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FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To The 85th International Convention Of

The Theosophical Society

BY N. SRI RAM, *President*

I dwelt last year on the crisis through which the world as a whole is passing. Since then this crisis has, if anything, deepened and become more tangible and solid. Events are moving so swiftly these days that one can see the fingers of Destiny pulling to pieces the erstwhile world-scene and reassembling them to a different pattern. It is not without significance that one people after another, who have been long without self-responsibility and in subjection to others, are being catapulted as if by a sudden explosion to a status of freedom and equality with their recent guardians and rulers. Those sections of humanity which have been till now inarticulate and inchoate, without a will of their own, are becoming individuated, to borrow a term from Jung. I do not use the word individualized, as it has a specific connotation in Theosophical literature, leading into the depths of the Theosophical philosophy. We are in a period when the course of events is rushing forward like a cataract, giving rise to numerous problems on every side, but also unfolding new and wonderful possibilities.

The advances being made are along lines both of scientific thought and technology

and human relations and living. What we are witnessing is really a demonstration of the capacities of the human mind in relation to the world of physical matter, and the problems it creates because of its fundamental ignorance. It is a mind which moves under strict limitations and suffers from many illusions, not a pure mind by any means; in its discursiveness, not to call it fragmentariness, it is incapable of such perceptions as are possible only in a state of wholeness or integrity purged of the propensity to create illusions pleasing to itself. Just as the highest peaks of the Himalayas tower above the regions of storms, mist and cloud as well as the plains far below, and remain bathed in eternal sunshine, so are the highest truths of the spiritual Wisdom beyond the capacities of the human mind under its present limitations. Yet it is possible to know them through a transformed understanding brought about by pure and brotherly living and freedom from the mind's addictions and agitations.

The teaching that comes down from the most ancient times, and is so well expounded in what we call Theosophy, as to the relations between the various categories or degrees of functioning of the one Universal

Life, including that superior consciousness in which alone is the perception of truth in the highest sense, is a teaching most needed at the present time. The depth of this teaching, its many-aspectedness and value have first to be realized in ourselves before we can convey them to others. Theosophy is not a mere statement in so many words to be propagated mechanically. No amount of mere reproduction or relay of words can bring about an awakening to the reality to which the words can only point.

When we use the word "propaganda" it has often the implication of a certain mechanical process, out of which it has to be lifted if it is to awaken the intelligence of those to whom it is addressed and give substance and shape to their own deeply hidden but subtly present intuitions of truth and rightness. All our wisdom and thought has to be expressed in a form of words, but the content of the Divine Wisdom which belongs to the category of life, with all of life's dynamism and beauty, has to be conveyed by means of life and thought which go beyond mechanical propagation. It is a Wisdom which requires a purified consciousness, different from that which is mostly active in the world at present, to serve as its vehicle or vessel, a type of mind which comes into play when we listen to something beautiful or significant, with wholeness of interest and attention, unalloyed by any personal reaction. Mr. Krishnamurti often speaks of the importance of such listening. There are some beautiful sentences in *Light on the Path* which indicate the attitude, or rather the state of consciousness in which the truth unfolds itself, such as: "Listen to the song of life," "Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you," "Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men." It is thus that we enter that kingdom where all life is one, being in its diverse forms aspects of one universal Life, and we learn the true meaning of Brotherhood, which is a sharing of the riches of all men's hearts as well as their sorrows.

Before I proceed to review the work of the various Sections, let me briefly refer to the result of the elections to the office of President of the Society, which were in progress when I addressed the Convention in December 1959. The result was announced on February 17th this year, that being the time when the previous seven years' term expired. All that I need say on this subject is that I deeply appreciate the trust which the members have expressed in me and it is my endeavour to honor it in the best way I can. To all those who have expressed their affection and good-will, whether overtly or otherwise, let me say from here that I am grateful to them all, and reciprocate their feelings.

Soon after I was re-elected President I was called upon to consider the question of whom I was to nominate as Vice-President. Mr. Sidney Cook, who had been Vice-President for some fourteen years, had expressed to me more than once the possible desirability of a change in that office. After much thought I decided to nominate Mrs. Josephine Ransom who by her able and devoted services in many capacities and over a long period of years, I thought, would prove acceptable to members throughout the world. The General Council of the Society confirmed this nomination, and I was hoping that we would have Mrs. Ransom with us as Vice-President for some years to give us the benefit of her counsel and inspiration from that office. But unfortunately she met with a car accident in a London street soon afterwards, and after some months in a hospital passed away on December 2nd, to the great sorrow of her daughter Dr. Shila Ransom and her many friends throughout the world. She leaves a gap in our work which it is difficult to fill, but she will continue to be surrounded by the grateful thoughts and affection of all who knew her.

It is not possible for me to refer to the work in all Sections but I shall try to give you an idea of how it is proceeding.

