

*Devachan, dream realm where
pure souls are rewarded*



Devachan¹ is not the western paradise of the uneducated rabble.

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¹ Boris de Zirkoff on the meaning of the term Devachan:

Devachan or *Devakhan* is not “the place consecrated to the Devas, i.e., a state of such bliss as Devas or Angels are supposed to enjoy.”

This error occurs in more than one place and should be corrected. *Devachan* is a Tibetan word; when transliterated from Tibetan characters, it would be *bde-ba-chan*, meaning a sphere or realm or state of unalloyed happiness. It is a term analogous to the Sanskrit word *Sukhāvati*. The Sanskrit word *deva* does not enter into the composition of this Tibetan term. (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN – IV) XI p. 499 & fn.)

There are states and states, and degrees upon degrees in Devachan

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The devachanic mind is capable only of the highest spiritual ideation, that neither objects of the grosser senses nor anything provocative of displeasure could even be apprehended by it. 18



Western stricture and Eastern version

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The memorandum that follows emanates from a British Theosophist. It was sent to “Lay Chela,” author of *Esoteric Buddhism*,¹ in response to whose desire that the objections should be explained away, the three Replies subjoined have been sent. They come from three different sources. — *Editor, The Theosophist*.²

Memorandum

It seems to me that our misunderstanding arises from the use of inconsistent language in these teachings. We constantly hear of the “*dreamers* in Devachan,” of the “subjective *isolation*” of this state. And then we are forthwith reproached for regarding it as “less real” than our present condition! Take the case of the association of friends there. What we want to know is whether there is any REAL intercourse of personalities — of 5th principle — there. No. VI of *Fragments* in *March Theosophist* and Appendix C, p. 136, professes to explain this, but leaves it still doubtful. Of course for the disembodied consciousness in Devachan the bodily presence which to us here is the outward and visible sign of intercourse can have no reality. It was surely unnecessary to insist much upon the fact. “Two sympathetic souls,” we are told, “both disembodied, will each work out its own Devachanic sensations, making the other a sharer in its subjective bliss. This will be as real to them, naturally, as though both were yet on this earth.” So far so good; the truth and reality of the intercourse seem to be quite unmistakably affirmed, though of course the *mode* of the intercourse is not such as we can at present recognize from experience. But in the next passage our doubt revives. “Nevertheless, each is dissociated from the other as regards personal or corporeal association.”³ As regards corporeal, granted, but what as regards *personal*, since it is just the personal, 5th principle, consciousness that survives in Devachan? Here are two disembodied personal consciousness in Devachan. Are they really and truly affected the one by the other so as to constitute a veritable *intercourse*, or is it merely that the one personality *imagines* the presence of the other, as taking that image to be reality, whereas it does not correspond with any fact of which the other personality could take cognizance? I deny that I am “postulating an incongruity” in objecting that such an “intercourse” is *not* real, is “a mere dream,” for I *can* conceive a *real* in-

¹ [A.P. Sinnett]

² [There is evidence to show that these replies were received, as in so many other cases, through the instrumentality of H.P. Blavatsky Portions of the text may have been actually written by her. In this connection, Master K.H., in a letter to A.P. Sinnett, received in London about July, 1883, says:

Again and once more, an attempt has been made to dispel some of that great mist that I find in Mr. Massey’s *Devachan*. It will appear as a contribution in the August number of *The Theosophist*, and to that I shall refer Mr. Massey and yourself . . . (*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 333)

— *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

³ If we understand the spirit of the objection at all, it rests simply upon a mistake. The conjunction placed between the words “personal” and “corporeal” is sufficient to show that the term *personal* stands here for “external” or “bodily.” Why should it then be taken in the sense of the mental representation of a personality? The “or” makes the two adjectives identical. — *Ed.*

tercourse — conscious on both sides and truly acting and reacting — which does *not* apply “only to the mutual relationship of physical existence.”

It is asked “. . . what *actual* companionship could there ever be other than the purely idealistic one as above described, between two *subjective* entities which are not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow — the *Māyāvi-rūpa*?” Now actual companionship implies the mutual action and reaction of consciousness — which need not be by any bodily mediation whatever. *You* must really and truly affect *me*, and I must know that you are in this sense (the most real of all) present with me, and *vice versa*. Anything short of that, any subjective consciousness of mine, whereby some representation of you arises in me if not correspondent to, and caused by, some act or thought of yours, is a mere dream, and I am ‘*cheated by nature*’ if I am made to believe what is not the *fact*. What we want to know, and cannot quite make out from these teachings, is whether Devachan is a state corresponding to our waking life here, or to our sleep with dreams? The former we call real and true, the latter fictitious.

The whole doubt arises out of the following statement: “The person whose happiness of the higher sort on earth had been entirely cantered in the exercise of the affections” [that is the case with few of us — enough that the affections are an essential element of our higher happiness] “will miss none in Devachan of those whom he or she loved. But at once it will be asked, if some of these are not themselves fit for Devachan, how then? The answer is, that does not matter. For the person who loved them *they will be there*.” And then it is truly pointed out that there is nothing absolutely real in what is objective to us here — all is relative. “As real as the realities of this world to us, and even more so, will be the realities of Devachan to those who go into that state.” But it will not be denied that there is a real intercourse between personalities here, albeit, by very imperfect and not essentially real *means*. Your body, and the voice I hear, as well as my body and those organs of sense by which I hear, are mere phenomena, at least as unreal to a spiritual consciousness, as spirits are unperceived and therefore unreal to us. But you and I are not unreal. There *is* real intercourse between us. Through our present defective means, it is true that you are very imperfectly, very partially, *with me* — I only get a symbol of *your* presence. Still it is a perfectly honest symbol as far as it goes, and you are really speaking to me when I hear you. I do not merely seem to myself to hear you, who may be absent or non-existent all the while. But if in Devachan I can realistically imagine the presence the living, communicating presence — of someone who is not there; what security have I that I am truly in communication with anyone who *is* there? *Am* I truly in such communication in any case? Or is each personality perfectly secluded and isolated, merely feigning and dreaming the companions around it, you of me, and I of you, even though we are both really in the same state, and might just as well be really in each other’s company? But again, how, for anyone who had attained the conception of Devachan in earth life — you and I for instance — would such dreams be *possible*? Why, we should know perfectly well all the time that we were merely dreaming, and then the dream would lose all its apparent reality — and we should in fact be *awake*. I should know that the friend I have left on earth is there still, and that

