

## Mahatma Letter No. 68 (B16) - The Devachan Letter

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Received July 15, 1882 at Simla India

*This letter contains questions by Sinnett and answers by the Mahatma K.H. It is called the "Devachan Letter" as it is principally concerned with that state into which the human enters between incarnations.*

*The letter begins with a reference to a letter in "the last Theosophist." This was the June 1882 issue. pp 225-6. It was signed "A Caledonian<sup>1</sup> Theosophist." This was probably a man by the name of Davidson, or Davison, a scientific ornithologist who at one time worked for Hume in connection with his bird hobby, serving in the capacity of a private secretary. The letter was headed "Seeming Discrepancies." The writer was concerned with what he considered some differences between statements in one of the articles in the series "Fragments of Occult Truth" written at that time by Hume and later by Sinnett, and certain passages in Isis Unveiled, H.P.B.'s first book. The so-called discrepancies had to do with spiritualistic phenomena. He also questioned the meaning of the word "Devachan."*

(1) The remarks appended to a letter in the last *Theosophist*,<sup>2</sup> page 226, Col. 1, strike me as very important and as qualifying — I do not say contradicting — a good deal of what we have hitherto been told *in re Spiritualism*.

We had heard already of a spiritual condition of life in which the redeveloped Ego enjoyed a conscious existence for a time before reincarnation in another world; but that branch of the subject has hitherto been slurred over. Now some explicit statements are made about it; and these suggest further enquiries.

In the *Devachan* (I have lent my *Theosophist* to a friend; and have not got it at hand to refer to but that if I remember rightly is the name given to the state of spiritual beatitude described) the new Ego retains complete recollection of his life on earth apparently. Is that so or is there any misunderstanding on that point on my part?

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<sup>1</sup> **Caledonia** is the Latin name given by the Romans to the land in today's Scotland north of their province of Britannia, beyond the frontier of their empire. The etymology of the name is probably from a P-Celtic source. Its modern usage is as a romantic or poetic name for Scotland as a whole, comparable with Hibernia for Ireland and Britannia for the whole of Britain.

<sup>2</sup> **The Theosophist** is the monthly journal of the international Theosophical Society based in Adyar, India. It was first published on October 1, 1879 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in Bombay, and has been in production continuously since that date.

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(1) The Deva-Chan, or land of "Sukhavati," is *allegorically* described by our Lord Buddha himself. What he said may be found in the *Shan-Mun-yi-Tung*<sup>3</sup>. Says Tathāgata<sup>4</sup>: —

"Many thousand myriads<sup>5</sup> of systems of worlds beyond this (ours) there is a region of Bliss called *Sukhavati* . . . . This region is encircled within<sup>6</sup> *seven* rows of railings, *seven* rows of vast curtains, *seven* rows of waving trees; this holy abode of Arahats<sup>7</sup> is governed by the Tathāgatas (Dhyan Chohans) and is possessed by the Bodhisatwas. It hath *seven* precious lakes, in the midst of which flow crystalline waters having '*seven and one*' properties, or distinctive qualities (the 7 principles emanating from the ONE). This, O, Sariputra<sup>8</sup> is the 'Deva-Chan.' Its divine Udumbara<sup>9</sup> flower casts a root *in the shadow of every earth*, and blossoms for all those who reach it. Those born in the blessed region are truly felicitous, there are no more grief(s) or sorrows *in that cycle* for them. . . . Myriads of Spirits (*Lha*) resort there for rest and then *return to their own regions*.<sup>10</sup> Again, O, Sariputra, in that land of joy many who are born in it are *Avaivartyas* . . ." <sup>11</sup> etc., etc.

(2) Now except in the fact that the duration of existence in the Deva Chan is limited, there is a very close resemblance between that condition and the Heaven of ordinary religion (omitting anthropomorphic ideas of God).

(2) Certainly the new *Ego* once that it is reborn, retains for a certain time — proportionate to its Earth-life, a "complete recollection of his life on earth."<sup>12</sup> But it can *never* return on earth, from the Deva-Chan, nor has the latter — even omitting all "anthropomorphic ideas of God" — any resemblance to the paradise or heaven of any religion, and it is H.P.B.'s literary fancy that suggested to her the wonderful comparison.

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<sup>3</sup> The text *Shan-Mun-yi-Tung* has not been identified.

<sup>4</sup> **Tathāgata** is Buddha, "he who walks in the footsteps of his predecessors"; as Bhagavat — he is the Lord. <sup>(U)</sup>

<sup>5</sup> **Myriad** - a countless or extremely great number.

<sup>6</sup> The phrase "encircled within seven rows" has been wrongly transcribed as "encircled with seven rows" in all printed editions.

<sup>7</sup> **Arahat** (Sk.). Arhat, Arhan, Rahat, etc., "the worthy one", lit., "deserving divine honours". This was the name first given to Jain and to the Buddhist holy men initiated into the esoteric mysteries. The Arhat is one who has entered the best and highest path, and is thus emancipated from re-birth. <sup>(TG)</sup>

<sup>8</sup> **Sariputra** A disciple of the Buddha

<sup>9</sup> **Udumbara** - In the Pali literature, the udumbara tree and its flowers are used concretely (as the tree beneath which a former Buddha gained enlightenment), and symbolically (evoking the insubstantiality of things and self). In Buddhist mythology, the flower was said to bloom only once every 3,000 years, and thus came to symbolize events of rare occurrence.

<sup>10</sup> **KH**: Those who have not ended their earth rings.

<sup>11</sup> **KH**: Literally — those who will never return — the seventh round men, etc.

<sup>12</sup> **KH**: (See back – page 2 of your questions.) *Sinnett's query (1) was not answered in response (1) but rather in response (2).*

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(3) Now the question of importance — is who goes to Heaven — or Deva Chan? Is this condition only attained by the few who are very good, or by the many who are not very bad, — after the lapse in their case of a longer unconscious incubation or gestation.

(3) "Who goes to Deva Chan?" The personal Ego<sup>13</sup> of course: but beatified, purified, holy. Every Ego — the combination of the sixth and seventh principles — which, after the period of unconscious gestation<sup>14</sup> is reborn into the Deva-Chan, 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-reincarnation, he brings along with him but the Karma of his good deeds, words, and thoughts into this Deva-Chan. "Bad" is a relative term for us — as you were told more than once before, — and the Law of Retribution is the only law that never errs. Hence all those who have not slipped down into the mire of unredeemable sin and bestiality — go to the Deva Chan. 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.

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<sup>13</sup> The Personal Ego is given as "a combination of the five lower principles" on page 31 of this letter.

<sup>14</sup> **Gestation** - After going through Kāmaloka the personal ego undergoes a period of *gestation* where it is purified from anything that is not fit to be expressed in Devachan. Then "the new spiritual Ego is reborn—like the fabled Phœnix from its ashes—from the old one" (CW4, 121)

**Period of Gestation** - In most cases the upper duad finds some spiritual elements that allows it to be "born" in Devachan. But before this is possible the soul has to undergo a period of spiritual gestation. A. P. Sinnett wrote:

When the division of, or purification of the fifth principle has been accomplished in Kama loka by the contending attractions of the fourth and sixth principles, the real Ego passes into a period of unconscious gestation . . . a spiritual ante-natal state at the entrance to spiritual life . . . and this period, in different cases, may be of very different duration - from a few moments to immense periods of years. (EB, 96-97)

According to H. P. Blavatsky the gestation period "lasts from a few days to several years", (CW4, 120-121) while Mahatma K.H. wrote that it can be very long: "longer sometimes than you may even imagine, yet proportionate to the Ego's spiritual stamina". (ML68)

It is usually said that the reviving of consciousness begins at the door of Devachan, once the struggle in Kama-Loka is over, but only after the period of gestation. (ML104, 362)

That remembrance will return slowly and gradually toward the end of the gestation (to the entity or Ego), still more slowly but far more imperfectly and incompletely to the shell, and fully to the Ego at the moment of its entrance into the Devachan. (ML104, 362)

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Of course it is *a state*, one, 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"*<sup>15</sup> . . .

