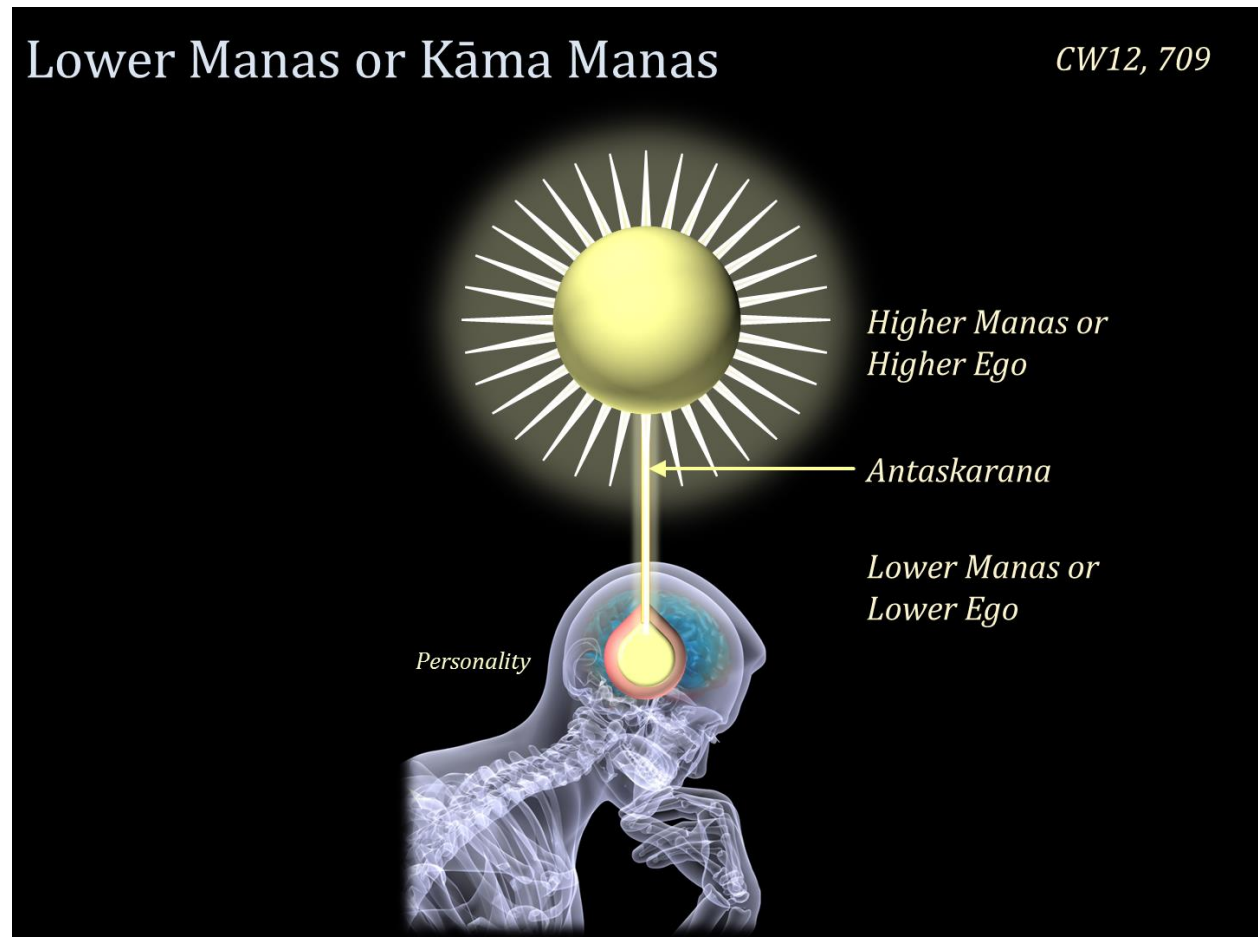


## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

Manas and Memory in the Dying

# Lower Manas, Or Kāma-Manas

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The Lower Manas<sup>1</sup> is, in many respects, most difficult to understand. There are enormous mysteries connected with it. We shall here consider it as a Principle, taking later the workings of Consciousness in the Quaternary, and in each member of it.

The important point to grasp is its relationship to the Higher Manas.