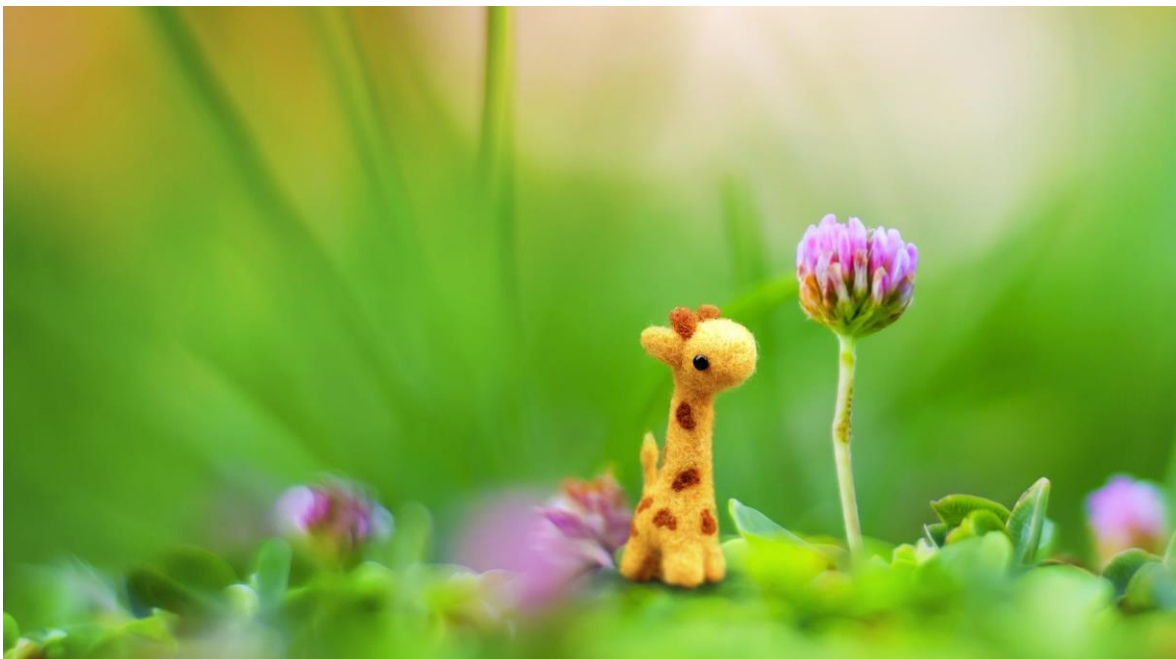
what of him seems to be with me is a mere subjective image of my own. I should know that because I have learned the doctrine of Devachan, and because “the continuity of our speculative ideas is one of the characteristics of Devachan,” as you explained to me the other night.¹

There seems to be one way out of this, and I should like to know if that is the true idea. It may be that for the Devachanī, that which is only future and potential for us here, is actual and present. Say that you are in Devachan, I upon earth. I of course *as* a person upon earth should have only that objective consciousness. But my higher personality, though not yet translated into terms of my objective consciousness, may all this while have a subjective consciousness of its own, that into which I shall come, and with which I shall identify myself in Devachan. And you in Devachan might be *en rapport* with this higher subjective consciousness of mine. You would thus know all that is best in me, all that in me which is in most affinity with your own Devachanic consciousness. Yet it would still be only so much of my 5th principle as is *capable* of elevation into the Devachanic state.

I have of course a great deal more to ask, but will not try your patience with more now.

* * *

30th April 1883



¹ See Reply II. — *Ed.*

From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness to the dream that never dies

Occultism postulates an ascending scale of subjectivity, which grows continually more real as it gets farther and farther from illusionary earthly objectivity towards its ultimate Reality, Parabrahman.

Reply I

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE REAL AND THE UNREAL) V pp. 74-81.

“The perfect consciousness that ‘I am Brahma’
Removes the false appearances projected
By Ignorance . . . Know that indeed as Brahma —
Nothing exists but Brahma, when aught else
Appears to be ‘tis like the mirage false. . . .”
— Śamkarāchārya, *Ātma-bodha* (Knowledge of Soul)

The “misunderstanding” arises from a natural misconception of the sense in which certain terms are made use of rather than from any “inconsistent language” used. The alternative of moving for ever in a vicious circle faces the European student of Occult philosophy, who begins his study before having made himself familiar with the technical mode of thought and peculiarity of expression of its teachers. His first necessity is, to know the esoteric views of the ultimate nature of Spirit, of Matter, Force and Space; the fundamental and axiomatic theories as to the Reality and Unreality, Form and the Formless (*rūpa* and *a-rūpa*), dream and waking.¹ Especially should he master — at least approximately — the distinction between the “objective” and the “subjective” in the living man’s sensuous perceptions and the same as they appear to the psychic perceptions of a disembodied entity (Devachanī). It will not strengthen his case to put forth the objection that “the mode of the intercourse is not such as we can at present recognize from experience”; in other words, that until one becomes a “Devachanī” one cannot enter into sympathy with his feelings or perceptions. For, the disembodied individuality being identical in nature with the higher *triad* of the living man, when liberated as the result of *self*-evolution effected by the full development of conscious and trained will, the adept can through this triad learn all that concerns the Devachanī; live for the time being his mental life, feel as he feels, and sharing thoroughly in his supersensuous perceptions, bring back with him on earth the memory of the same, unwarped by *māyāvic* deceptions, hence not to be gain-said. This, of course, assuming the existence of such *lusus naturae*² as an