Since the conscious perception of one's *personality* on earth is but an evanescent dream that sense will be equally that of a dream in the Deva-Chan — only a hundred fold intensified. So much so, indeed, that the happy *Ego* is unable to see through the veil, the evils, sorrows and woes to which those it loved on earth may be subjected to.

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.

It is in this, during *such* a condition of complete *Maya* that the Souls or astral Egos of pure, loving sensitives, labouring under the same illusion, think their loved ones come down to them on earth, while it is their own Spirits that are raised towards those in the Deva-Chan.

Many of the *subjective* spiritual communications — most of them when the sensitives are pure minded — are real; but it is most difficult for the *uninitiated* medium to fix in his mind the true and correct pictures of what he sees and hears.

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<sup>15</sup> **Māyā** is a Sanskrit word that in Indian religions has multiple meanings. Usually translated as "illusion" (from mā "not" and yā "this"), it points out the fact that we do not experience the reality but only a false image perceived by our minds, as when one pursues a mirage in the desert or mistakes a rope for a snake. (TSWiki)

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Some of the phenomena called psychography<sup>16</sup> (though more rarely) are also real. The spirit of the sensitive getting odylized,<sup>17</sup> so to say, by the aura<sup>18</sup> of the Spirit in the Devachan, becomes for a few minutes *that departed personality*, and writes in the hand writing of the latter, in his language and in his thoughts, as they were during his life time. The two spirits become blended in one; and, the preponderance of one over the other during such phenomena determines the preponderance of *personality* in the characteristics exhibited in such writings, and "trance-speaking."

What you call "rapport" is in plain fact an identity of molecular vibration between the astral part of the incarnate medium and the astral part of the disincarnate personality.

I have just noticed an article *on smell* by some English Professor (which I will cause to be reviewed in the *Theosophist* and say a few words), and find in it something that applies to our case.

As, in music, two different sounds may be in accord<sup>19</sup> and separately distinguishable, and this harmony or discord depends upon the synchronous vibrations and complementary periods; so there is *rapport* between medium and "control" when their astral molecules move in accord.

And the question whether the communication shall reflect more of the one personal idiosyncrasy or the other, is determined by the relative intensity of the two sets of vibrations in the compound wave of Akasha<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> **Psychography** refers to automatic writing (rather than its modern definition as the study of personality, values, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles). (TSWiki)

<sup>17</sup> **Od** (Gr.). From *odos*, "passage", or passing of that force which is developed by various minor forces or agencies such as magnets, chemical or vital action, heat, light, etc. It is also called "odic" and "odylic force", and was regarded by Reichenbach and his followers as an independent entitative [*Entitativity means the consideration of something as pure entity*] force—which it certainly is—stored in man as it is in Nature. (TG)

<sup>18</sup> **Aura** is an invisible emanation or field of subtle matter viewed by the clairvoyant as a luminous radiation surrounding a living creature or object. (TSWiki)

<sup>19</sup> **Accord** - (of a concept or fact) be harmonious or consistent with.

<sup>20</sup> **Akasha** - In the Theosophical view Akasha is seen as the spiritual Primordial Substance that pervades the whole space, and from which the cosmos is developed. Before the beginning of manifestation, Akasha is said to contain in seed the Logos of the system to-be. When the hour for re-awakening strikes, the Logos develops in Akasha and the Divine Thought of the former differentiates the primordial substance into all the manifested planes and forms in the Cosmos.

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The less identical the vibratory impulses the more mediumistic and less spiritual will be the message. So then, measure your medium's moral state by that of the alleged "controlling" Intelligence, and your tests of genuineness leave nothing to be desired.

(4) Or are there great varieties of condition within the limits, so to speak, of Deva Chan, so that an appropriate state is dropped into by all, from which they will be born into lower or higher conditions in the next world of causes. It is no use multiplying hypotheses. We want some information to go upon.

(4) Yes; there are great varieties in the Deva-Chan states, and, it is all as you say. As many varieties of bliss, as on earth there are shades of perception and of capability to appreciate such reward. It is an ideated 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 it is that variety which guides the temporary personal *Ego* into the current which will lead him to be reborn in a lower or higher condition in the next world of causes. Everything is so harmoniously adjusted in nature — especially in the subjective world, that no mistake can be ever committed by the Tathāgatas — or Dhyān Chohans<sup>21</sup> — who guide the impulses.

(5) On the face of the idea, a purely spiritual state would only be enjoyable to the entities highly spiritualized in this life. But there are myriads of very good people (morally) who are not spiritualized at all. How can they be fitted to pass, with their recollections of this life from a material to a spiritual condition of existence.

(5) It is "a spiritual condition" only as contrasted with our own grossly "material condition," and, as already stated — it is such degrees of spirituality that constitute and determine the great "varieties" of conditions within the limits of Deva-Chan.

A mother from a savage tribe is not less happy than a mother from a regal palace, with her lost child in her arms; and although as actual Egos, children prematurely dying before the perfection of their septenary Entity do not find their way to Deva-Chan, yet all the same the

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<sup>21</sup> **Dhyān Chohan** is a generic term for all Devas, Angels or celestial beings, of which there 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". "Thus," she continues, "Dhyān-Chohan would answer to 'Chief of the Dhyānis', or celestial Lights - which in English would be translated Archangels". The Dhyān Chohans are the agents of the Karmic and Cosmic Laws. Some of the Dhyāni-Chohan in The Secret Doctrine are the Primordial Seven, Lipikas, Mānasaputras, Kumāras, Manus, etc.

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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?

The pleasures realized by a Red Indian<sup>22</sup> in his "happy hunting grounds" in that Land of Dreams is not less intense than the ecstasy felt by a *connoisseur* who passes aeons<sup>23</sup> in the rapt<sup>24</sup> delight of listening to divine Symphonies by imaginary angelic choirs and orchestras.

As it is no fault of the former, if born a "savage" with an instinct to kill — though it caused the death of many an innocent animal — why, if with it all, he was a loving father, son, husband, why should he not also enjoy *his* share of reward?

The case would be quite different if the same cruel acts had been done by an educated and civilized person, from a mere love of sport. The savage in being reborn would simply take a low place in the scale, by reason of his imperfect moral development; while the *Karma* of the other would be tainted with moral delinquency. . . .

Everyone but that ego which, attracted by its gross magnetism, falls into the current that will draw it into the "planet of Death"<sup>25</sup> — the mental as well as physical satellite of our earth — *is* fitted to pass into a relative "spiritual" condition adjusted to his previous condition in life and mode of thought.

To my knowledge and recollection H.P.B. explained to Mr. Hume that man's sixth principle, as something purely spiritual could not exist, or have *conscious* being in the Deva-Chan,

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<sup>22</sup> "Red Indian" refers to American Indians; Native Americans. (TSWiki)

<sup>23</sup> **Aeon** (Gk.). An age or the duration of the world, or of the universe; an immeasurable period of time; eternity. In some contexts the word "aeon" can signify the personification of an age. (Theosophedia)

<sup>24</sup> **Rapt** - Deeply moved or delighted; enraptured; Deeply absorbed; engrossed:

<sup>25</sup> **Planet of Death** - The moon has often been described in Theosophical literature as the eighth sphere, because it is not one of the seven planets of our chain upon which evolution is taking place. It is therefore what is called a "dead end," a place where only refuse gathers, and it is a kind of a dust-heap or waste-paper-basket to the system--a kind of astral cesspool into which are thrown decaying fragments of various sorts, such as the lost personality which has torn itself away from the ego, who has allowed it to slip out of his grasp in the manner which I explained in the first volume of this book, in the article on Lost Soul. (Charles Webster Leadbeater, *The Inner Life* vol. II, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Press, 1942), 184.)