Manas is, as it were, a globe of pure, Divine Light, a Ray from the World Soul, a unit from a higher sphere, in which is no differentiation.

Descending to a plane of differentiation it emanates a Ray which is itself, which it can only manifest through the personality already differentiated. This Ray is the Lower Manas,

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<sup>1</sup> HPB “the lower manas or animal soul” (CW12, 645)

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while the globe of Divine Light, a Kumāra<sup>2</sup> on its own plane, is the Higher Ego, or Higher Manas, Manas proper. But it must never be forgotten that the Lower Manas is the same in its essence as the Higher.

This Higher Ego, at incarnation, shoots out the Ray, the Lower Ego.

At every incarnation a new Ray is emitted, and yet in essence it is the same Ray, for the essence is always one, the same in you and in me and in everybody. Thus the Higher Ego incarnates in a thousand bodies. The Flame is eternal. From the Flame of the Higher Ego the Lower is lighted, and from this a lower vehicle, and so on.

For this Ray can manifest on this Earth, sending out its Māyāvi-Rūpa<sup>3</sup>. The Higher Ego is the Sun, we may say, and the personal Manases are its Rays; the mission of the Higher Ego is to shoot out a Ray to be a soul in a child. Only thus can the Higher Ego manifest, for thus it manifests through its attributes. Only thus also can it gather experience; and the meaning of the passage in the Upanishads, where it says that the Gods feed upon men, is that the Higher Ego obtains its Earth experience through the Lower.

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<sup>2</sup> Kumāra - A Sanskrit word: *ku*, meaning “with difficulty”, and *māra*, meaning mortal; the idea being that these spiritual beings are so lofty they pass through the worlds of matter. i.e., become mortal, only with difficulty. (Occult Glossary, pp. 2-4) (CW12, 645)

The Kumāras are the direct radiations of the divine Ideation—“individual” in the sense of later differentiation owing to numberless incarnations. In sum they are the collective aggregation of that Ideation, become on our plane, or from our point of view, Mahat, as the Dhyān Chohans are in their aggregate the WORD or “Logos” in the formation of the World. (CW10, 252)

Mahat is Cosmic Intelligence, wisdom called the “Great Principle.” Manas (the Higher Ego) proceeds from Mahat (CW12, 607)

<sup>3</sup> Māyāvi Rūpa (Sk.). “Illusive form”; the “double” in esoteric philosophy; doppelgänger or pèrisprit in German and French. (TG)

The “double,” is called Māyāvi-Rupa (illusionary form) when acting blindly; and—Kama-Rupa, “will” or “desire-form” when compelled into an objective shape by the conscious will and desire of its possessor.

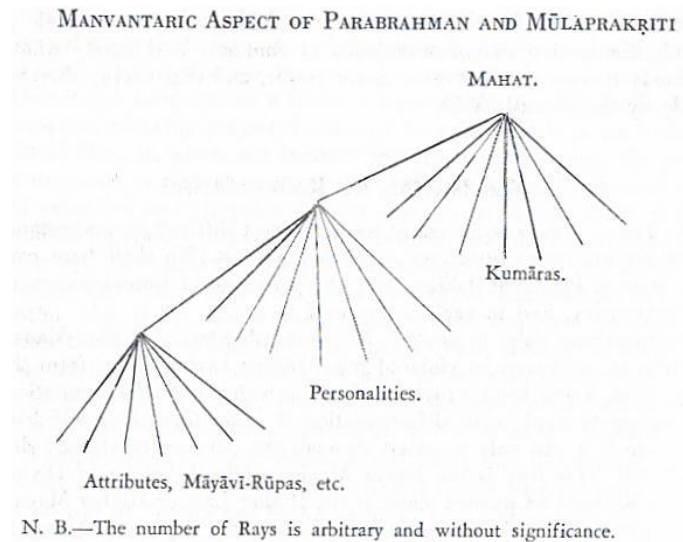
The *Jivātma* (vital principle) and *Linga-Śarīra* (Sex-body) are *inner* principles; while the *Māyāvi-Rupa* is the *outside* “soul” so to say: one which envelops the physical body, as in a filmy ethereal casing. It is a perfect counterpart of the man and even of the clothing which he happens to wear. And this principle is liable to become condensed into opacity, compelled to it, either by the law of intermagnetic action, or by the potentiality of Yoga-ballu or “adept-power.” (CW4 52-53)

See (CW5, 289, *Projection of the Double*) where Blavatsky talks about a certain Mahatma appearing in in his Māyāvi Rūpa in America while his physical body is in the Himalayas.