¹ The Vedanta philosophy teaches as much as Occult philosophy that our *monad* during its life on earth as a *triad* (7th, 6th, and 5th principles), has, besides the condition of pure intelligence, three conditions; namely, waking, dreaming, and *sushupti* — a state of *dreamless* deep — from the standpoint of terrestrial conceptions; of real, actual soul-life — from the occult standpoint. While man is either *dreamlessly*, profoundly asleep or in a trance state, the *triad* (Spirit, Soul and Mind) enters into perfect union with the Paramātma, the Supreme Universal Soul. — *Ed.*

² [freaks of nature]

“adept,” which may, perhaps, be conceded by the objectors for the sake of argument. And the further concession must be asked that no comparison shall be made to the adept’s detriment between the perceptive powers of his triad, when so freed from the body, and those of the half liberated monad¹ of the entranced somnambule or medium which is having its dazed glimpses into the “celestial arcana.” Still less, is it allowable to gauge them by the reveries of an embodied mind, however cultured and metaphysical, which has no data to build upon, save the deductions and inductions which spring from its own normal activity.

However much European students may seem to have outgrown the crude beliefs of their earlier years, yet a special study of Asiatic mental tendencies is indispensable to qualify them to grasp the meaning of Asiatic expressions. In a word, they may have out-grown their hereditary ideas only far enough to qualify them as critics of the same; and not sufficiently to determine what is “inconsistent language” or consistent, of Eastern thinkers. Difference in the resources of language is also a most important factor to keep in mind. This is well illustrated in the alleged reply of an Oriental visiting Europe, when asked to contrast Christianity with Buddhism: “It requires an Index or glossary; for it (Christianity) has not the ideas for our words, nor the words for our ideas.” Every attempt to explain the doctrines of Occultism in the meagre terminology of European science and metaphysics to students ignorant of our terms, is likely to result in disastrous misunderstandings despite good intentions on both sides. Unquestionably, such expressions as “life real in a dream” must appear inconsistent to a dualist who affirms the eternity of the individual soul, its independent existence, as distinct from the Supreme Soul or Paramātma, and maintains the *actuality* of (the personal) God’s nature. What more natural than that the Western thinker, whose inferences are drawn from quite a different line of thought, should feel bewilderment when told that the Devachanic life is “reality” — though a dream, while earthly life is but “a flitting dream” — though imagined an actuality. It is certain that Prof. Balfour Stewart — great physicist though he be — would not comprehend the meaning of our Oriental philosophers, since his hypothesis of an unseen universe, with his premises and conclusions, is built upon the emphatic assumption of the actual existence of a personal God, the personal Creator, and personal moral Governor of the Universe. Nor would the Mussulman philosopher with his two eternities — *azl*, that eternity which has no beginning, and *abd*, that other eternity having a beginning but no end; nor the Christian who makes every man’s eternity begin (!) at the moment when the personal God breathes a personal soul into the personal body — comprehend us. Neither of these three representatives of beliefs could, without the greatest difficulty, concur in the perfect reasonableness of the doctrine of Devachanic life.

When the word “subjective” is used in connection with the state of isolation of the Devachanī, it does not stand for the ultimate possible concept of subjectivity, but only for that degree of the same thinkable by the Western *non-Oriental* mind. To the latter everything is subjective without distinction which evades all sensuous percep-

¹ [Note to Students: Monad (*μοναδα*, in Greek) is the accusative case of *μονα*. However, as the term is here used in the nominative case (*μονα*), i.e., the subject of the verb, it should be transliterated as monas (*pl.* monases), i.e., the object of the verb, and not as monad (*pl.* monads). The same grammatical rule applies to duad, triad, tetrad, pentad, hexad, heptad, ogdoad, hebdomad, decad, etc. — ED. PHIL.]

tions. But the Occultist postulates an ascending scale of subjectivity which grows continually more real as it gets farther and farther from illusionary earthly objectivity: its ultimate, *Reality* — Parabrahm.

Those molecules, which, begotten by sensation, remain behind when it has passed away, constitute the physical foundation of memory; hence also the foundation of all dreams.

But Devachan being “but a dream,” we should agree upon a definition of the phenomena of dreams. Has memory anything to do with them? We are told by some physiologists it has. That the dream-fancies being based upon dormant memory,¹ are determined and developed in most cases by the functional activity of some internal organ, “the irritation of which awakens into activity that part of the brain with which the organ is in specific sympathy.”

To this, bowing reverentially to modern science, the Occultist replies that there are dreams and dreams. That there is a difference between a dream produced by outward physiological causes, and the one which reacts and becomes in its turn the producer of super-sensuous perceptions and feelings. That he divides dreams into the phenomenal and the noumenal, and distinguishes between the two; and that, moreover, the physiologist is entirely unfit to comprehend the ultimate constitution of a disembodied *Ego* — hence the nature of *its* “dreams.” This, he does for several reasons, of which one may be particularly noticed: the physiologist rejects *a priori* WILL, the chief and indispensable factor of the inner man. He refuses to recognize it apart from particular acts of volition, and declares that he knows only the latter, viewed by him simply as a reaction or desire of determination of energy outward, after . . . “the complex interworking and combination of ideas in the hemispherical ganglia.” Hence the physiologist would have to reject at once the possibility of consciousness — *minus* memory; and the Devachanī having no organs, no sensory ganglia, no “educated” nor even “idiotic centres,”² nor nerve-cells, cannot naturally have that, what the physiologists would regard and define as memory. Unfettered from the *personal* sensations of the *manas*, the devachanic consciousness would certainly have to become universal or *absolute* consciousness, with no past as with no future, the two merging into one eternal PRESENT — but for the trammels of the personal *Ego*. But even the latter, once severed from its bodily organs, can have no such memory as defined by Professor Huxley, who fathers it upon the “sensigenous molecules” of the brain — those molecules, which, begotten by sensation, remain behind when it has passed away, and that constitute, we are told, the physical foundation of memory; hence also the foundation of all dreams. What can these molecules have to do with the ethereal atoms that act in the spiritual consciousness of the monad, during its bliss wholly based and depending upon the degree of its connection with only the *essence* of the personal *Ego*!