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unless it assimilated some of the more abstract and pure of the mental attributes of the fifth principle or animal Soul <sup>26</sup> its *manas* (mind) and memory.

When man dies his second and third principles die with him; the lower triad disappears, and the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh principles form the surviving Quaternary. (Read again page 6 in *Fragments of O.T.*)<sup>27</sup>

Thenceforth it is a "death" struggle<sup>28</sup> between the Upper and Lower dualities.

If the upper wins, the sixth, having attracted to itself the quintessence of *Good* from the fifth — its nobler affections, its saintly (though they be *earthly*) aspirations, and the most spiritualized portions of its mind — follows its divine *elder* (the 7th) into the "Gestation" State; and the fifth and fourth remain in association as an empty *shell* — (the expression is quite correct) — to roam in the earth's atmosphere, with half the personal memory gone, and the more brutal instincts fully alive for a certain period — an "Elementary"<sup>29</sup> in short. This is the "angel guide" of the average medium.

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<sup>26</sup> **Animal Soul** - This term in Theosophy is generally applied to the fourth principle in human beings (*kāma*), although in some occasions it refers to the incarnated ray of fifth principle, the lower *manas* or lower mind, which in most people acts in close association with *kāma*. (TSWiki)

<sup>27</sup> **The Fragments of Occult Truth** is a series of articles published in *The Theosophist* in the early 1880's. The articles were written by Allan Octavian Hume and Alfred Percy Sinnett, based upon teachings they received from H. P. Blavatsky and Mahatmas K.H. and M. (TSWiki)

<sup>28</sup> **Death Struggle** - After the disposal of the three lower principles of consciousness that happen during physical death, the four principles remaining enter in *Kāmaloka*, which is an intermediate sphere between the physical and the spiritual. Before consciousness can pass on to Devachan, a "purification" of the psychic elements is necessary. During this period there is a tension between the two lower principles, which possess a tendency towards materiality, and the two higher, which are of a spiritual nature. What happens can be metaphorically seen as a "struggle" between the animal and the spiritual aspects of the soul (*Kāma* and *Buddhi* respectively) to assimilate *Manas*. (TSWiki)

<sup>29</sup> **Elementary** - Properly, the disembodied souls of the depraved; these souls having at some time prior to death separated from themselves their divine spirits, and so lost their chance for immortality; but at the present stage of learning it has been thought best to apply the term to the spooks or phantoms of disembodied persons, in general, to those whose temporary habitation is the *Kāma Loka*. Eliphas Lévi and some other Kabbalists make little distinction between elementary spirits who have been men, and those beings which people the elements, and are the blind forces of nature. Once divorced from their higher triads and their bodies, these souls remain in their *Kāma - rūpic* envelopes, and are irresistibly drawn to the earth amid elements congenial to their gross natures. Their stay in the *Kāma Loka* varies as to its duration; but ends invariably in disintegration, dissolving like a column of mist, atom by atom, in the surrounding elements. (TG)



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If, on the other hand, it is the Upper *Duality* which is defeated, there, it is the fifth principle that assimilates all that there may be left of *personal* recollection and perceptions of its personal individuality in the sixth.

But, with all this additional stock, it will not remain in *Kama-Loka* — "the world of Desire" or our Earth's atmosphere. In a very short time like a straw floating within the attraction of the vortices and pits of the Maelstrom, it is caught up and drawn into the great whirlpool of human Egos; while the sixth and seventh — now a purely Spiritual, *individual MONAD*,<sup>30</sup> with nothing left in it of the late personality, having no regular "gestation" period to pass through: (since there is no purified *personal* Ego to be reborn), after a more or less prolonged period of unconscious Rest in the boundless Space — will find itself reborn in another personality on the next planet.

When arrives the period of "Full Individual Consciousness" — which precedes that of *Absolute* Consciousness in the *Pari-Nirvana*<sup>31</sup> — this lost *personal* life becomes as a torn out page in the great *Book of Lives*, without even a disconnected word left to mark its absence. The purified Monad will neither perceive nor remember it in the series of its past rebirths — which it would had it gone to the "World of Forms" (*Rupa-loka*<sup>32</sup>) — and its retrospective glance will not perceive even the slightest sign to indicate that it had been. The light of *Sammā-Sambuddh*<sup>33</sup> —

". . . that light which shines beyond our mortal ken  
The line of all the lives in all the worlds "—

throws no ray upon that *personal* life in the series of lives foregone.

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<sup>30</sup> **Monad** - In Theosophy the word monad refers to the two highest principles, ātman and buddhi, which assimilate the highest attributes of manas during the process of evolution.

<sup>31</sup> **Pari-Nirvana** - In Blavatsky's writings the term "paranirvana" is used to refer to the state the universe enters at "the great day of Be-with-US", when: . . . everything becomes one, all individualities are merged into one, yet each knowing itself, a mysterious teaching indeed. But then, that which to us now is non-consciousness or the unconscious, will then be absolute consciousness. (CW10, 405)

<sup>32</sup> **Rupa-Loka** - The Mahatma Letters mention three spheres (Tribhuvana or Trailokya) of ascending spirituality after death: Kama-Loka, Rupa-Loka and Arūpa-Loka, the last two being part of Devachan. (TSWiki)

<sup>33</sup> **Sammā-Sambuddha** is the name traditionally given to a Buddha like Gautama, who discovered truth and gained Nirvāṇa by his own efforts without having a teacher to point it out. (TSWiki)  
In the *Key to Theosophy* glossary, HPB defines Sammā-Sambuddha as the sudden remembrance of all one's past incarnations, a phenomenon of memory obtained through Yoga. A Buddhist mystic term. And in *Key to Theosophy* she writes: Some people do recollect their past incarnations during life; but these are Buddhas and Initiates. This is what the Yogis call Sammā-Sambuddha, or the knowledge of the whole series of one's past incarnations. (KT)

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To the credit of mankind, I must say, that such an utter obliteration of an existence from the tablets of Universal Being does not occur often enough to make a great percentage. In fact, like the much mentioned "congenital idiot"<sup>34</sup> such a thing is a *lusus naturae*<sup>35</sup> — an exception, not the rule.

(6) And how is a spiritual existence in which everything has merged into the sixth principle, compatible with that consciousness of individual and personal material life which must be attributed to the Ego in Deva-Chan if he retains his earthly consciousness as stated in the *Theosophist* Note.

(6) The question is now sufficiently explained, I believe: the sixth and seventh principles apart from the rest constitute the eternal imperishable, but also *unconscious* "Monad." To awaken in it to life the latent consciousness, especially that of *personal* individuality, requires the monad plus the highest attributes of the fifth — the "animal Soul"; and it is that which makes the ethereal *Ego*<sup>36</sup> that lives and enjoys bliss in the Deva-Chan.

Spirit, or the unalloyed emanations of the ONE — the latter forming with the seventh and sixth principles the highest triad — neither of the two emanations are capable of assimilating but that which is good, pure and holy; hence, no sensual, material or unholy recollection can follow the purified memory of the *Ego* to the region of Bliss.

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<sup>34</sup> **Congenital** - Of or relating to a condition that is present at birth, as a result of either heredity or environmental influences

<sup>35</sup> **Lusus naturae** - a freak of nature; a person or animal that is markedly unusual or deformed.