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These relationships may be better conceived by a study of the following diagram:



When the Ray is thus shot forth, it clothes itself in the highest degree of the Astral Light<sup>4</sup>, and is then ready for incarnation; it has been spoken of at this stage as the Chhāyā, or

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<sup>4</sup> **Astral Light** (Occult) The invisible region that surrounds our globe, as it does every other, and corresponding as the second Principle of Kosmos (the third being Life, of which it is the vehicle) to the Linga Sharira or the Astral Double in man.

A subtle Essence visible only to a clairvoyant eye, and the lowest but one (*viz.*, the earth), of the Seven Ākāśic or Kosmic Principles. Eliphas Lévi calls it the great Serpent and the Dragon from which radiates on Humanity every evil influence. This is so; but why not add that the Astral Light gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible, in which the vile emanations of the earth (moral and physical) upon which the Astral Light is fed, are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics— moral, psychic and physical.

Finally, the Astral Light is the same as the *Sidereal Light* of Paracelsus and other Hermetic philosophers. "Physically, it is the ether of modern science. Metaphysically, and in its spiritual, or occult sense, ether is a great deal more than is often imagined. In occult physics, and alchemy, it is well demonstrated to enclose within its shoreless waves not only Mr. Tyndall's 'promise and potency of every quality of life', but also the realization of the potency of every quality of spirit.

Alchemists and Hermetists believe that their astral, or sidereal ether, besides the above properties of sulphur, and white and red magnesia, or *magnes*, is the *anima mundi*, the workshop of Nature and of all the Kosmos, spiritually, as well as physically. The 'grand magisterium' asserts itself in the phenomenon of mesmerism, in the 'levitation' of human and inert objects; and may be called the ether from its spiritual aspect. The designation *astral* is ancient, and was used by some of the Neo-Platonists, although it is claimed by some that the word was coined by the Martinists. Porphyry describes the celestial body which is always joined with the soul as 'immortal, luminous, and star-like'. The root of this word may be found, perhaps, in the Scythic *Aist-aer*—which means star, or the Assyrian *Istar*, which, according to Burnouf has the same sense." (Isis Unveiled.)<sup>(TG)</sup>

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shadow, of the Higher Mind, as indeed it is. This clothing of itself in a lower form of Matter is necessary for action in the Body; for as an emanation of the Higher Manas and of the same nature, it cannot, in that nature, make any impression on this plane nor receive any.

An archangel, having no experience, would be senseless on this plane, and could neither give nor receive impressions. Hence the Lower Manas clothes itself with the essence of the Astral Light, and this Astral Envelope shuts it out from its Parent, except through the Antaskarana.

### Antaskarana

The Antaskarana is therefore that portion of the Lower Manas which is one with the Higher, the essence, that which retains its purity; on it are impressed all good and noble aspirations, and in it are the upward energies of the Lower Manas, the energies and tendencies which become its Devachanic experiences. The whole fate of an incarnation depends on whether this pure essence, Antaskarana, can restrain the Kāma-Manas or not. It is the only salvation. Break this and you become an animal.

But while the inner essence of the higher Ego is unsoilable, that part of it which may be spoken of as its outer garment, the portion of the Ray which takes up Astral Matter, may be soiled. This portion of it forms the downward energies of the Lower Manas, and these go towards Kāma, and this portion may, during life, so crystallize itself and become one with Kāma, that it will remain assimilated with Matter.

Thus the Lower Manas, taken as a whole, is, in each Earth-Life, what it makes itself. It is possible for it to act differently on different occasions, although surrounded each time by similar conditions, for it has Reason and self-conscious knowledge of Right and Wrong, of Good and Evil, given to it. It is, in fact, endowed with all the attributes of the Divine Soul, and one of these attributes is Will. In this the Ray is the Higher Manas.