¹ One of the paradoxes of modern physiology seems to be that “the more sure and perfect memory becomes, the more unconscious it becomes.” (See *Body and Mind*, by H. Maudsley, M.D.)

² Professor Maudsley’s expressions.

During sleep, as volition is rendered passive and unconscious by the temporary inactivity of the sensory centres, Manas is allowed the freedom of its conscious action and therefore perceives the reality of the subjective world which was hidden from it in waking hours.

What may then be the nature of the Devachanic dream — we are asked — and how does the occultist define the dream of the still embodied man? To Western science a dream is a series of thoughts, of connected acts or rather “states,” which are *only imagined to be real*. The uninitiated metaphysician, on the other hand, describes it in his exoteric way, as the passage of sense from darkness into light — the awakening of spiritual consciousness. But the occultist, who knows that the spiritual sense pertaining to the *immutable* can never sleep or even be dormant *per se*, and is always in the “Light” of reality, says that during the state of sleep, *Manas* (the seat of the physical and personal intelligence) becomes able — its containing vehicle *Kāma*, the WILL, being allowed the full freedom of its conscious action owing to *volition* being rendered passive, and unconscious by the temporary inactivity of the sensory centres — to perceive that reality in the subjective world which was hidden from it in waking hours. That reality does not become less real, because upon awakening the “sensitive molecules,” and “uneducated centres” throw and toss in the *māyāvic* light of actual life the recollection and even the remembrance of it into confusion. But the participation of the *manas* in the Devachanic bliss, does not add to, but on the contrary takes away from, the reality that would fall to the lot of the monad were it altogether free from its presence. Its bliss is an outcome of *Sakkāyaditthi*, the delusion or “heresy of individuality,” which heresy, together with the *attavādic* chain of causes, is necessary for the monad’s future birth. It is all this that leads the occultist to regard the association or “intercourse” between two disembodied entities in the Devachan — however *more real than life* it may be as an illusion, and from his standpoint still “a dream,” and so to speak of it; while that which his critics would fain call — however regretfully — dreams — “the interludes which fancy makes” — is in the knowledge of the former simply glimpses of the Reality.

Death is powerless to sever strong psychic association between individuals when bonded by pure spiritual love on earth.

Let us take an instance: a son loses a much beloved father. In his dreams he may see and converse with him, and for the time it lasts feel as happy and unconscious of his death as though the father had never left this earth. This upon awakening, he will regard with sorrow as a mere dream that could not last. Is he right to so regard it? The occultist says that he is wrong. He is simply ignorant of the fact that his spirit being of the same essence and nature as that of his father — as all spirits are — and the inherent property of mutual attraction and assimilation being in their special case strengthened by the paternal and filial love of their personal *Egos* — that they have, in fact, *never separated from each other*, death itself being powerless to sever psychic association there, where pure spiritual love links the two. The “dream” was in this instance *the reality*; the latter a *māyā*, a false appearance due to *avidyā* (false notions). Thus it becomes more correct and proper to call the son’s ignorance during his waking hours a “dream” and “a delusion,” than to so characterize the *real* intercourse. For what has happened? A Spiritualist would say: “the spirit of the father *descended* upon earth to hold communion with his son’s spirit, during the quiet hours

of sleep.” The Occultist replies: “Not so; neither the father’s *spirit* descended, nor has the son’s triad ascended (strictly and correctly speaking).” The centre of Devachanic activity cannot be localized: it is again *avidyā*. Monads during that time even when connected with their five finite *Kośas* (sheaths or principles) know neither space nor time, but are diffused throughout the former, are omnipresent and ubiquitous. *Manas* in its higher aspect is *dravya* — an eternal “substance” as well as the *Buddhi*, the spiritual soul — when this aspect is developed; and united with the Soul *Manas* becomes spiritual *self*-consciousness, which is a *Vikāra* (a production) of its original “producer” *Buddhi*.¹ Unless made utterly unfit, by its having become hopelessly mixed with, and linked to, its lower *Tanmātras*, to become one with *Buddhi*, it is inseparable from it. Thus the higher human triad, drawn by its affinity to those triads it loved most, with *Manas* in its highest aspect of self-consciousness — (which is entirely disconnected with, and has no need as a channel of the internal organ of physical sense called *antah-karana*)² — helping, it is ever associated with, and enjoys the presence of all those it loves — in death, as much as it did in life. The intercourse is *real and genuine*.

The critic doubts whether such an intercourse can be called a “veritable one.” He wants to know whether the two disembodied entities are “really and truly affected the one by the other”; or, “is it merely that the one personality *imagines* the presence of the other,” such intercourse corresponding with no fact “of which the other personality [either embodied or disembodied] could take cognizance”; and while doubting, he denies that he is “‘postulating an incongruity in objecting that such an ‘intercourse’ is *not* real, is a ‘mere dream,’” for he says, he “*can* conceive a *real* intercourse conscious on both sides and truly acting and reacting — which does *not* apply ‘only to the mutual relationship of physical existence.’” If he really *can*, then where is the difficulty complained of? The real meaning attached by the occultist to such words as dream, reality, and unreality, having been explained, what further trouble is there to comprehend this specific tenet? The critic may also be asked, how he can conceive of a real conscious intercourse on both sides, unless he understands the peculiar, and — to him as yet unknown — intellectual reaction and inter-relation between the two. [This sympathetic reaction is no fanciful hypothesis but a scientific fact known and taught at initiations, though unknown to modern science and but hazily perceived by some metaphysicians — spiritualists.]³ Or is it that, alternatively, he anthropomorphises Spirit — in the spiritualistic mistaken sense? Our critic has just told us that “the *mode* of the intercourse is not such as we [he] can at present recognize from experience.” What kind of intercourse is it then that he *can* conceive of?