The largest Section of all is India, with a membership of a little over 7,000 mem-

bers. Mr. Rohit Mehta, who had been General Secretary for fourteen years, was succeeded last December by Mr. K. Rajagopalachari. But because of the indisposition of Mr. Rajagopalachari the Annual Report is submitted by Mrs. Radha S. Burnier as officiating General Secretary. It speaks of the past year as one of transition. Although the Section is numerically large, the Report deplores the fact that there are not sufficient workers at the Federation and Lodge levels to carry on their work with as much vigour as is to be desired. A large part of the work has to be carried on by just a few members, and "often a Lodge or Centre is so dependent," says the Report, "on one or two individuals that it sinks into a dormant state as soon as the services of these individuals cease to be available." This state of affairs has existed for a long time, and periodically in the past there have been campaigns to revitalize the Lodges. Too often in India, and there are other places, too, with regard to which the same remark can be made, the members wait for inspiration from some lecturer or so-called leader. It is partly with a view to help Lodges with material for their programmes and stimulate the interest of members that a Department of Studies was created last year at the Section Headquarters at Varanasi. One of the essentials for the vitalization of the whole Society, not only India, is a different spirit in the members, with a creativeness of their own, which will enable them to find for themselves the inspiration they need, an attitude of self-reliance and of giving to the movement whatever it is possible for them to give.

In the American Section also there has been a change of some consequence in the administration, which does not mean for better or worse. Mr. James S. Perkins, who had been National President since the termination of the war, retired from that office last July, and his place has been taken by Dr. Henry A. Smith, one of the leading members in Chicago, who has been Vice-President of the Section. The report which

is presented by Mr. Perkins, as it covers the last year of his office, shows a membership of over 4,400 organized into 143 Lodges. All the different branches of activity into which the Section's work, as directed from its Headquarters, is organized, such as radio broadcasting, the sending out of lecturers and study courses, regional expansion work in selected areas, the Department of Education which assists the Lodges, and other features mentioned by me in previous years, have continued in full strength.

To mention in particular one distinctive feature of the Section's work, 6 more radio stations, increasing the total to 21, have been used to broadcast Theosophical ideas throughout the year. The activities of the Lodges are reported in *The American Theosophist* month by month, with the names of speakers as well as the subjects of their lectures and studies. This gives, as mentioned by Mr. Perkins, a continuous and unbroken record of events and activities throughout the Section. Thanks to the widespread and continuous activity of the Section and the Lodges, the United States is increasingly permeated, says the Report, by Theosophical ideas and influences.

England, the third largest Section of the Society, is one which has been built up through the years under the powerful stimulus first of H.P.B. herself, who resided in London in the closing years of her life and wrote *The Secret Doctrine* there, and later of Dr. Annie Besant and her co-workers, followed still later by others who drew their inspiration from these early leaders. It is a Section which as the decades pass, illustrates the fact that while workers come and go, the stream of the Eternal Wisdom continues to flow, bringing its life-giving waters to new generations, refreshing and inspiring them according to the needs of their times. The Section has 105 Lodges with a membership which is rather less than what it used to be. However it is as active as ever, and the General Secretary, Dr. L. J. Bendit, mentions the fact that a number of new members are coming in, young and

interested in the scientific aspects of work, particularly the work of the Theosophical Research Centre.

Mr. Paul Thorin, the General Secretary for France, reports that "after the long years of crisis" (another word for crisis is dissensions) the Section is running rather smoothly. There has been increasing co-operation with the other French-speaking areas in Europe, namely, the Belgian Section and the French-speaking part of Switzerland. This co-operation has, among other things, resulted in the adoption of a common "double Review," *Le Lotus Bleu* and *La Vie Theosophique*, in place of *Clarte* which has now ceased publication.

Another Section where there has been a fall in membership is the Netherlands Section. Mr. A. J. H. van Leeuwen, the General Secretary, reports that despite this decline the enthusiasm of the members has not waned but is on the increase, and there is a new Lodge, with the name Arjuna. The Section has published five books during the year, including two volumes by the General Secretary himself entitled "The Esoteric Meaning of the Old Testament Book of Genesis".

One of the Sections where there is a growing interest and a steady expansion of activity is far-off Iceland. "The wind blows in favor of Theosophy in Iceland," says Mr. Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson, its General Secretary. Iceland has a small population of about 140,000, yet it has well over 450 members, a fact which supports Mr. Hjalmarsson's optimistic statement. Having remained more or less isolated from the rest of Europe, the country is comparatively free from those distractions which are a feature of modern life and which come in the way of any natural inclination there may be in people to consider such a philosophy as ours or generally any ideas bearing on the deeper issues in life.

Greece is another Section which reports much activity, with an increase of members from 203 to 250. The General Secretary, Mr. George Vliamos, reports as an

important event of the year the formation of a new Lodge composed of young people, mostly University students, who are all active and enthusiastic workers. This Lodge has been holding meetings three times a week with large attendances. They are studying *The Secret Doctrine*, the members putting questions and discussing in a friendly manner.

The General Secretary for Denmark, Mr. Jorgen Winde, writes that there is increased interest in the Section, thanks largely to the two Summer Schools that are held every year in Denmark, one at Gammel Praestegaard where there is a gathering of members from different Sections, and the other in Besantgaarden under the auspices of Mr. Otto Viking. The Section is "open and alive," says Mr. Winde, "to the life-side of Theosophy," which is certainly far more important than merely mental knowledge.

Mrs. Claire Wyss, General Secretary for the Swiss Section till the end of this year, when she will be succeeded by Mr. Georges Tripet, characterizes the Section's activities as lively and writes that the Groups—Group meaning Lodge or Centre—are "making a thoughtful study of the classical Theosophical books". At the same time they also discuss modern problems.

Argentina and Brazil are the two biggest Sections in South America. Mr. N. Rimini, the General Secretary of the Argentine Section, writes that there has been a clearing-up process there, a number of Lodges not functioning at all and Lodges not acting in a manner consistent with the Objects of the Society, having been dissolved. The Section has acquired premises of its own in Buenos Aires which can be used by the Section office as well as by the Lodges. In Brazil the Rio de Janeiro Federation has now its own Headquarters in a central part of the city. Mr. Armando Sales, the General Secretary, reports that all the Lodges of the Section have kept up their activities.