The part of the Essence is the Essence, but while it is out of itself, so to say, it can get soiled and polluted, as above explained. So also it can emanate itself, as said above, and can pass its essence into several vehicles, e.g., the Māyāvi-Rūpa, the Kāma-Rūpa, etc., and even into Elementals, which it is able to ensoul, as the Rosicrucians taught.<sup>5</sup>

This unity of Essence with its Divine Parent renders possible its absorption into its source, both during Earth-Life and during the Devachanic interval . . . (CW 709-712)

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<sup>5</sup> See Le Comte de Gabalis, by the Abbé de Montfaucon de Villars.

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### Māyāvi Rupa, Kama Rupa & Linga Śarîra

. . . we now find our esteemed friend “C. C. M.” confusing the Sanskrit term “*Linga-Śarîra*” with the *Māyāvi* or *Kāma-Rupa*—the “astral soul,” and calling the doctrine of its dissolution with the body—a “recent teaching.”

If he but turns to the back volumes of *The Theosophist* he will find in the November issue of 1879 (Art. “Yoga Vidya”) a correct definition of the term in that sentence which says (p. 44, col. 2) that the *Linga-Śarîra* “. . . is the subtile, ethereal element of the ego of an organism [whether human or animal or vegetable]; inseparably united to . . . the latter; it never leaves it but at death.”

And if so, how could the “astral body” of man, if we call it *Linga-Śarîra*, leave him during his lifetime and appear as his double, as we know, is repeatedly the case with mediums and other peculiarly endowed persons?

The answer is simple: that which appears, or the “double,” is called *Māyāvi-Rupa* (illusionary form) when acting blindly; and—*Kama-Rupa*, “will” or “desire-form” when compelled into an objective shape by the conscious will and desire of its possessor.

The *Jivātma* (vital principle) and *Linga-Śarîra* (Sex-body)\*<sup>6</sup> are *inner principles*; while the *Māyāvi-Rupa* is the *outside* “soul” so to say: one which envelops the physical body, as in a filmy ethereal casing. It is a perfect counterpart of the man and even of the clothing which he happens to wear.†<sup>7</sup> And this principle is liable to become condensed into opacity, compelled to it, either by the law of intermagnetic action, or by the potentiality of *Yoga-ballu* or “adept-power.”

Thus, the “*Linga-Śarîra*” is “dissolved with the external body at the death of the latter.” It dissolves slowly and gradually, its adhesion to the body becoming weaker, as the particles disintegrate. During the process of decay, it may, on sultry nights, be sometimes seen over the grave. Owing to the dry and electric atmosphere it manifests itself and stands as a bluish flame, often as a luminous pillar, of “odyle,” bearing a more or less vague resemblance to the outward form of the body laid under the sod. Popular superstition, ignorant of the nature of these post-mortem gaseous emanations, mistakes them for the presence of the “suffering” soul, the personal spirit of the deceased, hovering over his body’s tomb. Yet, when the work of destruction has been completed, and nature has broken entirely the cohesion of corporeal particles, the *Linga-Śarîra* is dispersed with the body of which it was but an emanation.

(CW4 52-53, The Present Great Need Of A Metaphysico-Spiritual Vocabulary)

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<sup>6</sup> \* In this esoteric sense *linga* means neither “phallus” as translated by some, nor “knowledge,” as done by others; but rather “male” or “sex.” Bâdarayana, calls it in his *Darśana* (system of philosophy) *kritsita Śarîra*,—the “contemptible body,” as it is but the *turba*-stirring principle within man resulting in animal emanations.

<sup>7</sup> † See in this connection *The Soul of Things* by Prof. Denton.

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

Manas and Memory in the Dying

# Memory in the Dying (CW11, 446)

[Lucifer, Vol. V, No. 26, October, 1889, pp. 125-129]

### From The Footnote

[H.P.B. refers here to a letter of Master K.H. received by A. P. Sinnett about October 1882, when he was at Simla, India. It is a very long communication, and contains answers to queries sent in by Sinnett. These queries and the Master's replies can be found in The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, pp. 144-178. Sinnett had asked:

(16) You say:—"Remember we create ourselves, our Devachan, and our Avitchi<sup>8</sup> and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our sentient lives."

(cML 93a, 13)

Master K.H. - "(16) It is a widely spread belief among all the Hindus that a person's future pre-natal state and birth are moulded by the last desire he may have at the time of death. But this last desire, they say, necessarily hinges on to the shape which the person may have given to his desires, passions, etc., during his past life. It is for this very reason, viz.—that our last desire may not be unfavourable to our future progress—that we have to watch our actions and control our passions and desires throughout our whole earthly career.