¹ It is only when *Ego* becomes *Ego-ism* deluded into a notion of independent existence as the producer in its turn of the five *Tanmātras* that *Manas* is considered *Mahā-bhūtic* and finite in the sense of being connected with *Ahamkāra*, the *personal* “I-creating” faculty. Hence *Manas* is both eternal and non-eternal: eternal in its atomic nature (*paramānu-rūpa*); finite (or *kārya-rūpa*) when linked as a duad — with *kāma* (*Volition*), a lower production. — *Ed.*

² *Antah-karana* is the path of communication between soul and body, entirely disconnected with the former: existing with, belonging to, and dying with the body. — *Ed.*

³ It is demonstrated to Occultists by the fact that two adepts separated by hundreds of miles, leaving their bodies at their respective habitations and their *astral bodies* (the lower *manas* and volition, *kāma*) to watch over them, can still meet at some distant place and hold converse and even perceive and sense each other for hours as though they were both *personally* and bodily together, whereas, even their lower *māyāvi-rūpas* are absent. — *Ed.*

When deep sleep comes we begin living in the realm of reality

The waking hours are more of dream and delusion when compared to the vividness of dreamful sleep, and even more so to the authenticity of the devachanic experience.

Reply II

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (DREAM LIFE) V pp. 81-88.

The Appendix referred to in the *Fragment* No. VI, in *The Theosophist* for March, is in no way inconsistent. When properly understood in the light of our doctrines, Appendix C¹ gives what it professes to explain and leaves nothing doubtful, while the *Fragment* itself has perhaps a few expressions that may be misleading: though exclusively so to those who have not paid sufficient attention to that which preceded. For instance:

“Love, the creative force, has placed their [the associates’] living image before the personal soul which craves for their presence, and that image will never fly away.”

It is incorrect to use the term “personal soul” in connection with the monad. “The *personal* or animal soul” is, as already said, the 5th principle, and cannot be in Devachan, the highest state permitted to it on earth being *Samādhi*. It is only its *essence* that has followed the monad into Devachan, to serve it there as its ground-tone, or as the background against which its future dream-life and developments will move; its entity, or the *reliquiae* is the “shell,” the dross that remains behind as an elementary to fade away and in time disappear. That which is in Devachan is no more the *persona*—the mask, than the smell of a rose is the flower itself. The rose decays and becomes a pinch of dust: its aroma will never die, and may be recalled and resurrected ages thence. Correctly expressed, the sentence would have to read:

“ . . . the living image before the *Spiritual* Soul, which being now saturated with the essence of the personality, has thus ceased to be *Arūpa* (formless or rather devoid of all substance) for its Devachanic duration, and craves for their presence, *etc.*”

The gestation period is over, it has won the day, been reborn as a new out of the old ego, and before it is ushered again into a new *personality*, it will reap the effects of the causes sown in its precedent birth in one of the Devachanic or Avitchian states, as the case may be, though the latter are found wide apart.

*Avaśyam eva bhoktavyam kritam karma śubhāśubham.*²

¹ p. 136

² The fruit of the tree of action, whether good or bad, must unavoidably be eaten.

The Devachanic condition in *all its aspects* is no doubt similar to a dreamy state *when considered from the standpoint of our present objective consciousness when we are in our waking condition*. Nevertheless, it is as real to the Devachanī himself as our waking state is to us. Therefore, when it is asked “Whether Devachan is a state corresponding to our waking life here or to our sleep with dreams,” — the answer given is that it is not similar to either of these conditions; but it is similar to the *dreamy condition* of a man who has no waking state at all, if such a being can be supposed to exist. A monad in Devachan has *but one state of consciousness*, and the contrast between a waking state and a dreamy state is never presented to it so long as it is in that condition. Another objection urged is, that if a Devachanī were to think of an object or person as if the object or person were present before him when they are not so (when judged from the common *ideas* of objective perception) then the Devachanī is “cheated by nature.” If such is really the case, he is indeed always “cheated by nature”; and the suggestion contained in the foregoing letter as to the possible mode of communication between a Devachanī and one living on earth will not save him from delusion. Leaving aside for a moment the nature of a Devachanī’s communication with another monad either in or out of Devachan, let the nature of his ideas be examined so far as they are connected with objects; and then the truth of the above mentioned statement will be easily perceived. Suppose, for instance, Galileo in Devachan, subjectively engaged in his favourite intellectual pursuit. It is natural to suppose that his telescope often comes within the range of his Devachanic consciousness, and that the Devachanī subjectively directs it toward some planet. It is quite clear that according to the general ideas of objectivity, Galileo has no telescope before him, and it cannot be contended that his train of ideas in any way actually affects the telescope which he left behind him in this world. If the objector’s reasoning is correct, Galileo is “being cheated by nature,” and the suggestion above referred to will in no way help him in this case.

Thus, the inference that it is neither correct nor philosophical to speak of a Devachanī as being “cheated by nature” becomes once more unavoidable. Such words as cheating, delusion, reality are always relative. It is only by contrast that a particular state of consciousness can be called real or illusionary; and these words cease to have any significance whatever, when the said state of consciousness cannot be compared with any other state. Supposing one is justified in looking upon Devachanic experience as delusion from his present standpoint as a human being living on this earth, what then? We fail to see how any one means to make use of this inference. Of course from the foregoing remarks the reader is not to suppose that a Devachanī’s consciousness can never affect or influence the state of consciousness of another monad either in or out of Devachan. Whether such is the case or not, the reality or the unreality of Devachanic experience, so far as a Devachanī is concerned, does not depend upon any such communicative influence.

In some cases it is evident that the state of consciousness of one monad whether in Devachan or yet on earth, may blend with, as it were, and influence the ideation of another monad also in Devachan. Such will be the case where there is strong, affectionate sympathy between the two *egos* arising from participation in the same higher feelings or emotions, or from similar intellectual pursuits or spiritual aspirations. Just as the thoughts of a mesmerizer standing at a distance are communicated to

his subject by the emanation of a current of magnetic energy attracted readily towards the subject, the train of ideas of a Devachanī are communicated by a current of magnetic or electric force attracted towards another Devachanī by reason of the strong sympathy existing between the two monads, especially when the said ideas relate to things which are subjectively associated with the Devachanī in question. It is not to be inferred, however, that in other cases when there is no such action or reaction, a Devachanī becomes conscious of the fact that his subjective experience is a mere delusion, for it is not so. It was already shown that the question of reality or unreality does not depend upon any such communication or transmission of intellectual energy.