<sup>36</sup> **Ethereal Ego**: Mme. Blavatsky wrote: The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas gravitates more downward to Kama rūpa, the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to Buddhi, the Spiritual Ego. In the latter case, the higher consciousness of the individual Spiritual aspirations of mind (Manas), assimilating Buddhi, are absorbed by it and form the Ego, which goes into Devachanic bliss. <sup>(KT)</sup>

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The Karma for these recollections of evil deeds and thought will reach the Ego when it changes its *personality* in the following world of causes. The *Monad*, or the "Spiritual Individuality," remains untainted *in all cases*. "No sorrow or Pain for those born there (in the *Rupa-Loka* of Deva-Chan); for this is the Pure-land. All the regions in Space possess such lands (*Sakwala*),<sup>37</sup> but this land of Bliss is the most pure." In the *Djnāna Prasthāna Shaster*,<sup>38</sup> it is said: "By personal purity and earnest meditation, we overleap the limits of the World of Desire, and enter in the World of Forms."

(7) The period of gestation between Death and Deva-Chan has hitherto been conceived by me at all events as very long. Now it is said to be in some cases only a few days, in no cases (it is implied) more than a few years. This seems plainly stated, but I ask if it can be explicitly confirmed because it is a point on which so much turns.

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<sup>37</sup> **Sakwala**. This is a *bana* or "word" uttered by Gautama Buddha in his oral instructions. Sakwala is a mundane, or rather a solar system, of which there is an infinite number in the universe, and which denotes that space to which the light of every sun extends. Each Sakwala contains earths, hells and heavens (meaning good and bad spheres, our earth being considered as hell, in Occultism); attains its prime, then falls into decay and is finally destroyed at regularly recurring periods, in virtue of one immutable law.

Upon the earth, the Master taught that there have been already four great "continents" (the Land of the Gods, Lemuria, Atlantis, and the present "continent" divided into five parts of the *Secret Doctrine*), and that three more have to appear. The former "did *not communicate* with each other", a sentence showing that Buddha was not speaking of the actual continents known in his day (for *Patala* or America was perfectly familiar to the ancient Hindus), but of the four geological formations of the earth, with their four distinct *root-races* which had already disappeared. <sup>(KT)</sup>

<sup>38</sup> **Djnana Prasthana Shaster** probably refers to the Jñāna-prasthāna-śāstra, composed by Katyayaniputra. The Jnanaprasthana ("establishment of knowledge") is one of the seven Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma Buddhist scriptures. <sup>(TSWiki)</sup>

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(7) Another fine example of the habitual disorder in which Mrs. H.P.B.'s mental furniture is kept. She talks of "Bardo"<sup>39</sup> and does not even say to her readers what it means! As in her writing room confusion is ten times confounded, so in her mind are crowded ideas piled in such a chaos that when she wants to express them the tail peeps out before the head. "Bardo" has nothing to do with the duration of time in the case you are referring to. "Bardo" is the period between death and rebirth — and may last from a few years to a kalpa.<sup>40</sup> It is divided into three sub-periods

(1) when the *Ego* delivered of its mortal coil<sup>41</sup> enters into *Kama-Loka*<sup>42</sup> (the abode of Elementaries<sup>43</sup>);

(2) when it enters into its "Gestation State";

(3) when it is reborn in the *Rupa-Loka* of Deva-Chan.

Sub-period (1) may last from a few minutes to a *number* of years — the phrase "a few years" becoming puzzling and utterly worthless without a more complete explanation;

Sub-period (2) is "very long"; as you say, longer sometimes than you may even imagine, yet proportionate to the Ego's spiritual stamina;

Sub-period (3) lasts in proportion to the good KARMA, after which the *monad* is again reincarnated.

The *Agama Sutra* saying: — "in all these *Rupa-Lokas*, the Devas (Spirits) are equally subjected to birth, decay, old age, and death," means only that an Ego is borne thither then begins fading out and finally "dies," *i.e.*, falls into that unconscious condition which precedes rebirth; and ends the Sloka with these words — "As the devas emerge from these heavens, they enter the lower world again:" *i.e.*, they leave a world of bliss to be reborn in a world of causes.

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<sup>39</sup> **Bardo:** Master K.H. wrote: "Bardo" is the period between death and rebirth — and may last from a few years to a kalpa. It is divided into three sub-periods (1) when the Ego delivered of its mortal coil enters into Kama-Loka (the abode of Elementaries); (2) when it enters into its "Gestation State"; (3) when it is reborn in the Rupa-Loka of Devachan. (cML No. 44, 194)

<sup>40</sup> **Kalpa:** The exoteric Brahmanical works give 4,320,000,000 years as the duration of a great Kalpa, a "Day of Brahma." This includes all the seven "Rounds" of our Planetary Chain, *i.e.*, the period of human existence on different planets in different Rounds together, with what are called "Obscurations" or the period of rest for humanity between two planets, in its passage from the one to the other, after its seven Races are evolved on that planet. (CW13, 302)

**Kalpa (Sk.)** The period of a mundane revolution, generally a cycle of time, but usually, it represents a "day" and "night" of Brahma, a period of 4,320,000,000 years. (TG)

<sup>41</sup> **Coil:** The troubles and activities of the world (in the Shakespearean phrase *this mortal coil*)

<sup>42</sup> **KH:** Tibetan: Yuh-Kai.

<sup>43</sup> **Elementary** is a word used in Theosophy in several ways, mainly to designate the souls of deceased people who remain bound to the physical world, unable to move on in the post-mortem processes. Elementaries should not be confused with elementals. (See footnote above for HPB's definitions in the *Theosophical Glossary*)

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(8) In that case, and assuming that Deva-Chan is *not* solely the heritage of adepts and persons almost as elevated, there *is* a condition of existence tantamount to Heaven actually going on, from which the life of Earth may be watched by an immense number of those who have gone before!

(9) And for how long? Does this state of spiritual beatitude endure for years? for decades? for centuries?

(8) Most emphatically "the Deva-Chan *is not* solely the heritage of adepts," and most decidedly there is a "heaven" — if you *must* use this astro-geographical Christian term — for "an immense number of those who have gone before." But "the life of Earth" can be *watched* by none of these, for reasons of the Law of Bliss plus *Maya*, already given.

(9) For years, decades, centuries and milleniums, oftentimes — multiplied by something more. It all depends upon the duration of Karma.

Fill with oil Den's little cup,<sup>44</sup> and a city Reservoir of water, and lighting both see which burns the longer. The *Ego* is the wick and *Karma* the oil; the difference in the quantity of the latter (in the cup and the reservoir) suggesting to you the great difference in the duration of various *Karmas*.

Every effect must be proportionate to the cause. And, as man's terms of incarnate existence bear but a small proportion to his periods of inter-natal existence in the manvantaric cycle, so the good thoughts, words, and deeds of any one of these "lives" on a globe are causative of effects, the working out of which requires far more time than the evolution of the causes occupied.

Therefore, when you read in the Jāts<sup>45</sup> and other *fabulous* stories of the Buddhist Scriptures that this or the other good action was rewarded by Kalpas of several figures of bliss, do not smile at the absurd exaggeration, but bear in mind what I have said.