He has planned to bring out booklets in Spanish for use in Spanish-speaking coun-

tries, though the language of Brazil itself is Portuguese.

Mexico reports the addition of 4 new Lodges and 57 members—quite a large increase considering its total strength of about 550 members. The General Secretary, Senor Arturo Vado Lopez, writes most hearteningly that all the members of the Section are trying to do the best they can, and there is much inner enthusiasm.

An event of importance for the Central American Section, which embraces a number of countries in that region, was the holding at San Salvador of a Convention, the second one to take place during the history of the Section. The Convention, which was an inter-State affair, was held last August, and presided over by Seniorita Esther de Mezerville, a veteran Theosophist from Costa Rica. The Lodge at San Salvador had its new building ready for the event; and according to reports I have received, it was an occasion of great inspiration and rejoicing among those who attended.

The Report from Colombia, sent by the General Secretary, mentions the formation of a Centre of Theosophical activity in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with a name which means White Lotus Flower. It is the first centre to be formed in that State. The General Secretary writes that the Lodges in Colombia are all very active and work in harmony with one another. Every three months the Section issues a Theosophical booklet, entitled *Theosophical Selections*. As the title indicates, the material is selected from various sources. The number of copies sent out has been increased to 1500. Recently the Section printed for free distribution no less than 30,000 copies of Mr. L. W. Rogers' book *What is Theosophy*. This kind of work, which takes place also in certain other Sections, especially those where the ground is still new for Theosophy, gives us an idea of the extent to which the Theosophical influence is spreading, even though there may not be many who feel the call to join the movement. The Society's influence during the 85 years

of its existence has been far greater than the number of its members may signify.

Miss Helen Zahara, the General Secretary for Australia, gives an account of the Indo-Pacific Conference which was held from December 31st to January 8th this year at Wallacia in New South Wales. It was attended by some 200 members. Australia is a country of great distances, and in order to come into effective touch with the Lodges Miss Zahara undertook an extensive tour this year and has also been organizing at the Section Headquarters in Sydney various services to the Lodges, such as illustrated study courses, tape lectures, lists of books on different subjects, and so forth. There has been recently much immigration into Australia from different countries in Europe, and to meet the needs of the immigrants the Section keeps elementary books on Theosophy in various languages to loan to those who ask. The General Secretary sums up the trends in the Australian Section in these words: "There is evident a quickening of interest in basic Theosophical literature, with at the same time a greater spirit of questioning and challenge, a deeper approach to fundamental principles and an emphasis on the need for individual understanding."

Miss Clarice Gregory, the General Secretary for New Zealand, writes that the work there is being carried on with steady devotion. She remarks that many people have been coming in for a short time and then passing out of the Society. There are people in other countries, too, who have been such temporary sojourners. It might be interesting to find out, if such research can be made, what expectations they had coming in, and what caused their leaving the Society. It is only the motive of helping the Society, in order to help humanity through it, which really endures. If the motive is of gaining something, they generally leave it, either after they have gained what they wanted or out of dissatisfaction at not having been able to gain it. The Society stands for the whole Truth and

nothing but the Truth and while Truth must ultimately be equated with the highest Good, it cannot rest upon the satisfaction of the thirst for new sensations which is so strong at the present time.

The Order of Service has been active in all those countries where it exists. Theosophical Lodges and individual Theosophists in different countries have been giving much help for the care and re-habilitation of refugees. During this year Srimati Rukmini Devi made a special appeal for the helping of refugees from Tibet, who had come into India, and I am glad to report it has had a gratifying response.

The Adyar Library has steadily carried on its work of research, cataloguing and bringing out publications of old works likely to be of interest to Orientalists and scholars. Next year, 1961, will mark the 75th anniversary of the inauguration of the Library by our President-Founder, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott. One of the functions during this Convention will be the laying of the Foundation Stone for the Library's long-projected and hoped-for new building. During the course of this year a special appeal was made for substantial sums to augment the Adyar Library Building Fund, and it is hoped that before long it will be possible to commence construction of the first phase of the new building.

As regards the Society's finances, the audited accounts that are published every year as well as the Treasurer's explanatory statements show how very much the Society is dependent on the donations from members to balance its budget. We are thankful to the donors as well as to those who have made bequests by their wills for their generosity, their support and interest in the Society's work. Bequests of any size are, as a rule, utilized as endowments from which the interest is used for the regular current expenses. In the year ending 30th September 1959, the donations received accounted for over one-third of the total receipts, yet there was an excess of ex-

pense over income, and that is often the case. Without the donations, the excess in this particular year would have been ten times as much. So, as in former years, I bring to the notice of members all over the world the need that exists for continued support to all our activities and funds, including the Adyar Besant Commemorative Fund and the Fund for the new Adyar Library building.