We are asked, “if some of these (the Devachanī loved) are not themselves fit for Devachan, how then?” We answer: “Even in the case of a man still living on earth, or even of one suffering in Avīchi, the ideation of a monad in Devachan may still affect his monad if there is strong sympathy between the two as indicated above.¹ Yet the Devachanī will remain ignorant of the mental suffering of the other.”

If this generous provision of nature that never punishes the innocent outside this our world of delusion, be still called “a cheating of nature,” and objected to, on the ground that it is not an “honest symbol” of the other personality’s presence, then the most reasonable course would be to leave the occult doctrines and Devachan alone. The noble truths, the grandest goal in soul-life, will remain for ever a closed book to such minds. Devachan instead of appearing what it is — a blissful rest, a heavenly oasis during the laborious journey of the Monad toward a higher evolution, will indeed present itself as the culmination, the very essence of death itself. One has to sense intuitively its logical necessity; to perceive in it, untaught and unguided, the outcome and perpetuation of that strictest justice absolutely consonant with the harmony of the universal law, if one would not lose time over its deep significance. We do not mean it in any unkind spirit, yet with such an opposition to the very exposition (since no one is pressed for its acceptance) of our doctrine by some Western minds, we feel bound to remind our opponents that they have the freedom of choice. Among the later great world philosophies there are two — the more modern the outgrowth of the older — whose “after states” are clearly and plainly defined, and the acceptance of either of which, moreover, would be welcomed: one — by millions of spiritualists, the other — by the most respectable portion of humanity, viz., civilized Western society. Nothing equivocal, or like cheating of nature in the latter: her Devachanīs, the faithful and the true, are plainly and charitably promised the ineffable rapture of seeing during an eternity the tortures of the damned in the depths of Gehenna.² We are, and do feel willing to give out some of our *facts*. Only occult philosophy and Buddhism having both failed as yet to produce a Tertullian to strike for us the key-note of an orthodox hell,³ we cannot undertake to furnish fictions to suit every taste and fancy.

¹ The reader is reminded in this connection that neither Devachan nor Avīchi is a locality, but a *state* which affects directly the being in it and all others only by *reaction*. — *Ed.*

² [*Γέεννα*, in Greek]

³ Reference is probably made here to the soul-inspiring monologue that is found in Tertullian’s *De Spectaculis*, Chapter xxx. Falling into a wild ecstasy of joy over the bare prospect of seeing some day all the philosophers

There is no such place of torture for the innocent, no such state in which under the plea of reward and a necessity for “honest symbols,” the guileless should be made witness to, or even aware of, the sufferings of those they loved. Were it otherwise, the active bliss of the Dhyāni Chohans themselves would turn into a shoreless ocean of gall at such a sight. And He who *willed*— “Let all the sins and evils flowing from the corruption of *Kalīyuga*, this degenerate age of ours fall upon me, but let the world be redeemed” — would have so willed in vain, and might have given preference to the awes of the visible to those of the invisible world. To suppose that a “Soul” escaping from this evil-girdled planet where the innocent weep while the wicked rejoice, should have a like fate in store for it even within the peaceful haven of Devachan, would be the most maddening, the [most] dreadful thought of all! But we say, it is *not* so. The bliss of a Devachanī is complete, and nature secures it even at the risk of being accused of *cheating* by the pessimists of this world unable to distinguish between *Vastu* — the one reality, and *Vishaya* — the “*māyās*” of our senses. It is fetching rather too far the presumption that our *objective* and *subjective* shall be the true standards for the realities and unrealities of the rest of the universe; that *our* criterion of truth and honesty is to stand as the only universal land-mark of the same. Had we to proceed upon such principles, we would have to accuse nature of cheating incessantly not only her human but also her animal offspring. Who, of our objectors, when treating of facts of natural history and the phenomena of vision and colour, would ever hazard the remark that because ants are utterly unable to see and distinguish colours as human beings do (the red, for instance, having no existence for them), therefore, are they also “cheated by nature”? Neither *personality* nor *objectivity* as known to us, have any being in the composition of a monad; and could, by any miracle, any living human creature come within the range of the Devachanic vision, it would be as little perceived by the Devachanī as the elementals that throng the air around us are perceived with our natural eyes.

One more error of the critic. He seems to be labouring under the impression that if one has some conception of Devachanic state of subjective consciousness while in this life, he will know that such experience is illusionary when he is actually there; and then Devachanic beatitudes will have lost all their reality so far as he is concerned. There is no reason to apprehend any such catastrophe. It is not very difficult to perceive the fallacy that underlies this argument. Suppose, for instance, A, now living at Lahore, knows that his friend B is at Calcutta. He dreams that they are both at Bombay engaged in various transactions. Does he know *at the time he is dreaming* that the whole dream is illusionary? How can the consciousness that his friend is really at Calcutta, which is only realized when he is in his waking condition, help

“who have persecuted the name of Christ burn in a most cruel fire in hell. . . .” this saintly Patristic character, a Father of the Christian Church, exclaims: “Oh, what shall be the magnitude of that scene. How I shall laugh! How I shall rejoice! How I shall triumph!” *etc.* — *Ed.*

[It is not known from what particular translation of Tertullian’s work H.P. Blavatsky quotes. However, in T.R. Glover’s translation of the original Latin text (See *Loeb Classical Library*, Edited by T.E. Page, *etc.*, London, Wm. Heinemann, Ltd.; New York, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1931), the following passage is to be found:

. . . How vast the spectacle that day, and how wide! What sight shall wake my wonder, what my laughter, my joy and exultation? as I see all those kings. . . . And the magistrates who persecuted the name of Jesus. . . .

In the above-mentioned edition, the English text is printed side by side with the original Latin. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

him in ascertaining the delusive nature of his dream *when he is actually dreaming?* Even after experiencing dreams several times during his life and knowing that dreams are generally illusionary, A will not know that he is dreaming when he is actually in that condition.