From a small seed, you know, sprung a tree whose life endures now for 22 centuries; I mean the Anuradha-pura Bo tree.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "**Den's little cup**" probably refers to the Sinnett's young son Dennis. (TSWiki)

<sup>45</sup> **Jāts** are the accounts of the Buddha's previous lives in the Jātaka Tales. (TSWiki)

<sup>46</sup> The **Anuradha-pura Bo tree** is a Bodhi Tree (or "Bo tree", in Sinhalese) still existing in Anuradhapura, a major city in Sri Lanka, which is said to date back to the year 245 BC. (TSWiki)

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Nor must you laugh, if ever you come across *Pindha-Dhana* or any other Buddhist *Sutra* and read: "Between the *Kama-Loka* and the *Rupa-Loka* there is a locality, the dwelling of 'Mara' (Death)<sup>47</sup>. This Mara filled with passion and lust, destroys all virtuous principles, as a stone grinds corn. <sup>48</sup> His palace is 7000 yojanas <sup>49</sup> square, and is surrounded by a *seven-fold wall*," for you will feel now more prepared to understand the allegory.

Also, when Beal, or Burnouf, or Rhys Davids <sup>50</sup> in the innocence of their Christian and materialistic souls indulge in such translations as they generally do, we do not bear them malice for their commentaries, since they cannot know any better. But what can the following mean: —

"The names of the Heavens" (a mistranslation; *lokas* are not *heavens* but localities or abodes) of Desire, Kama-Loka — so called, because the beings who occupy them are subject to desires of eating, drinking, sleeping and love. They are otherwise called the abodes of the five (?) orders of sentient creatures — Devas, men, asuras, beasts, demons" (*Lantan Sutra*, trans. by S. Beal).

They mean simply that, had the reverend translator been acquainted with the true doctrine a little better — he would have (1) divided the Devas into two classes — and called them the "Rupa-devas" and the "Arupa-devas" (the "form" — or objective, and the "formless" or subjective Dhyān Chohans; and (2) — would have done the same for his class of "men," since there are shells, and "Mara-rupas" — i.e. bodies doomed to annihilation. All these are:

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<sup>47</sup> **Mara** (Sk.). The god of Temptation, the Seducer who tried to turn away Buddha from his PATH. He is called the "Destroyer" and "Death" (of the Soul). One of the names of Kama, God of love. <sup>(TG)</sup>

<sup>48</sup> **KH**: This *Mara*, as you may well think, is the allegorical image of the sphere called the "Planet of Death" — the *whirlpool* whither disappear the *lives* doomed to destruction. It is between *Kama* and *Rupa-Lokas* that the struggle takes place.

<sup>49</sup> A **Yojana** is a Vedic measure of distance that was used in ancient India. It is equivalent to about 1.6 km (1 mi) as per modern measures of distance, although the exact value is disputed among scholars (between 2 and 5 km (1 and 3 mi)). <sup>(Wikipedia)</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Thomas William **Rhys Davids** (12 May 1843 – 27 December 1922) was a British scholar of the Pāli language and founder of the Pali Text Society. <sup>(TSWiki)</sup>

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- (1) "*Rupa-devas*" — *Dhyan Chohans* <sup>51</sup> having forms; Ex-men  
(2) "*Arupa-devas*" [— *Dhyan Chohans*] having *no* forms;  
(3) "*Pisāchas*"<sup>52</sup> — (two-principled) ghosts.  
(4) "*Mara-rupa*" — Doomed to *death* (3 principled).  
(5) *Asuras* — Elementals <sup>53</sup> — having human form Future men.  
(6) *Beasts* — [Elementals] 2nd class — animal Elementals  
(7) *Rakshasas* (Demons) Souls or Astral Forms of sorcerers; men who have reached the apex of knowledge in the forbidden art. Dead or alive they have, so to say *cheated* nature; but it is only temporary — until our planet goes into *obscuration*, after which they have  *nolens volens* to be annihilated.

It is these *seven* groups that form the principal divisions of the Dwellers of the subjective world around us. It is in stock No. 1, that are the *intelligent* Rulers of this world of Matter, and who, with all this intelligence are but the blindly obedient instruments of the ONE; the active agents of a Passive Principle.

And thus are misinterpreted and mistranslated nearly all our Sutras; yet even under that confused jumble of doctrines and words, for one who knows even superficially the *true* doctrine, there is firm ground to stand upon.

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<sup>51</sup> **KH:** The Planetary Spirits of our Earth are not of the highest, as you may well imagine — since, as Subba Row says in his criticism upon Oxley's work that no Eastern Adept would like to be compared with an angel or a *Deva*. See *May The Theosophist*.

<sup>52</sup> **Pisāchas** (Sk.). In the Purānas, goblins or demons created by Brahmā. In the southern Indian folklore, ghosts, demons, larvæ and vampires—generally female—who haunt men. Fading remnants of human beings in Kāmaloka, as shells and Elementaries. <sup>(TG)</sup>

<sup>53</sup> **Elemental:** In the Theosophical literature there is mention to three elemental kingdoms, which are evolving in the direction of humanity. Mme. Blavatsky wrote that "the inferior, semi-intelligent and non-intelligent Elementals—are all future men". <sup>(SD1, 277)</sup>

There are different classes [of elementals] for each plane, and division of plane, of nature. Many can never be recognized by men. And those pertaining to one plane do not act in another. <sup>(CW9, 105)</sup>

**Elementals.** Spirits of the Elements. The creatures evolved in the four Kingdoms or Elements—earth, air, fire, and water. They are called by the Kabbalists, Gnomes (of the earth), Sylphs (of the air), Salamanders (of the fire), and Undines (of the water). Except a few of the higher kinds, and their rulers, they are rather forces of nature than ethereal men and women. These forces, as the servile agents of the Occultists, may produce various effects; but if employed by "Elementaries" (*q.v.*) in which case they enslave the mediums—they will deceive the credulous. All the lower invisible beings generated on the 5th, 6th, and 7th *planes* of our terrestrial atmosphere, are called Elementals: Peris, Devs, Djins, Sylvans, Satyrs, Fauns, Elves, Dwarfs, Trolls, Kobolds, Brownies, Nixies, Goblins, Pinkies, Banshees, Moss People, White Ladies, Spooks, Fairies, etc., etc., etc. <sup>(TG)</sup>

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Thus, for instance in enumerating the seven lokas of the "Kama-Loka" the *Avatamsaka Sutra*,<sup>54</sup> gives as the *seventh*, the "Territory of Doubt." I will ask you to remember the name as we will have to speak of it hereafter.

Every such "world" within the Sphere of Effects has a Tathāgata, or "Dhyan Chohan" — to protect and watch over, not to interfere with it.

Of course, of all men, spiritualists will be the first to reject and throw off our doctrines to "the limbo of exploded superstitions." Were we to assure them that every one of their "Summerlands"<sup>55</sup> had seven boarding houses in it, with the same number of "Spirit Guides" to "boss" *in them*, and call these "angels," Saint Peters, Johns, and St. Ernests, they would welcome us with open arms.

But whoever heard of Tathāgat(a)s and Dhyan Chohans, Asuras and Elementals? Preposterous! Still, we are happily allowed — by our friends (Mr. Eglinton,<sup>56</sup> at least) — to be possessed "of a certain knowledge of Occult Sciences" (*Vide "Light"*). And thus, even this mite of "Knowledge" is at your service, and is now helping me to answer your following question:

Is there any intermediate condition between the spiritual beatitude of Deva-Chan, and the forlorn shadow life of the only half conscious elementary *reliquiae*<sup>57</sup> of human beings who have lost their sixth principle. Because if so that might give a *locus standi*<sup>58</sup> in imagination to the Ernests and Joeys of the spiritual mediums — the better sort of controlling "spirits." If so surely that must be a very populous world, from which any amount of "spiritual" communications might come.

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<sup>54</sup> The **Avatamsaka Sūtra** is one of the most influential Mahayana sutras of East Asian Buddhism. The title is rendered in English as Flower Garland Sutra, Flower Adornment Sutra, or Flower Ornament Scripture. The Sūtra describes a cosmos of infinite realms upon realms, mutually containing one another.