I spoke, at the beginning of this address, of the wonderful possibilities that at the present fateful juncture lie before humanity. They depend for their realization upon reaching a state of peace, but peace, in the hearts of men as well as peace in their relations. This peace can come into being only through unadulterated good-will and brotherliness, the realization that it is the same life that manifests itself in all behind the superficial differences. The gospel of universal Brotherhood is really a version of the gospel of the inner unity of all. In so far as we realize this unity, we are saved, in a very real sense. It is the same life in different forms which gives rise to all the richness that exists, which like music, is brought out by different notes in different relationships. But each note has to be pure and clear, the note being each one's true distinctiveness, his innate and true individuality, the manifestation of which depends upon his freeing himself from various artificial and extraneous influences. When each is himself in a true sense, then by a wonderful process of magnetization each comes into his true relations with all, which relations are Brotherhood, which relations will also spell a beautiful and ever-enriching peace. The possibilities are not merely the physical well-being of all humanity without the exception of a single human being, but also the process of a change in men which will enable them to see life whole and life clear—a new quality of consciousness which will make them more perceptive of the true values of life and make the life of each one immeasurably richer than it can be otherwise.

THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP AND DEATH

IVERSON L. HARRIS

Can we have any positive, first-hand knowledge of what happens when sleep overtakes the body and the brain ceases to function as it does normally during waking consciousness? What happens to the Ego—the 'I am I' consciousness—during sleep? Where does it go—if, indeed, it goes anywhere? What is it, or who am I? Am I my body? What is the difference between me awake and me asleep? Do dreams mean anything, or are they merely chaotic hallucinations? What causes them? Why are some beautiful, others ugly, some inspiring, others degrading, some peaceful, others full of terror? Is their interpretation a matter of guess-work, or are they subject to universal laws? Is there anyone capable of unraveling the mysteries of sleep in a manner that would satisfy fully the exacting canons of strictly scientific research?

And as for death, which is a longer, a more complete, a more perfect, a relatively absolute sleep: in what way does death differ from its brother, sleep? Is the veil of death really an impenetrable one? Has anyone ever been able actually to experience the mysteries of death, regain ordinary human consciousness, retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience, and transmit it to his fellows? Is death now, and is it to remain for ever, the Great Unknown? How, where, and from whom may one obtain teaching that has stood and will stand the test of time and of critical examination, concerning the mysteries of sleep and death?

Answering our last question first, I would say: study the recorded teachings of the greatest Sages and Seers that the world has known, the titan intellects who have had direct vision of truth and have revealed it to mankind for their enlightenment and guidance. Not only have there been such, but the Theosophist declares that there are

such even today, of varying degrees of intellectual and spiritual illumination and wisdom.

Among those of past times whom the world in general, and Theosophists in particular, recognise as belonging to the great Hermetic Chain of Teachers, may be mentioned Krishna, the Buddha, and Sankaracharya in India, Lao-Tse and Confucius in China, Jesus the Syrian Sage, Pythagoras, Plato, and Apollonius of Tyana of the classical Greek world, Ammonius Saccas of Alexandria, and H. P. Blavatsky, the Messenger of the nineteenth century.

Is not the basis of our study satisfactory? Does not the authority of the doctrines of Theosophy rest on sure foundations? As Victor Hugo said: "At night I accept the authority of the torches." So now let us answer the other questions propounded. What I shall say is based largely on what I have learned from the oral instruction and the written teaching of Dr. G. de Purucker, who has devoted years of study to the great religious and philosophic literatures of the world, supplemented by his own researches and intuitive perception of occult truths, and guided and inspired, he tells us, by those who have taught him . . . He reminds us of the saying of the old Greek philosophers, *hupnos kai thanatos adelphoi*: 'sleep and death are brothers'; and he quotes the Swiss mathematician, Leonard Euler:

Sleep furnishes something like an example (prefiguration) of the state of the soul after death, as the union of soul and body is then in a great measure interrupted; yet the soul ceases not from activity, being employed in the production of dreams. These are usually disturbed by the remaining influence which the senses exercise; and we know by experience that the more this influence is suspended, which is the case in profound

sleep, the more regular and connected are our dreams. Thus, after death we shall find ourselves in a more perfect state of dreaming which nothing shall be able to decompose. It will consist of representations and reasonings perfectly sustained.

Commenting on the above, Dr. de Purucker says: "An Initiate into the Mysteries could not have written more to the point and with greater effect."

We lay us down to sleep at night in perfect confidence that we are well cared for; and we take it for granted that when the morning comes the thread of consciousness, on which our life is builded, will be picked up again where we left it on retiring. Whither do we go during sleep? We go whither the thoughts and tendencies of our waking hours draw us: not far away from the body or the personality if our consciousness has been largely centered therein during the hours when we were responsible for our thoughts and acts; but ranging the starry spaces and achieving the conquests of the soul, if the tendencies of our thoughts and aspirations are heavenwards and divine. And the same is true at death.

Is not death, equally with sleep, natural and universal? Why then should we fear it? Because, through centuries of wrong thinking, based upon a materialistic and self-centered conception of life, we of the West have almost completely identified ourselves with the bodies in which we live, and with the personality through which we seek to express ourselves. Like the man who builds himself a palace and becomes imprisoned inside his own creation, instead of remaining for ever its master and looking upon his creation with lofty detachment, so do we, after building ourselves a tenement of flesh in order that we may live in it while on our earthly journey, too often look upon the house and self as one, and forget our spiritual dignity as 'the master of our fate, the captain of our soul.'

In his *Intimations of Immortality*, Wordsworth sings:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

I take no exception to the conventional use of the word 'God,' even though its connotation is usually one of an anthropomorphic deity, which no Theosophist could accept, as an 'Infinite Person' is a philosophic impossibility, because I have no doubt that in the depths of his poet's soul, Wordsworth's conception of the Infinite, the Unknowable, and the Boundless, far transcended the limitations of a personal God.