Similarly, a man may experience the devachanic condition while yet alive, and call it delusion, if he pleases, when he comes back to his ordinary state of objective consciousness and compares it to the said condition. Nevertheless, he will not know that it is a dream either when he experiences it a second time (for the time being) while still living, or when he dies and goes to Devachan.

The above is sufficient to cover the case were even the state under discussion indeed “a dream” in the sense our opponents hold it in. But it is neither a “dream” nor in any way “cheating.” It may be so from the standpoint of Johnson’s dictionary; from that of *fact* independent of all human definition, and the standpoint of him who knows something of the laws that govern the worlds invisible, the intercourse between the monads is real, mutual, and as *actual* in the world of subjectivity, as it is in this our world of deceptive reality. It is the old story of Zöllner’s man from the two-dimensional region disputing the reality of the phenomena taking place in the three-dimensional world.



There are states and states, and degrees upon degrees in Devachan

The heavy hand of a personal deity and his personal ministers seems to compress the brain of almost every Western thinker.

Reply III

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE VARIOUS STATES OF DEVACHAN) V pp. 88-94.

The foremost question that presents itself to the mind of the Occultist of Asiatic birth, upon seeing the multifarious difficulties which beset the European students of Esotericism, as regards Devachan: how to account for their weird fancies with regard to the after states! It is natural for one to measure other persons' intellectual operations by his own; not without an effort can he put himself in his neighbour's place and try to see things from his standpoint. As regards Devachan, for example, nothing would apparently be clearer than the esoteric doctrine, incompletely as it may have been expressed by "Lay Chela"; yet it is evidently not comprehended, and the fact must be ascribed, I think, rather to the habitual differences in our respective ways of looking at things than to the mechanical defects in the vehicle of expression. It would be very hard for an Asiatic Occultist to even conjure up such a fancy as that of Swedenborg, who makes the angels our *post-mortem* "inquisitors," obliged to estimate a soul's accumulated merits and demerits by physical inspection of its body, beginning at the tips of the fingers and toes and tracing thence to centres! Equally baffling would be the attempt to bring ourselves to the point of seriously tracing a denizen of the American Summer-Land of Spirits through the nurseries, debating clubs, and legislative assemblies of that optimistic Arcadian Eden. A warp of anthropomorphism seems to run through the entire woof of European metaphysics. The heavy hand of a *personal* deity and his personal ministers seems to compress the brain of almost every Western thinker. If the influence does not show itself in one form, it does in another. Is it a question about God? A metaphysical slide is inserted, and the stereopticon flashes before us a picture of a gold-paved, pearly-doored New Jerusalem, with its Durbar Hall, peacock throne, Maharajah, Dewans, courtiers, trumpeters, scribes, and general train. Is the intercourse between disembodied spirits under discussion? The Western constitutional bias of mind can conceive of no such intercourse without some degree of mutual consciousness of an objective presence of the corporeal kind: a sort of psychic chit-chat. I hope I do not wrong our Western correspondents, but it is impossible, for myself at least, to draw any conclusions from the whole tenor of the British Theosophist's memorandum. Vapoury and etherealized as his concept may be, it is yet materialistic at the core. As we would say, the germ-point of metaphysical evolution is of Biblical derivation: and through its opalescent vapour sparkle the turrets of the "New Jerusalem."

There is much fanciful exotericism to be sure, in Asiatic systems. Quite as much and more perhaps than in the Western; and our philosophies have many a harlequin cloak. But we are not concerned now with externals: our critic comes upon metaphysical ground and deals with esotericism. His difficulty is to reconcile “isolation,” as he understands it, with “intercourse” as we understand it. Though the monad is not like a seed dropped from a tree, but in its nature is ubiquitous, all-pervading, omnipresent; though in the subjective state time, space and locality are not factors in its experiences; though, in short, all mundane conditions are reversed; and the now thinkable becomes the then unthinkable and *vice-versa* — yet the London friend goes on to reason as though all this were not so. . . .

The devachanic mind is capable only of the highest spiritual ideation, that neither objects of the grosser senses nor anything provocative of displeasure could even be apprehended by it.

Now, Buddhistically speaking, there are states and states and degrees upon degrees in Devachan, in all of which, notwithstanding the (to us) objective isolation of the principal hero, he is surrounded by a host of actors in conjunction with whom he had during his last earth-life created and worked out the causes of those effects that are produced first on the field of *Devachanic* or *Avitchean* subjectivity, then used to strengthen the Karma to follow on the objective (?) plane of the subsequent rebirth. Earth-life, is so to say, the *Prologue* of the drama (or we should, perhaps, call it *mystery*), that is enacted in the *rūpa* and *arūpa* lokas. Now were we to say that nature, with every due regard to personality and the laws of objectivity as understood in exotericism, “constitutes a veritable intercourse” between the devachanic heroes and actors; and, instead of *dissociating* the monads not only as regards “personal or corporeal” but even *astral* “association” establishes “actual companionship” between them, as on the earth-plane, we might, perhaps, avoid the strange accusation of “nature cheating” in Devachan. On the other hand, after thus pandering to emotional objections, we could hardly help placing our European Chelas in a far more inextricable dilemma. They would be made to face a problem of personal *post-mortem* ubiquity, throwing that of the Western deity far into the background of illogical absurdity. Suppose for one moment a Devachanic father, twice wedded, and loving both his wives as he does his children, while the step-mother loves neither his progeny nor *their* mother, the coolest indifference if not actual aversion reigning between the two. “Actual companionship,” and “real *personal* intercourse” (the latter applied even to their astral bodies) implies here bliss for the father and irritation for the two wives and children, all equally worthy of Devachanic bliss. Now imagine again the real mother attracting by her intense love the children within her devachanic state, and thus depriving the father of *his* legitimate share of bliss. It has been said before, that the devachanic mind is capable only of the highest spiritual ideation; that neither objects of the grosser senses nor anything provocative of displeasure could even be apprehended by it — for otherwise, Devachan would be merging into *Avichi*, and the feeling of unalloyed bliss destroyed for ever. How can nature reconcile in the above case the problem without either sacrificing her duty to our terrestrial sense of *objectivity* and *reality*, or, without compromising her status before *our* criterion of truth and honest dealing? On one hand, the children would have to double and treble themselves *ad infinitum* — as they too may have disembodied, devachanic objects of

spiritual attachment clamouring elsewhere for their presence — which process of ubiquity would hardly be consistent with our notions of personal, actual presence, at one and the same time and at several different places; or, there would always be somebody, somewhere “cheated by nature.” To place the *monads* promiscuously together, like one happy family — would be fatal to truth and fact: each man, however insignificant he may have been on earth, is yet mentally and morally *sui generis* in his own distinct conceptions of bliss and desires, and has, therefore, a right to, and an absolute necessity for, a specific, personal, “isolated” devachan.

