

Master KH on The Panoramic Vision at Death

Letter received by A.P. Sinnett, around October 1882

Questions by APS

[16] You say: — “Remember we create ourselves, our Devachan and our Avitchi, and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our sentient lives.”

[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 chance which brought some special thought uppermost at last?

Answers by Master KH

[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.

[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. 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.¹

¹ Good gracious! Had I forgotten in my hurry to add the last *five words*, would not I have caught it as a charge of *flat* contradiction!



No man dies insane or unconscious — as some physiologists assert. Even a *mad-man*, 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 over again. Speak in whispers, ye, who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have you to keep quiet just after Death² 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 its reflection upon the Veil of the Future.³



² Cf. "Twelve hours at least had to elapse between the death of the person and the burning or the destruction by any other means of the corpse of the dead. This old law was equally forgotten by the Brahmins as by the Zoroastrians. It was not the act of *burning* that was forbidden, but the burning before the corpse was empty, *viz.* before the inner principles had had time to get entirely liberated." *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE EFFICACY OF FUNERAL CEREMONIES) IV p. 508 *fn.*

³ Sinnett's questions 16 & 17 excerpted from Mahātma Letter 23B p. 143 (Combined ed.), 93B p. 306 (Chronological ed.); Master KH's answers from pp. 167 and 326, respectively. [Also refer to H.P. Blavatsky's amplifications on the subject in: *Collected Writings*, (MEMORY IN THE DYING) XI pp. 446-53 — ED. PHIL.]