I call particular attention to the first line of the stanza: "Our *birth* is but a sleep and a forgetting." Note that he does not say that *death* is a sleep and a forgetting, but that *birth* is such. This is a purely Theosophic and spiritual conception, because in reality birth into physical life for the vast majority of mankind means sleep or temporary death to the spiritual nature. With rare exceptions we cannot enter the gates of incarnation without crossing the waters of Lethe, drinking which we forget the high spiritual estate from which we sprang and towards which we are journeying back again.

We enter through the portals of birth into the dark realms of material existence in order that we may gain the needed experiences and learn the necessary lessons thereof; we pass out through the portals of death into the bright regions of the supernal spirit, there to assimilate those experiences and those lessons in blissful, quiet sleep, unbroken save by bright dreams born of our loftiest hopes and aspirations, our spiritual yearnings and impersonal loves. Both birth and death are portals in the endless corridors of eternal life. In the words of Walt Whitman:

I know I am deathless.

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass, . . . And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years, I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait . . . And as to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths. (No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.) Births have brought us richness and variety, And other births will bring us richness and variety.

Can we have any positive, first-hand knowledge of what happens when sleep overtakes the body and the brain ceases to function as it does normally during waking consciousness? I believe we can and that each of us does in varying degree, but that our understanding of what happens, and the vividness of our recollection thereof, depend entirely upon the grade we have reached in our evolution. Probably none but an Initiate can have full first-hand knowledge and relatively complete understanding of what happens when sleep overtakes the body; and Initiates are extremely rare.

What happens to the Ego—the 'I am I' consciousness—during sleep? That depends, as already stated, upon how the Ego—and we here refer to the human Ego, the re-incarnating entity—employs its waking consciousness: the thoughts it thinks, the aspirations it cherishes, the motives it entertains, the purposes it holds to, the emotions it indulges, the deeds it does. Is not this not only reasonable, but self-evident? Is it conceivable, for example, that the Ego of an Einstein, filled during its waking hours with thoughts of cosmic reach as well as with hopes and plans for the betterment of humanity, will, during sleep, go to the same place or state or condition as does the Ego of, let us say, a profiteer planning to foment a war in order to make millions out of the sale of munitions, or as does the Ego of a self-centered nobody, consumed with jealousy, anger, lust, or petty ambi-

tion? Of course not. We are told in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, that what becomes of us after death (and therefore in less degree what happens to us during sleep which is an incomplete death), depends very largely upon what we are during our waking consciousness. I can do no better than to quote some of the most illuminating passages from Letters Nos. XXIV B and XXV, in which the Master K.H. replies to questions from Mr. A. P. Sinnett concerning man's state after death, especially while the Ego is in Devachan. In some respects Mr. Sinnett's questions are not unlike those with which we have introduced our subject of discussion; and if we remember that death and sleep are brothers; that sleep is but a little death, and death but a more complete, relatively absolute sleep; and that Devachan is but a dream-state, "only a hundredfold intensified," we shall see that what the Master says about the Devachan applies equally to the state of dreams, only in much less degree:

Every just disembodied *four-fold* entity—whether it died a natural or violent death, from suicide or accident, mentally sane or insane, young or old, good, bad or indifferent—loses at the instant of death all recollection, it is mentally—*annihilated*; it sleeps its akasic sleep in the Kama-loka. This state lasts from a few hours, (rarely less) days, weeks, months—sometimes to several years. All this according to the entity, to its mental status at the moment of death, to the character of its death, etc. 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. And now the latter being a state determined and brought by its past life, the Ego does not fall headlong but sinks into it gradually and by easy stages. With the first dawn of that state appears that life (or rather *is once more lived over*

by the Ego) from its first day of consciousness to its last. From the most important down to the most trifling event, all are marshalled before the spiritual eye of the Ego; only, unlike the events of real life, those of them remain only that are chosen by the new *liver* (pardon the word) clinging to certain scenes and actors, these remain *permanently*—while all the others fade away to disappear for ever, or to return to their creator—the *shell*. Now try to understand this highly important, because so highly just and retributive law, in its effects. Out of the resurrected Past *nothing* remains but what the Ego has felt *spiritually*—that was evolved by and through, and lived over by his spiritual faculties—they be *love* or *hatred*. All that I am now trying to describe is in truth—indescribable. As no two men, not even two photographs of the same person, nor yet two leaves resemble line for line each other, so no two states in Deva-Chan are alike. Unless he be an adept, who can realize such a state in his *periodical* Devachan—how can one be expected to form a correct picture of the same?—pp. 186-7

The Devachan *State*, I repeat, can be as little described as explained, by giving a however minute and graphic description of the state of one ego taken at random, as all the human lives collectively could be described by the “Life of Napoleon” or that of any other man.

There are millions of various states of happiness and misery, *emotional* states having their source in the *physical* as well as the *spiritual* faculties and senses, and only the latter surviving. An honest labourer will feel differently from an honest *millionaire*. Miss Nightingale’s *state* will differ considerably from that of a young bride who dies before the consummation of what she regards as happiness. The two former love their families; the philanthropist—humanity; the girl centres the whole world in her future husband; the *melomaniac* knows

of no *higher* state of bliss and happiness than music—the most divine and *spiritual* of arts. The devachan merges from its highest into its lowest degree—by insensible gradations; while from the last step of *devachan*, the Ego will often find itself in *Avitcha*’s faintest state, which, towards the end of the “spiritual selection” of events may become a *bona fide* “Avitcha.” Remember, every feeling is relative. There is neither *good* nor *evil*, *happiness* nor *misery per se* . . . Search in the depths of your conscience and memory, and try to see what are the scenes that are likely to take their firm hold upon you; when once more in their presence you find yourself *living them over* again; and that, ensnared, you will have forgotten all the rest . . .