<sup>55</sup> **Summerland**. The name given by the American Spiritualists and Phenomenalists to the land or region inhabited after death by their "Spirits". It is situated, says Andrew Jackson Davis, either within or beyond the Milky Way. It is described as having cities and beautiful buildings, a Congress Hall, museums and libraries for the instruction of the growing generations of young "Spirits".

<sup>56</sup> **William Eglinton** (1857-1933) was a young English medium who went to India with the avowed purpose of investigating Theosophy. After a few years of acquaintance with Theosophy Mahatma K.H. visited him in his Māyāvi-Rūpa (or thought-body) on board a ship, and they had a long conversation according to *Readers Guide to The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.

<sup>57</sup> **Reliquiae**: fossil remains of animals or plants.

<sup>58</sup> **Locus standi** is a Latin phrase meaning "place to stand". It refers to whether or not someone has the right to be heard in court. People may use the term "standing" or "legal standing" to describe this concept.



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Alas, no; my friend; not that I know of. From "Sukhavati" down to the "Territory of Doubt" there is a variety of Spiritual States; but I am not aware of any such "intermediate condition."

I have told you of the Sakwalas (though I cannot be enumerating them since it would be useless); and even of *Avitchi* — the "Hell" from which there is no return,<sup>59</sup> and I have no more to tell about. "The forlorn shadow" has to do the best it can. As soon as it has stepped outside the *Kama-Loka*, and crossed the "Golden Bridge" leading to the "Seven Golden Mountains" the *Ego* can confabulate no more, with easy-going mediums. No "Ernest" or "Joey" has ever returned from the *Rupa Loka* — let alone the *Arupa-Loka* — to hold sweet intercourse with mortals.

Of course there is a "better sort" of *reliquiae*; and the "shells" or the "earth-walkers" as they are here called, are not necessarily *all* bad. But even those that are good, are made bad for the time being by mediums. The "shells" may well not care, since they have nothing to lose, anyhow. But there is another kind of "Spirits," we have lost sight of: the *suicides* and those *killed by accident*. Both kinds can communicate, and both have to pay dearly for such visits. And now I have again to explain what I mean.

Well, this class is the one that the French Spiritists call — "*les Esprits Souffrants*." <sup>60</sup> 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 opened 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, found 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 seventh and sixth principles, though not for ever, 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.

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<sup>59</sup> **KH:** In *Abidharma* Shastra (Metaphysics) we read: — "Buddha taught that on the *outskirts of all the Sakwalas*, there is a black interval, *without Sun or moonlight* for him who falls into it. There is *no re-birth* from it. It is the *cold Hell*, the great *Naraka*." This is *Avitchi*.

<sup>60</sup> **Les Esprits Souffrants** means "the suffering spirits" in French.

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In the *Kama-Loka*, the land of intense desires, they can gratify their earthly yearnings but 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 *Akasic 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 Deva-Chan — 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.

But if the victim of accident or violence, be neither very good, nor very bad — an average person — then this may happen to him. A medium who attracts him, will create for him the most undesirable of things: a new combination of *Skandhas* and a new and evil *Karma*. But let me give you a clearer idea of what I mean by *Karma* in this case.

In connection with this, let me tell you before, that since you seem so interested with the subject, you can do nothing better than to study the two doctrines — of *Karma* and Nirvana — as profoundly as you can. Unless you are thoroughly well acquainted with the two tenets — the double key to the metaphysics of Abidharma<sup>61</sup> — you will always find yourself at sea in trying to comprehend the rest. We have several sorts of Karma and Nirvana in their various applications — to the Universe, the world, Devas, Buddhas, Bodhisatwas, men and animals — the second including its seven kingdoms. Karma and Nirvana are but two of the seven great MYSTERIES of Buddhist metaphysics; and but four of the seven are known to the best orientalists, and that very imperfectly.

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<sup>61</sup> **Abhidharma** (Sanskrit) or Abhidhamma (Pāli) are ancient Buddhist texts which contain doctrinal material appearing in the Buddhist Sutras. <sup>(TSWiki)</sup> **Abhidharma** (Sk.). The metaphysical (third) part of *Tripitaka*, a very philosophical Buddhist work by Kātyāyana. <sup>(TG)</sup>

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If you ask a learned Buddhist priest what is Karma? — he will tell you that Karma is what a Christian might call Providence (in a certain sense only) and a Mahomedan — *Kismet*, fate or destiny (again in one sense).

That it is that cardinal tenet which teaches that, as soon as any conscious or sentient being, whether man, deva, or animal dies, a new being is produced and he or it reappears in another birth, on the same or another planet, under conditions of his or its own antecedent making.

Or, in other words that *Karma* is the guiding power, and *Trishna* (in Pali *Tanha*) the thirst or desire to sentiently live — the proximate <sup>62</sup> force or energy, the resultant of human (or animal) action, which, out of the old *Skandhas* <sup>63</sup> produce the new group that form the new being and control the nature of the birth itself.

Or to make it still clearer, the *new* being, is rewarded and punished for the meritorious acts and misdeeds of the *old* one; Karma representing an Entry Book, in which all the acts of man, good, bad, or indifferent, are carefully recorded to his debit and credit — by himself, so to say, or rather by these very actions of his.

There, where Christian poetical fiction created, and sees a "Recording" Guardian Angel, stern and realistic Buddhist logic, perceiving the necessity that every cause should have its effect — shows its real presence.

The opponents of Buddhism have laid great stress upon the alleged injustice that the doer should escape and an innocent victim be made to suffer, — since the doer and the sufferer are different beings.

The fact is, that while in one sense they may be so considered, yet in another *they are identical*.

The "old being" is the sole parent — father and mother at once — of the "new being." It is the former who is the creator and fashioner, of the latter, in reality; and far more so in plain truth, than any father in flesh. And once that you have well mastered the meaning of *Skandhas* you will see what I mean.

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<sup>62</sup> **Proximate** - Direct or immediate

<sup>63</sup> **KH:** I remark that in the second as well as in the first edition of your *Occult World* the same misprint appears, and that the word *Skandha* is spelt *Shandba* — on page 130. As it now stands I am made to express myself in a very original way for a *supposed* Adept.

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It is the group of Skandhas, that form and constitute the physical and mental individuality we call man (or any being). This group consists (in the exoteric teaching) of five Skandhas, namely:

*Rupa* — the material properties or attributes;

*Vedanā* — sensations;

*Sanna* — abstract ideas;

*Sankhārā* — tendencies both physical and mental;

and *Vinnana* — mental powers, an amplification of the fourth — meaning the mental, physical and moral predispositions.

We add to them two more, the nature and names of which you may learn hereafter. Suffice for the present to let you know that they are connected with, and productive of *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*,<sup>64</sup> the "heresy or delusion of individuality" and of *Attavāda*<sup>65</sup> "the doctrine of Self," both of which (in the case of the fifth principle the soul) lead to the *maya* of heresy and belief in the efficacy of vain rites and ceremonies; in prayers and intercession.

Now, returning to the question of identity between the *old* and the *new* "Ego." I may remind you once more, that even your Science has accepted the old, very old fact distinctly taught by our Lord,<sup>66</sup> *viz.* — that a man of any given age, while sentiently the same, is yet physically not the same as he was a few years earlier (we say *seven* years and are prepared to maintain and prove it): buddhistically speaking, his *Skandhas* have changed.

At the same time they are ever and ceaselessly at work in preparing the abstract mould, the "privation" of the future *new* being.