(cML 93b, 62)

Sinnett - "(17) But do the thoughts on which the mind may be engaged at the last moment *necessarily* hinge on to the predominant character of its past life? Otherwise it would seem as if the character of a person's Devachan or Avitchi might be capriciously and unjustly determined by the change which brought some special thought uppermost at last?"

(cML 93a, 13)

Master K.H. - "(17) It *cannot* be otherwise. The experience of dying men— by drowning and other accidents—brought back to life, has corroborated our doctrine in almost every case. Such thoughts are *involuntary* and we have no more control over them than we would over the eye's retina to prevent it perceiving that colour which affects it most."

(cML 93b, 62-63)

Immediately following the above sentence, there occurs the passage quoted by H.P.B.— Compiler.]

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<sup>8</sup> In the Theosophical view Avichi is not a locality but a state of misery experienced by those who have devoted their life to do conscious harm, and as a consequence their personal egos have broken the connection with the spiritual Individuality. This state is not only experienced after death, but can continue on the physical plane in a new incarnation as a soulless person, leading a life full of sorrow, turning more and more animalistic as time passes. The personality is eventually annihilated, after one or several incarnations.

Avitchi is defined by Mahatma K.H. as "the perfect antithesis of Devachan — vulgarized by the Western nations into Hell and Heaven."

Avitchi (Sk.). A state: not necessarily after death only or between two births, for it can take place on earth as well. Lit., "uninterrupted hell". The last of the eight hells, we are told, "where the culprit, die and are reborn without interruption--yet not without hope of final redemption". This is because Avitchi is another name for Myalba (our earth) and also a state to which some soulless men are condemned on this physical plane. (TG)

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### Manas and Memory in the Dying

We find in a very old letter from a Master, written years ago to a member of the Theosophical Society, the following suggestive lines on the mental state of a dying man:

“At the last moment, the whole life is reflected in our memory and emerges from all the forgotten nooks and corners picture after picture, one event after the other. The dying brain dislodges memory with a strong supreme impulse, and memory restores faithfully every impression entrusted to it during the period of the brain’s activity. That impression and thought which was the strongest naturally becomes the most vivid and survives so to say all the rest which now vanish and disappear for ever, to reappear but in Devachan. No man dies insane or unconscious—as some physiologists assert. Even a *madman*, or one in a fit of *delirium tremens* will have his instant of perfect lucidity at the moment of death, though unable to say so to those present. 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 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 . . .” (cML 93b)

The above statement has been more than once strenuously opposed by materialists; Biology and (Scientific) Psychology, it was urged, were both against the idea, and while the latter had no well-demonstrated data to go upon in such a hypothesis, the former dismissed the idea as an empty “superstition.” Meanwhile, even biology is bound to progress, and this is what we learn of its latest achievements. Dr. Ferré has communicated quite recently to the Biological Society of Paris a very curious note on the mental state of the dying, which marvellously corroborates the above lines. For, it is to the special phenomenon of life-reminiscences, and that sudden re-emerging on the blank walls of memory, from all its long neglected and forgotten “nooks and corners,” of “picture after picture” that Dr. Ferré draws the special attention of biologists.

We need notice but two among the numerous instances given by this Scientist in his *Rapport*, to show how scientifically correct are the teachings we receive from our Eastern Masters.

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

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### Remembering Past Lives from *The Mahatma Letters (No.93a & b)*

[This section is not part of HPB's article *Memory in the Dying*]

Sinnett - (18) "The full remembrance of our lives will come but at the end of the "minor cycle." Does "minor cycle" here mean one round, or the whole Manvantara of our planetary chain? That is, do we remember our past lives in the Devachan of world Z at the end of each round, or only at the end of the seventh round?

Master K.H. - (18) Yes; the "full" remembrance of our lives (*collective* lives) will return back at the end of *all the seven Rounds*, at the threshold of the long, long Nirvana that awaits us after we leave Globe Z. At the end of isolated Rounds, we remember but the sum total of our last impressions, those we had selected, or that have rather *forced* themselves upon us and followed us in *Devachan*. Those are all "probationary" lives with large indulgences and new trials afforded us with every new life. But at the close of the minor cycle, after the completion of all the seven Rounds, there awaits *us no other* mercy but the cup of good deeds, of *merit*, outweighing that of *evil* deeds and *demerit* in the scales of Retributive Justice.