Yes; *Love* and *Hatred* are the only immortal feelings; but the gradations of tones along the seven by seven scales of the whole key-board of life, are numberless. And, since it is those two feelings—(or, to be correct, shall I risk being misunderstood again and say those two poles of man’s “Soul” which is a unity?)—that mould the future state of man, whether for *devachan* or *Avitcha* then the variety of such states must also be inexhaustible.—pp. 187-8

Why should it be supposed, that *devachan* is a monotonous condition *only* because some one moment of earthly sensation is indefinitely perpetuated—stretched, so to say, throughout aeons? It is not, it *cannot* be so. This would be contrary to all analogies and antagonistic to the law of effects under which results are proportioned to antecedent energies.

To make it clear you must keep in mind that there are two fields of causal manifestation, to wit: the objective and subjective. So the grosser energies, those which operate in the heavier or denser conditions of matter manifest objectively in physical life, their outcome being the new personality of each birth included

(Continued on page 18)

IN MEMORIAM

Death came with tragic suddenness to Alexander Watt of Kitchener Lodge in a motor accident on January 23. Mrs. Watt was severely injured and is still in the hospital.

Mr. Watt formed the Kitchener Lodge shortly after he moved from London, Ont. to Kitchener and from that time he was the main support of the Lodge. He was an earnest student of Theosophy and the Kabala and his lectures on these subjects were looked forward to by members of Toronto and Hamilton Lodges as Mr. Watt always presented his material in dynamic and original manner. The last farewells to this active worker were said at a Theosophical funeral service held on Thursday, January 26 at the Toronto Crematorium.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Watt and to Hugh and Alexander and to members of their families.

* * *

Another motor accident resulted in the instant death of Edward Godfrey Barthelmes of Toronto Lodge on Friday, Feb. 10. Mr. Barthelmes had been a member of Toronto Lodge for a number of years and was a constant attendant at its meetings. A Theosophical funeral service was held on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Our deep sympathy goes out to his wife, Helen, and to other members of the family in their sudden bereavement.

* * *

We also have to record the death of two other members of Toronto Lodge, Miss Mary Roebuck and Mrs. Alice Richardson.

Miss Roebuck joined Toronto Lodge in 1924 and for years was a very active worker, contributing many articles to *The Canadian Theosophist*. She was the sister of Senator Roebuck and acted as his secretary while he was in Toronto. In latter years Miss Roebuck resided in Chicago.

Mrs. Richardson resided in St. Catharines and while not a frequent visitor to Toronto Lodge, she was active in the local group at St. Catharines and vicinity.

The Theosophical Society in England suffered the loss of two of its prominent members in the past few months. Mrs. Josephine Ransom and Mrs. Adelaide Gardener. Mrs. Ransom had been nominated by our President, Mr. Sri Ram, as Vice-President of the Society but died of injuries received in a motor accident before she assumed office. Both these members were well-known throughout the Theosophical world and members everywhere will share with our English brothers the sense of deep loss to the international Society in the passing of these two workers.

* * *

In recording the passing of these six companions of the way, we were reminded that life on earth is a river—a constant stream of incoming souls ever sustaining its flow and an equally constant stream of souls leaving to enter once again the great ocean of life. We come in, play our little parts—each so important to us while we are here—and then depart. In the clearer light of the inner realms we will distill the essence of that life's experiences and then again return to earth—let us hope a little wiser, more tolerant and more capable than before.

THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, yet remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

Idyll of the White Locust

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MONTREAL LODGE

The Annual Meeting of Montreal Lodge was held on Tuesday, January 31 when the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Mr. Fred Griffiths, President; Mrs. B. Scott, Vice-President; Mrs. E. Goossens, Secretary and Mrs. M. Roth, Treasurer.

The Annual Report of the Secretary contained the following tribute to our late General Secretary, "I would like at this point

to pay a tribute to the memory of Colonel E. L. Thomson, D.S.O. As Secretary for Montreal Lodge, I had been brought into contact with him rather more frequently, a privilege I learned to appreciate and would have wished to continue. We surely realize that our loss here is one for the whole of Canada, wherever Theosophists foregather."

Mrs. E. Goossens, *Secretary*

FUTURE THEOSOPHISTS?

For some months past there has been a heated discussion carried on in the Province of Ontario concerning religious instruction in the schools of the Province.

A questionnaire was recently distributed to 1,100 High School pupils by Dr. Flowers of the Department of Educational Research of the Ontario College of Education, questioning them on their opinions regarding religion, education and government. On the question of what students should be taught respecting religious beliefs, the following summary of the replies indicates clearly the attitude of these young people:

	Boys	Girls
What beliefs are correct	17.2%	13.2%
Nothing at all about beliefs	3.7%	2.1%
How to arrive at their own beliefs	79.1%	84.7%

TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING

Plans are being prepared for the construction of a Temple of Understanding in Washington, D.C. which will have facilities for the six major religions of the world. The building will resemble a sun, from the centre of which will radiate six rays, each containing a chapel representing one of the six religions—Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. It is reported that the sponsors of the five million dollar scheme include many prominent lay and religious figures from all over the world.

