than he deserves. There is no impulse in him, but he dies out. His dream is at an end. ... There is no impulse on the part of the Devachanee; it is no impulse at all. Karma takes him by the nape of his neck, and there is no impulse at all, just as when a policeman comes and takes you. ... [Karma] has placed the Devachanee into the state of happiness; it gives him his fill of what he deserves and stands and whistles at the door. When that is finished, Karma takes him by the nape of the neck and puts him into the new body.

Mr Old: Then Karma does not operate, or has no active operation, only a reflex operation, in Devachan?

Mme. Blavatsky: Merely sends a man into Devachan and stops on the threshold.” – *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*, p. 598-599, 581

THE AFTER-DEATH STATE OF THE ATHEIST/MATERIALIST

“Karma acts incessantly: we reap *in our after-life* only the fruit of that which we have ourselves sown in this.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 160

An enquirer remarked that surely after death the “spiritual eyes” of the atheist or materialist will be opened and “will certainly compel him to see” the reality of spiritual existence. This is the response from HPB: “He will not be compelled, nor will he see anything. Having persistently denied during life the continuance of existence after death, he will be unable to see it, because his spiritual capacity having been stunted in life, it cannot develop after death, and he will remain blind.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 156

“If they say that self-consciousness ceases with the body, then in their case they simply utter an unconscious prophecy, for once they are firmly convinced of what they assert, no conscious after-life is possible for them.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 157

“Desperately materialistic thinkers will remain in the devachanic condition stupefied or asleep, as it were, as they have no forces in them appropriate to that state save in a very vague fashion, and for them it can be very truly said that there is no state after death so far as mind is concerned; they are torpid for a while, and then they live again on earth.” – WQJ, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 113

“In order to live in the world to come a conscious life, one has to believe first of all in that life during the terrestrial existence. ... according to the after life a man has believed in and expected, such is the life he will have. He who expected no life to come will have an absolute blank, amounting to annihilation, in the interval between the two re-births. ... There being no Devachan for a [wicked] materialist, the Sutratma will re-incarnate almost immediately. But those materialists who erred in nothing but their disbelief will oversleep but one station. And the time will come when that ex-materialist will perceive himself in the Eternity and perhaps repent that he lost even one day, one station, from the life eternal.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 165, 170

THE MOMENT OF REBIRTH

“As the man at the moment of death has a retrospective insight into the life he has led, so, at the moment he is reborn on earth, the *Ego*, awaking from the state of Devachan, has a prospective vision of the life which awaits him, and realizes all the causes that have led to it. He realizes them and sees futurity, because it is between Devachan and re-birth that the *Ego* regains his full *manasic* consciousness, and rebecomes for a short time the god he was, before, in compliance with Karmic law, he first descended into matter and incarnated in the first man of flesh.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 162-163

NIRVANA

“We call Nirvana and the Universal life alone a reality, while relegating the terrestrial life, its terrestrial personality included, and even its Devachanic existence, to the phantom realm of illusion.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 169

“Devachan ... is an illusion of our consciousness, a happy dream, and ... those who are fit for Nirvana must have lost entirely every desire or possibility of the world’s illusions.” – HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 151

“Everything is *illusion (Maya)* outside of eternal truth, which has neither form, colour, nor limitation. He who has placed himself beyond the veil of maya – and such are the highest Adepts and Initiates – can have no Devachan.” –HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 148

“The “devotees” are divided into two broad classes, those who reach Nirvana, and either accept or don’t accept it (because they have the option of remaining on earth, at least in the atmosphere of doing good, or they have the option of going selfishly to plunge themselves into Nirvana and not caring for the world), and those who do not do so and have not reached Nirvana.” –HPB, *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*, p. 299-301

“Nirvana ... in the esoteric explanations it is the state of absolute existence and absolute consciousness, into which the Ego of a man who has reached the highest degree of perfection and holiness during life goes, after the body dies, and occasionally, as in the case of Gautama Buddha and others, during life. ... As Mr Eitel, the scholarly Sinologist, explains it: “The popular exoteric systems agree in defining Nirvana *negatively* as a state of absolute exemption from the circle of transmigration; as a state of entire freedom from all forms of existence; to begin with, freedom from all passion and exertion; a state of indifference to all sensibility” – and he might have added “death of all *compassion* for the world of suffering.” And this is why the Bodhisattvas who prefer the Nirmanakaya to the Dharmakaya vesture, stand higher in the popular estimation than the Nirvanis.” – HPB, *Theosophical Glossary (Entries for “Nirvana” and “Nirvani”)*

“The adepts ... have a perfect right to Nirvana, but they won’t go. They think it is selfish to do so, and they won’t go. They refuse the Nirvanic condition. ... Nirvana ... is selfish: you will benefit no one by it but yourselves, and this selfishness is to be avoided.” – HPB, *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues*, p. 601, 445