Bad, irretrievably bad must be that *Ego* that yields no mite<sup>9</sup> from its fifth Principle, and *has* to be annihilated, to disappear in the *Eighth Sphere*<sup>10</sup>. A mite, as I say, collected from the Personal Ego suffices to save him from the dreary Fate. Not so after the completion of the great cycle: either a long Nirvana of Bliss (unconscious though it be in the, and according to, your crude conceptions); after which — life as a Dhyan Chohan<sup>11</sup> for a whole Manvantara, or else "*Avitchi Nirvana*" and a Manvantara of misery and Horror as a — you *must not* hear the word nor I — pronounce or write it. But "those" have nought to do with the mortals who pass through the seven spheres. The *collective* Karma of a future Planetary is as lovely as the collective Karma of a — is terrible. Enough. I have said too much already.

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<sup>9</sup> Mite - A very small contribution

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Percy Sinnett in his book *Esoteric Buddhism* wrote about the "eight sphere":

The spheres of the cyclic process of evolution are seven in number, but there is an eighth in connection with our earth, our earth being, it will be remembered, the turning-point in the cyclic chain, and this eighth sphere is out of circuit, a cul de sac, and the bourne from which it may be truly said no traveller returns.

This "eight sphere" is either a locality or state into which irredeemable personalities are drawn after death to be dissolved. Master K. H. wrote that this is a region...:

... whither fall but absolute nonentities; "failures of nature" to be remodelled entirely, whose divine monad separated itself from the five principles during their life-time, (whether in the next preceding or several preceding births, since such cases are also on our records), and who have lived as soulless human beings. These persons whose sixth principle has left them (while the seventh having lost its vahan (or vehicle) can exist independently no longer) their fifth or animal Soul of course goes down "the bottomless pit."

<sup>11</sup> Dhyan Chohan is a generic term for all Devas, Angels or celestial beings of which are several hierarchies and degrees. The Sanskrit word dhyani means "contemplative, one who meditates" while the origin of the word chohan is unknown. According to H. P. Blavatsky it is a Tibetan word meaning "'Lord' or 'Master'; a chief".



## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

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### Back to *Memory in the Dying*

[HPB's article *Memory in the Dying* resumes with this section]

**The first instance** is that of a moribund<sup>12</sup> consumptive<sup>13</sup> whose disease was developed in consequence of a spinal affection. Already consciousness had left the man, when, recalled to life by two successive injections of a gramme of ether, the patient slightly lifted his head and began talking rapidly in Flemish, a language no one around him, nor yet himself, understood. Offered a pencil and a piece of white cardboard, he wrote with great rapidity several lines in that language—very correctly, as was ascertained later on—fell back, and died. When translated—the writing was found to refer to a very prosaic<sup>14</sup> affair. He had suddenly recollected, he wrote, that he owed a certain man a sum of fifteen francs since 1868—hence more than twenty years—and desired it to be paid.

But why write his last wish in Flemish? The defunct was a native of Antwerp<sup>15</sup>, but had left his country in childhood, without ever knowing the language, and having passed all his life in Paris, could speak and write only in French. Evidently his returning consciousness, that last flash of memory that displayed before him, as in a retrospective panorama, all his life, even to the trifling fact of his having borrowed twenty years back a few francs from a friend, did not emanate from his *physical* brain alone, but rather from his spiritual memory, that of the *Higher Ego* (Manas or the re-incarnating individuality). The fact of his speaking and writing Flemish, a language that he had heard at a time of life when he could not yet speak himself, is an additional proof. *The Ego is almost omniscient in its immortal nature.* For indeed matter is nothing more than “the last degree and as the shadow of existence,” as Ravaisson, member of the French Institute, tells us.

#### **But to our second case.**

Another patient, dying of pulmonary<sup>16</sup> consumption and likewise re-animated by an injection of ether, turned his head towards his wife and rapidly said to her: “You cannot find that pin now; all the floor has been renewed since then.” This was in reference to the loss of a scarf pin eighteen years before, a fact so trifling that it had almost been forgotten, but which had not failed to be revived in the last thought of the dying man, who having expressed what he saw in words, suddenly stopped and breathed his last. Thus any one of the thousand little daily events, and accidents of a long life would seem capable of being recalled to the flickering consciousness, at the supreme moment of dissolution. A long life, perhaps, lived over again in the space of one short second!