DHARMA

The fundamental thought of the people of the East has been the thought embodied in that one word "Dharma". Every man has his Dharma. But what does Dharma mean? It means the obligations into which every man is born, the obligations which surround him from the moment of his birth. The obligations to the family, the obligations to the community, the obligations to the nation — these are the Dharma into which every human being comes by the gateway of birth. It is not an arbitrary thing but a natural one. It is not a thing which is created, but it is a thing which comes out of the long course of evolution. And out of that fundamental idea of Dharma comes the thought that the first thing in human life which makes it possible is the fact that that obligation is recognised and righteously discharged.

When the baby is born into the family, helpless, unable to feed itself, lying there without strength, without ability, naked, feeble, what is it that preserves the life of the babe? It is the duty of the mother and of the father the duty of the elder to the younger, the sense of obligation which surrounds helps, guards, and preserves the babe through the years of childhood and of youth; out of that discharge of duty to the child, grows the obligation of the child to the family and community. The elders guard the child in infancy. The child in its manhood must repay the obligations in its turn.

Thus we come to the idea of Manu, of the debts which every man is bound to pay; the debt to the Devas for giving him the whole of the natural advantages, the whole of the gifts of nature by which alone life is possible; the debt to the ancestors whose labours he has inherited and by the fruits of whose progress his life is rendered possible today; his debt to the human beings around him; to the animals below him, his debt to the Sages of the past, all these he comes into; they make the obligations into

which he is born, which he must pay back by the useful life of the man, the father and the citizen. Out of that idea of human duty, out of that recognition of human obligation, out of the realization that we are beings on whom duty has a claim—out of that grows the stability and the orderly progress of human society.

It is our duty, as citizens, to help every effort in our midst which is based on the old principles and which tries to adapt them to the changed conditions of human life. Let us stretch out our hand in help to all efforts of human improvement; strengthen those of our fellow-citizens whom we find able to guide the young and help the old along the path that combines modern progress with the ancient wisdom.

Federation Letter No. 76, *The Bombay Theosophical Bulletin*

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY

Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion. . . . It has to find objective expression in an all embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit—the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love. Its followers have to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality before they get the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic Unity and singleness of purpose in other associations and individuals. . . . The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission is the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties which would satisfy most and best the altruistic and right feeling in us; and the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life where they may be applied with most equitableness . . . such as the common work in view for all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task and

will require strenuous and persevering exertion, but it must lead you insensibly to progress and leave no room for any selfish aspirations.

An Elder Brother

BOOK REVIEW

Oedipus and Akhnaton, by Immanuel Velikovsky, published 1960, by Doubleday & Company Inc. 208 pp. \$5.75.

Was Oedipus a powerful Egyptian Pharaoh? Was the legend surrounding his name actually the true dramatic story of the father and family of Tutankhamen? Dr. Velikovsky answers these questions affirmatively, and devotes considerable research, scholarship and ratiocination to support his thesis. The result, while not convincing, brings to light many interesting facts, and gives the reader a lot to think about.

Akhnaton is of more than academic interest, whether considered in the light of Egyptian history or religion. His reign occurred during a period of Egypt's greatest prosperity, and although our knowledge of this era is tantalizingly sparse, it is archaeologically evident that both he and his father, Amenhotep III were rulers of utmost power, and were wealthy beyond imagination. Akhnaton, it will be remembered, is an important figure in the long religious history of Ancient Egypt, for it was he who attempted a startling reformation—as short lived as his reign—in replacing the cult of Amon ('king of the gods') with the worship of the solar disk Aton. Akhnaton, known prior to the schism as Amenhotep IV, decreed that only the religion of Aton was official, and forbade the worship of lesser deities; as a result, he has been credited, rather gratuitously, with being the founder of monotheism. Sigmund Freud, indeed, went so far as to suggest he was the mentor of Moses. When Tutankhamen ascended to the throne, Amon, as the Pharaoh's name suggests, once more became the major deity of the Egyptian pantheon.

That a number of similarities exist between the life of Akhnaton as we know it, and the well-documented tragic legend of Oedipus Rex cannot be denied; but most of the points of resemblance are superficial and inconclusive. The author attempts to support these parallels with arguments on a number of items which tend to go beyond the limits of credence: that the swollen-footed Oedipus is one and the same as the swollen-thighed Akhnaton; that the seven-gated Boetian Thebes of the legend was actually the hundred-gated Egyptian Thebes; that Akhnaton lived incestuously with his mother Tiy; that the character of the blind seer Tiresias was inspired by Amenhotep, son of Hapu; for each character and action in the myth, the question is begged in an attempt to match it with reality. To all of these comparisons and arguments, in the light of present knowledge, we can only reply: "possible, but not probable."

Is it more than a coincidence that psychoanalyst Freud should have been concerned with the principal characters of this book? Although of course, he did not dream of equating them, as has the author. Some readers may wish to consider the possibility that Dr. Velikovsky has made a "Freudian slip" in developing his theme, for the god despised and overthrown by Akhnaton, Amon, was sometimes called 'his mother's husband.'

In spite of the fact that a sceptical approach to this work is advisable, even total disagreement should not detract from the pleasure of reading it. Well-written and generously illustrated, this book is recommended to all who have a scholarly, or even passing interest in mythology, archaeology and Egyptology.

—TED DAVY

* * *

H. P. Blavatsky, Collected Writings, Vol. VIII, compiled by Boris de Zirkoff, published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 507 pages, illustrated, price \$7.00.