The speculations of the Western mind have hitherto scarcely ever depicted any higher future life than that of the *Kāma* and *Rūpa lokas*, or the lower, intra-terrestrial “spirit-worlds.” In Appendix D many states and spheres are hinted at. According even to exoteric Buddhistic philosophy disincarnate beings are divided into three classes of

- 1 *Kāmawāchara*, or those who are still under the dominion of the passions in *Kāmaloka*;
- 2 *Rūpawāchara*, or those who have progressed to a higher stage, but still retain vestiges of their old form in *Rūpa loka*; and
- 3 *Arūpawāchara*, or those who are become formless entities in the *Arūpa lokas* of the highest Devachan.

All depends on the degree of the monad’s spirituality and aspirations. The astral body of the 4th principle — called *Kāma*, because inseparable from *Kāma loka* — is always within the attraction of terrestrial magnetism; and the monad has to work itself free of the still finer yet equally potent attractions of its *Manas* before it ever reaches in its series of Devachanic states, the upper-*Arūpa* regions. Therefore, there are various degrees of Devachanīs. In those of the *Arūpa lokas* the entities are as *subjective* and truly “not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow — the *Māyāvi-rūpa*.” And yet even there, we affirm there is still “actual companionship.” But only very few reach there skipping the lower degrees. There are those Devachanīs, men of the highest moral calibre and goodness when on earth, who, owing to their sympathy *for old intellectual researches and especially for unfinished mental work*, are for centuries in the *Rūpa-lokas* in a strict Devachanic isolation — literally so, since men and loved relatives have all vanished out of sight before this intense and purely spiritual passion for intellectual pursuit. For an example of the study-bound (pardon the new word for the sake of its expressiveness) condition, take the mental state of the dying Berzelius, whose last thought was one of despair that his work should be interrupted by death. This is *Tanhā* (Hindu *Trishna*) or an unsatisfied yearning which must exhaust itself before the entity can move on to the purely *a-rūpa* condition. A provision is made for every case, and in each case it is created by the dying man’s last, uppermost desire. The scholar who had mainly lived under the influence of *manas*, and for the pleasure of developing his highest physical intelligence, kept absorbed in the mysteries of the material universe, will still be magnetically held by his mental attractions to scholars and their work, influencing and being influenced by them *subjectively* — (though in a manner quite different from that known in séance-rooms and by mediums), until the energy exhausts itself and *Bud-*

dhi becomes the only regnant influence. The same rule applies to all the activities, whether of passion or sentiment, which entangle the travelling monad (the Individuality) in the relationships of any given birth. The discarnate must consecutively mount each rung of the ladder of being upward from the earthly subjective to the *absolutely* subjective. And when this limited Nirvānic state of Devachan is attained, the entity enjoys it and its vivid though spiritual realities until that phase of Karma is satisfied and the physical attraction to the next earth-life asserts itself. In Devachan, therefore, the entity is affected by and reciprocally affects the psychic state of any other entity whose relationship is so close with it as to survive, as was above remarked, the purgatorial evolution of the lower post-mortem spheres. Their intercourse will be sensed spiritually, and still, so far as any relationship until now postulated by Western thinkers goes, each will be “dissociated from the other.” If the questioner can formulate to himself the condition of the monad as pure spirit, the most subjective entity conceivable, without form, colour, or weight, even so great as an atom; an entity whose recollections of the last personality (or earth-birth) are derived from the late union of the *Manas* with the lower five principles — he may then find himself able to answer his own interrogatory. According to Esoteric Doctrine this evolution is not viewed as the extinguishment of individual consciousness but its infinite expansion. The entity is not obliterated, but united with the universal entity, and its consciousness becomes able not merely to recall the scenes of one of its earth-evolved Personalities, but of each of the entire series around the Kalpa, and then those of every other Personality. In short from being finite it becomes infinite consciousness. But this comes only at the end of all the births at the great day of the absolute Resurrection. Yet, as the monad moves on from birth to birth and passes its lower and Devachanic spheres after each fresh earthly existence, the mutual ties created in each birth must weaken and at last grow inert, before it can be reborn. The record of those relationships imperishably endures in the *Ākāśa*, and they can always be reviewed when, in any birth, the being evolves his latent spiritual powers to the “fourth stage of *Dhyāna*”: but their hold upon the being gradually relaxes. This is accomplished in each inter-natal Devachan; and when the personal links — magnetic or psychic, as one may prefer to call them — binding the Devachanī to other entities of the next previous life, whether relatives, friends, or family, are worn out, he is free to move on in his cyclic path. Were this obliteration of personal ties not a fact, each being would be travelling around the Kalpa entangled in the meshes of his past relationships with his myriad fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives, &c., &c., of his numberless births: a jumble, indeed! It was the ignorant delusion of the geocentric hypothesis which begot all the exoteric theologies, with their absurd dogmas. So, likewise, it is the ignorant theory of monogenesis, or but one earth life for each being, which makes it so hard for European metaphysicians to read the riddle of our existence and comprehend the difference between the monad’s individuality, and its physical appearance in a series of earth-lives as so many different, totally distinct personalities. Europe knows much about atomic weights and chemical symbols, but has little idea of Devachan.