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<sup>12</sup> Moribund - approaching death; about to die.

<sup>13</sup> Consumptive - a person suffering from an illness; afflicted with or associated with pulmonary tuberculosis;

<sup>14</sup> Prosaic - Matter-of-fact; straightforward.

<sup>15</sup> Antwerp - A city of northern Belgium on the Scheldt River north of Brussels.

<sup>16</sup> Pulmonary - Of, relating to, or affecting the lungs: pulmonary tuberculosis.

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A **third case** may be noticed, which corroborates still more strongly that assertion of Occultism which traces all such remembrances to the thought-power of the *individual*, instead of to that of the personal (lower) Ego. A young girl, who had been a sleepwalker up to her twenty-second year, performed during her hours of somnambulic<sup>17</sup> sleep the most varied functions of domestic life, of which she had no remembrance upon awakening.

Among other psychic impulses that manifested themselves only during her sleep, was a secretive tendency quite alien to her waking state. During the latter she was open and frank to a degree, and very careless of her personal property; but in the somnambulic state she would take articles belonging to herself or within her reach and hide them away with ingenious cunning. This habit being known to her friends and relatives, and two nurses, having been in attendance to watch her actions during her night rambles for years, nothing disappeared but what could be easily restored to its usual place. But on one sultry night, the nurse falling asleep, the young girl got up and went to her father's study. The latter, a notary of fame, had been working till a late hour that night. It was during a momentary absence from his room that the somnambule entered, and deliberately possessed herself of a will left open upon the desk, as also of a sum of several thousand pounds in bonds and notes. These she proceeded to hide in the hollow of two dummy pillars set up in the library to match the solid ones, and stealing from the room before her father's return, she regained her chamber and bed without awakening the nurse who was still asleep in the armchair.

The result was, that, as the nurse stoutly denied that her young mistress had left the room, suspicion was diverted from the real culprit and the money could not be recovered. The loss of the will involved a lawsuit which almost beggared her father and entirely ruined his reputation, and the family were reduced to great straits. About nine years later the young girl who, during the previous seven years had not been somnambulic, fell into consumption of which she ultimately died. Upon her death-bed, the veil which had hung before her physical memory was raised; her divine insight awakened; the pictures of her life came streaming back before her inner eye; and among others she saw the scene of her somnambulic robbery. Suddenly arousing herself from the lethargy in which she had lain for several hours, her face showed signs of some terrible emotion working within, and she cried out "Ah! what have I done? . . . It was I who took the will and the money . . . Go search the dummy pillars in the library, I have . . ." She never finished her sentence for her very emotion killed her. But the search was made and the will and money found within the oaken pillars as she had said. What makes the case more strange is, that these pillars were so high, that even by standing upon a chair and with plenty of time at her disposal instead of only a few moments, the somnambulist could not have reached up and dropped the objects into the hollow columns. It is to be noted, however, that ecstasies and convulsionists

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<sup>17</sup> Somnambulic - The act or an instance of walking or performing another activity associated with wakefulness while asleep or in a sleeplike state. Also called *noctambulism*, *somnambulism*.

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

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(*Vide the Convulsionnaires de St. Médard et de Morzîne*)<sup>18</sup> seem to possess an abnormal facility for climbing blank walls and leaping even to the tops of trees.

### Somnambolic Memory is not Physical

Taking the facts as stated, would they not induce one to believe that the somnambolic personage possesses an intelligence and memory of its own apart from the physical memory of the waking lower Self; and that it is the former which remembers in *articulo mortis*<sup>19</sup>, the body and physical senses in the latter case ceasing to function, and the intelligence gradually making its final escape through the avenue of psychic, and last of all of spiritual consciousness? And why not? Even materialistic science begins now to concede to psychology more than one fact that would have vainly begged of it recognition twenty years ago. “The real existence,” Ravaisson tells us, “the life of which every other life is but an imperfect outline, a faint sketch, is that of the Soul.”

That which the public in general calls “soul,” we speak of as the “reincarnating Ego.”