Well then, if it is just that a man of 40 should enjoy or suffer for the actions of the man of 20, so it is equally just that the being of the new birth, who is essentially identical with the previous being — since he is its outcome and creation — should feel the consequences of that begetting Self or personality.

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<sup>64</sup> **Sakkāya-diṭṭhi** (Pāli) is the wrong idea that we are the personality formed by the skandhas. (TSWiki)

<sup>65</sup> **Attavāda** (Pāli) refers to the illusion of the existence one's self as a substantial and permanent entity. (TSWiki)

<sup>66</sup> **KH:** See the *Abhidharma Kosha Vyākhyā*, the *Sutta Pitaka*, any Northern Buddhist book, all of which show Gautama Buddha saying that none of these Skandhas is the soul; since the body is constantly changing, and that neither man, animal, nor plant is ever the same for two consecutive days or even minutes. "Mendicants! remember that there is within man *no abiding principle* whatever, and that only the *learned* disciple who acquires wisdom, in saying '*I am*' — knows what he is saying."

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Your Western law which punishes the innocent son of a guilty father by depriving him of his parent, rights and property; your civilized Society which brands with infamy the guileless<sup>67</sup> daughter of an immoral, criminal mother; your Christian Church and Scriptures which teach that the "Lord God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" are not all these far more unjust and cruel than anything done by Karma? Instead of punishing the innocent together with the culprit, the Karma *avenges and rewards the former*, which neither of your three western potentates <sup>68</sup> above mentioned ever thought of doing.

But perhaps, to our physiological remark the objectors may reply that it is only the body that changes, there is only a molecular transformation, which has nothing to do with the mental evolution; and that the *Skandhas* represent not only a material but also a set of mental and moral qualities.

But is there, I ask, either a sensation, an abstract idea, a tendency of mind, or a mental power, that one could call an absolutely non-molecular phenomenon? Can even a sensation or the most abstract of thoughts which is *something*, come out of *nothing*, or be nothing?

Now, the causes producing the "new being" and determining the nature of *Karma* are, as already said — *Trishna* (or "Tanha") — thirst, desire for sentient existence and *Upadana*<sup>69</sup> — which is the realization or consummation of *Trishna* or that desire. And both of these the medium helps to awaken and to develop *nec plus ultra*<sup>70</sup> in an Elementary, be he a suicide or a victim. <sup>71</sup>

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.*, in the *Kama-Loka*. But exceptions are, in the case of suicides and those who die a violent death in general. Hence, one of such Egos, for instance, 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."

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<sup>67</sup> **Guileless** - free of deceit; characterized by honesty and fairness

<sup>68</sup> **Potentate** - One who has the power and position to rule over others

<sup>69</sup> **Upādāna** is the Sanskrit and Pāli word for "clinging," "attachment" or "grasping". (TSWiki)

<sup>70</sup> **Nec plus ultra** is a French expression meaning the acme or highest point. "nothing further beyond"; state-of-the-art; ultimate

<sup>71</sup> **KH**: Alone the Shells and the Elementals are left unhurt, though the morality of the sensitives can by no means be improved by the intercourse.

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

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* will 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 was 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 a series of untold evils for the new Ego that will be born under its nefarious shadow, and that with every séance — especially for materialization — 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 lavishing their hospitality.

And now, you may understand why we oppose so strongly Spiritualism and mediumship. And, you will also see, why, to satisfy Mr. Hume, — at least in one direction, — I got myself into a *scrape* with the Chohan, and *mirabile dictu!*<sup>72</sup> — with both the sahibs,<sup>73</sup> "the young men by the name of" — Scott<sup>74</sup> and Banon.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> **Mirabile dictu** - (Latin) amazing to say; strange to say; marvelous to relate.

<sup>73</sup> **Sahib** means "friend" in Arabic and was commonly used in the Indian Sub-continent as a courteous term in the way that "Mr." and "Mrs." are used in the English language. (TSWiki)

<sup>74</sup> **Ross Scott** met the Founders aboard the ship "Speke Hall" in February 1879, as they were sailing to Bombay. He was a young Irishman and British civil servant who was on his way to his post in North India. Col. Olcott called him "a noble fellow and an Irishman of the better sort". A. P. Sinnett, however, considered him coarse fibered. Master K.H. asked Mr. Sinnett: "I have a favour to ask of you: try and make friends with Ross Scott. I need him". On August 21, 1881, he was chosen as secretary of the newly formed Simla Eclectic Theosophical Society. (TSWiki)

<sup>75</sup> **Capt. A. Banon**, fellow of the Theosophical Society and British Army Officer who supported the Founders in the controversy with the Rev. Joseph Cook. However, Banon must have written something against KH, since in ML 16 (68), p. 119, KH speaks of the "Banon papyrus" which contained "a severe literary thrashing of my humble self." (TSWiki)

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

To amuse you, I will ask H.P.B. to send you with this a page of the "Banon papyrus," an article of his that he winds up with a severe literary *thrashing* of my humble self. Shadows of the Asuras, in what a passion she flew upon reading this rather disrespectful criticism! I am sorry she does not print it, upon considerations of "family honour" as the "Disinherited"<sup>76</sup> expressed it.

As to the Chohan, the matter is more serious; and, he was far from satisfied that I should have allowed Eglinton<sup>77</sup> to believe it was *myself*. He had permitted this proof of the power in *living man* to be given to the Spiritualists through a medium of theirs, but had left the programme and its details to ourselves; hence his displeasure at some trifling consequences. I tell you, my dear friend, that I am far less free to do as I like than you are in the matter of the *Pioneer*.<sup>78</sup> None of us but the highest Chutuktus<sup>79</sup> are their full masters. But I digress.

And now that you have been told much and had explained a good deal, you may as well read this letter to our irrepressible friend — Mrs. Gordon.<sup>80</sup> The reasons given *may* throw some cold water on her Spiritualistic zeal, though I have my reasons to doubt it. Anyhow it may show her that it is not against *true* Spiritualism that we set ourselves, but only against indiscriminate mediumship and — physical manifestations, — materializations and trance-possession especially.

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<sup>76</sup> **Disinherited** - Djual Khool (also spelled Gjual-Khul) was a chela of Mahatma K.H. at the beginning of the correspondence the latter and Mahatma Morya held with A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume . . . Djual Khool is frequently referred to in the letters as the Disinherited, a nickname given him because he was disinherited by his Brahmin family when he became a chela of the Mahatma K.H. (TSWiki)

<sup>77</sup> **William Eglinton** (1857-1933) was a young English medium who went to India with the avowed purpose of investigating Theosophy. After a few years of acquaintance with Theosophy Mahatma K.H. visited him in his Māyāvi-Rūpa (or thought-body) on board a ship, and they had a long conversation. (TSWiki)

<sup>78</sup> **The Pioneer** was an Anglo-Indian newspaper founded in Allahabad in 1865 by George Allen, an Englishman who had had great success in the tea business in north-east India in the previous decade. It issued a weekly as well as a daily edition (circulation of 5,000). In 1872, Alfred Percy Sinnett became the editor of the newspaper, and oversaw the transformation of the newspaper to one of exercising great influence in British India. (TSWiki)

<sup>79</sup> **Chutuktu** (Tibetan). An incarnation of Buddha or of some Bodhisattva, as believed in Tibet, where there are generally five manifesting and two secret Chutuktus among the high Lamas. (TG)

<sup>80</sup> **Mrs. Alice Gordon** and her husband, Lt. Col. William Gordon, members of the TS, residents of Calcutta and friends of APS, AOH, and the Founders. They were primarily interested in spiritualism. The Gordons were hosts to the medium, William Eglinton. (TSWiki)

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

Could the Spiritualists be only made to understand the difference between *individuality* and *personality*, between *individual* and *personal* immortality and some other truths, they would be more easily persuaded that Occultists may be fully convinced of the *monad's* immortality, and yet deny that of the soul — the vehicle of the *personal Ego*; that they can firmly believe in, and themselves practice spiritual communications and intercourse with the *disembodied Egos* of the *Rupa-Loka*, and yet laugh at the insane idea of "shaking hands" with a "Spirit"!; that finally, that as the matter stands, it is the Occultists and the Theosophists who are true Spiritualists, while the modern sect of that name is composed simply of *materialistic* phenomenalists.

And once that we are discussing "individuality" and "personality," it is curious that H.P.B. when subjecting poor Mr. Hume's brain to torture with her muddled explanations, never thought — until receiving the explanation from himself, of the difference that exists between individuality and personality — that it was the very same doctrine she had been taught: that of *Paccika-Yana*, and of *Amita-Yana*.

The two terms as above given by him are the correct and literal translation of the Pali, Sanskrit, and even of the Chino-Tibetan technical names for the many *personal entities* blended in one *Individuality* — the long string of lives emanating from the same Immortal MONAD. You will have to remember them: —

(I) The *Paccika Yana* — (in Sanskrit "Pratyeka") means literally — the "personal vehicle" or *personal Ego*, a combination of the five lower principles. While —

(II) The *Amita-Yana* — (in Sanskrit "Amrita") is translated: "The immortal vehicle," or the *Individuality*, the Spiritual Soul, or the Immortal monad — a combination of the fifth, sixth and seventh. <sup>81</sup>

It appears to me that one of our great difficulties in trying to understand the progress of affairs turns on our ignorance so far of the *divisions* of the seven principles. Each has in turn its seven elements we are told: can we be told something more concerning the seven-fold constitution of the fourth and fifth principles especially? It is evidently in the divisibility of these that the secret of the future and of many psychic phenomena here during life, resides.

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<sup>81</sup> **KH:** To avoid a fresh surprise and confusion at the news of the fifth keeping company with the sixth and seventh, please turn to page 3, *et seq.* [answer to question 5 above]



## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

Quite right. But I must be permitted to doubt whether with the desired explanations the difficulty will be removed, and you will become able to penetrate "the secret of psychic phenomena."

You, my good friend, whom I had once or twice the pleasure of hearing playing on your piano in the quiet intervals between dress-coating and a beef-and-claret dinner — tell me, could you favour me as readily, as with one of your easy *waltzes* — with one of Beethoven's Grand Sonatas? Pray, pray have patience! Yet, I would not refuse you by any means. You will find the fourth and the fifth principles, divided into roots and Branches on a fly-sheet herein enclosed, if I find time. <sup>82</sup> And now, how long do you propose to abstain from interrogation marks? <sup>83</sup>

Faithfully,

K. H.

P.S. — I hope I have now removed all cause for reproaches — my delay in answering your queries notwithstanding, — and that my character is re-established. Yourself and Mr. Hume have received now more information about the A.E. Philosophy <sup>84</sup> than was ever given out to *non-initiates* within my knowledge. Your sagacity, my kind friend, will have suggested long ago, that it is not so much because of your combined personal virtues — though Mr. Hume I must confess, has run up a large claim since his *conversion* — or my personal preferences for either of you, as for other and very *apparent* reasons. Of all our semi-chelas you two are the most likely to utilize for the general good the facts given you. You must regard them received in trust for the benefit of the whole Society; to be turned over, and employed and re-employed in many ways and in all ways that are good. If you (Mr. Sinnett) would give pleasure to your trans-Himalayan friend, do not suffer any month to pass without writing a *Fragment*,<sup>85</sup> long or short for the magazine, and then, issuing it as a pamphlet — since you so call it. You may sign them as "A Lay-Chela of K.H.," or in any way you choose. I dare not ask the same favour of Mr. Hume, who has already done more than his share in another direction.

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<sup>82</sup> **KH**: I did *not* find time. Will send it a day or two later.

<sup>83</sup> KH showed his sense of humor "when he was growing tired of Sinnett's unending questions."  
(Abdill, Edward, *Masters of Wisdom*, 34)

<sup>84</sup> **A.E. Philosophy** probably stands for "Arhat-Esoteric Philosophy". (TSWiki)

<sup>85</sup> **Fragment** refers to the column Fragments of Occult Truth. (TSWiki)

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

I will not answer your query about your *Pioneer* connection just now: something may be said on both sides. But at least take no rash decision. We are at the end of the cycle, and you are connected with the T.S. Under favour of my Karma — I mean to answer to-morrow Mr. Hume's long and kind personal letter. The abundance of MSS. from me of late shows that I have found a little leisure. Their blotched, patchy and mended appearance also proves that my leisure has come by snatches, with constant interruptions, and that my writing has been done in odd places here and there, with such materials as I could pick up. But for the *Rule* that forbids our using one minim of power until every ordinary means has been tried and failed, I might, of course, have given you a lovely "precipitation" as regards chirography<sup>86</sup> and composition. I console myself for the miserable appearance of my letters with the thought that perhaps, you may not value them the less, for these marks of my personal subjection to the way-side annoyances which you English so ingeniously reduce to a *minimum* with your appliances of sorts. As your lady<sup>87</sup> once kindly remarked, they take away most effectually the flavour of miracle, and make us as human beings, more thinkable entities, — a wise reflection for which I thank her.

H.P.B. is in despair: the Chohan<sup>88</sup> refused permission to M. to let her come this year further than the Black Rock, and M. very coolly made her unpack her trunks. Try to console her, if you can. Besides, she is really wanted more at Bombay than Penlor. Olcott is on his way to Lanka and Damodar<sup>89</sup> packed up to Poona for a month, his foolish austerities and hard work having broken down his physical constitution. I will have to look after him, and perhaps, to take him away, if it comes to the worst.

Just now I am able to give you a bit of information, which bears upon the so often discussed question of our allowing phenomena. The Egyptian operations of your blessed countrymen involve such local consequences to the body of Occultists still remaining there and to what they are guarding, that two of our adepts are already there, having joined some Druze brethren and three more on their way. I was offered the agreeable privilege of becoming an eye-witness to the human butchery, but — declined with thanks. For such great emergencies is our Force stored up, and hence — we dare not waste it on fashionable tamasha.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> **Chirography** - another name for calligraphy; handwriting; penmanship.

<sup>87</sup> **Patience Edensor Sinnett** was an English Theosophist who knew H. P. Blavatsky in the earliest days of the Theosophical Society in India, and wife of Alfred Percy Sinnett. (TSWiki)

<sup>88</sup> **Chohan** is a word that according to H. P. Blavatsky means "'Lord' or 'Master'; a chief." (TSWiki)

<sup>89</sup> **Damodar K. Mavalankar** (born September 1857 in Ahmedabad) was an Indian Theosophist and a chela of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. (TSWiki)

<sup>90</sup> **Tamasha**, show, display; trick, jugglery, performance of phenomena. (The Working Glossary - 1892 | W. Q. Judge)

## The Soul's Journey through Life and Death – Part 5

Mahatma Letter No.68 - The Devachan Letter

In about a week — new religious ceremonies, new glittering bubbles to amuse the babes with, and once more I will be busy night and day, morning, noon, and evening. At times I feel a passing regret that the Chohans should not evolve the happy idea of allowing us also a "sumptuary allowance" in the shape of a little spare time. Oh, for the final Rest! for that Nirvana where — "to be one with Life, yet — to live not." Alas, alas! having personally realized that: —

" . . . the Soul of Things is sweet,  
The Heart of Being is celestial Rest,"  
one does long for — eternal REST!

Yours,

K. H.