“To be, is to live, and to live is to will and think,” says the French Scientist<sup>20</sup>. But, if indeed the physical brain is of only a limited area, the field for the containment of rapid flashes of unlimited and infinite thought, neither will nor thought can be said to be generated *within* it, even according to materialistic Science, the impassable chasm between matter and mind having been confessed both by Tyndall and many others.

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<sup>18</sup> [It is possible that this French reference points to de Mirville’s account of these convulsionaries in his *Des Esprits*, etc., Vol. I, pp. 159 *et seq.* (3rd ed., Paris, 1854); this has not been definitely ascertained, however.—Compiler.]

<sup>19</sup> at the point of death

<sup>20</sup>*Rapport sur la Philosophie en France au XIXme Siècle.*

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

Manas and Memory in the Dying

### The Human Brain Is Simply the Canal between Two Planes

The fact is that the human brain is simply the canal between two planes—the psycho-spiritual and the material—through which every abstract and metaphysical idea filters from the Manasic down to the lower human consciousness. Therefore, the ideas about the infinite and the absolute are not, nor can they be, within *our* brain capacities. They can be faithfully mirrored only by our Spiritual consciousness, thence to be more or less faintly projected onto the tables of our perceptions on this plane.

Thus while the records of even important events are often obliterated from our memory, not the most trifling action of our lives can disappear from the “Soul’s” memory, because it is no MEMORY for it, but an ever present reality on the plane which lies outside our conceptions of space and time. “Man is the measure of all things,” said Aristotle; and surely he did not mean by man, the form of flesh, bones and muscles!

Of all the deep thinkers Edgard Quinet, the author of *La Création*<sup>21</sup>, expressed this idea the best. Speaking of man, full of feelings and thoughts of which he has either no consciousness at all, or which he feels only as dim and hazy impressions, he shows that man realizes quite a small portion only of his moral being. “The thoughts we think, but are unable to define and formulate, once repelled, seek refuge in the very root of our being.” . . . When chased by the persistent efforts of our will “they retreat before it, still further, still deeper into—who knows what—fibres, but wherein they remain to reign and impress us unbidden and unknown to ourselves . . .”

Yes; they become as imperceptible and as unreachable as the vibrations of sound and colour when these surpass the normal range. Unseen and eluding grasp, they yet work, and thus lay the foundations of our future actions and thoughts, and obtain mastery over us, though we may never think of them and are often ignorant of their very being and presence. Nowhere does Quinet, the great student of Nature, seem more right in his observations than when speaking of the mysteries with which we are all surrounded: “The mysteries of neither earth nor heaven but those present in the marrow of our bones, in our brain cells, our nerves and fibres. No need,” he adds, “in order to search for the unknown, to lose ourselves in the realm of the stars, when here, near us and in us, rests the unreachable . . . As our world is mostly formed of imperceptible beings which are the real constructors of its continents, so likewise is man.”

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<sup>21</sup> [Vol. II, pp. 377-78.]

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 3

Manas and Memory in the Dying

### Memory Returns at Death

Verily so; since man is a bundle of obscure, and to himself unconscious perceptions, of indefinite feelings and misunderstood emotions, of ever-forgotten memories and knowledge that becomes on the surface of his plane—*ignorance*. Yet while physical memory in a healthy living man is often obscured, one fact crowding out another weaker one, at the moment of the great change that man calls death—that which we call “memory” seems to return to us in all its vigour and freshness.

May this not be due as just said, simply to the fact that, for a few seconds at least, our two memories (or rather the two states, the highest and the lowest state, of consciousness) blend together, thus forming one, and that the dying finds himself on a plane wherein there is neither past nor future, but all is one present? Memory, as we all know, is strongest with regard to its early associations, then when the future man is only a child, and more of a soul than of a body; and if memory is a part of our Soul, then, as Thackeray has somewhere said, it must be of necessity eternal. Scientists deny this; we, Theosophists, affirm that it is so. They have for what they hold but negative proofs; we have, to support us, innumerable facts of the kind just instanced, in the three cases described by us. The links of the chain of cause and effect with relation to mind are, and must ever remain a terra incognita to the materialist. For if they have already acquired a deep conviction that as Pope says—

“Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain  
Our thoughts are link’d by many a hidden chain . . .”

—and that they are still unable to discover these chains, how can they hope to unravel the mysteries of the higher, Spiritual, Mind!

“H.P.B.”

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