This is the first volume of the *Collected Works* to be published at Adyar — Vols. V, VI, and VII were published in the United States by Mr. de Zirkoff.

This volume has been assembled with the same pains-taking care which has characterized all Mr. de Zirkoff's efforts to assemble the entire writings of H.P.B. It contains her writings from September to December, 1887 and includes her editorials from those issues of *Lucifer* published during that period, together with some of H.P.B.'s most scholarly essays, such as,

"The History of a Planet", "Misconceptions", "The Origin of Evil", "The Science of Life", "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels", and many others.

As in the other volumes of this series there is a complete bibliography, together with biographical sketches and Notes and Comments by the Compiler.

This Volume and the other volumes of this series may be purchased from *Theosophia*, 551 So. Oxford Ave., Los Angeles 5, California.

SHOULD THE PRIESTESS RETURN?

BY ESME WYNNE-TYSON

During 1960 in which the first three women were admitted to the priesthood by the Lutheran Swedish Church, the subject of woman-priests, as they are rather significantly termed, and whether they should be allowed to preach, was well-aired in the British Press and discussed on the Radio. But whether it was approved of or not, everyone tended to regard it as a great innovation, something quite novel in the history of the human race that has happened only as a result of women's emancipation.

Whereas, in point of fact, as many theosophists know, the priestess was the outstanding figure in the ancient Western world. In the earliest Mystery Religions of which we have record women took the leading part, and it was the priestess of the Goddess rather than the priest of the God who ministered to humanity.

According to Hesiod, Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, had the chief hand in forming the Chaldean Mysteries, the first of those Mystery Religions that were afterwards found in all parts of the civilized world. The principal deity in the earliest of them was always the Mother-Goddess—whether known as Rhea—the deity with whom Semiramis was identified when she

was deified after her death, and pictured with Nimrod, previously deified as Nin, as an infant in her arms—or as Ceres, the Goddess of the most famous of all the Mysteries, those of Eleusis.

Semiramis, the remarkable woman who, according to Ovid (*Metam. IV:58, Pyramus and Thisbe*), and other writers, built the walls of Babylon, brought irrigation to parched lands, and taught mankind many arts, was understandably equated with Wisdom and therefore identified with the Queen of Heaven, the mother of the Gods. In Phrygia she was known as Cybele, the Idaean Goddess, in Egypt as Isis, and eventually both these deities were identified with Ceres who had originally been the wise woman who brought the art of agriculture to the West, for which favour Erechtheus, the king of Athens, gratefully established the Eleusinian Mysteries in her honour.

Semiramis, the earthly prototype of the Wisdom Goddess, was like her husband, Nimrod, an Ethiopian, but was said to be very beautiful, and her symbol was the dove—a black dove. Therefore it has been assumed that the two black doves who founded the first Oracle in the West, at Dodona,

and the famous shrine of Ammon in Libya, were two of her Egyptian priestesses. It is also significant that two doves were said to be concerned with founding the most famous of all shrines, at Delphi. According to mythology, Jupiter loosed the birds from the two extremities of the earth and they met at the place where the Temple was built, so Delphi was thought to be the centre of the earth. This shrine is said to have changed hands many times before the final appropriation of it by the priests of Apollo. The names of the earlier deities include Terra and her daughter Themis whose cult appears to have been similar to that of Ceres and Proserpine.

Indeed, throughout the ancient world we find that Woman, who, as tiller of the soil, learnt the secrets of nature, the times of planting, the value of herbs for medicine, and eventually the art of spinning, while the Man spent his life merely indulging the animal instincts of the hunter, was generally equated with Wisdom. As Ashtoreth, we find her being worshipped by that wisest of all Jewish kings, Solomon, and as Minerva, springing whole from the mind of Zeus. We also know that the Western world was first instructed by the Italian Sybil of Cumae who, as Tertullian pointed out, was older than all literature, her evidence being the "testimonia divinarum literarum"; while the word of wisdom of the Delphic oracle to which the greatest rulers of the earth sent for advice, was delivered by an inspired prophetess.

Therefore, if it is decided to admit women to the ministry, and so to reinstate the priestess, it will be no novelty but a return to a very old and often most successful custom. But what seems a little puzzling is *why* women should wish to preach the wholly masculinized version of Christianity which has been presented to the world as the gospel of Jesus Christ since the reign of Constantine, and has so lamentably failed to bring peace and goodwill to so-called Christendom. What purpose would be served by hearing from the lips

of woman the same teachings that, by their tolerance of violence, in such forms as Crusades, 'holy' wars and wars of defence, since the accommodation made by the Bishops with the Emperor in the fourth century when Christians, previously dedicated to non-violence, were given permission to 'bear arms', have brought mankind to its present plight of living under the menacing shadow of that culmination of violence—the nuclear deterrent? If women are going to preach to us, surely it should be of something that would produce happier and more 'Christian' results.

At the beginning of this century, the Irish mystic, George Russell, known as A.E., who was evidently well read in ancient religious history, suggested in one of his most beautiful essays, *Religion and Love*, that women should adopt a theology of their own, as they did in those far-off times when the priestess was considered to be the natural minister to humanity. He wrote:

I have often wondered whether there is not something wrong in our religious systems in that the same ritual, the same aspirations, are held to be sufficient both for men and women;

and went on to deplore the masculinity of Western religion, and how it had failed to recognize the divinity in woman, and therefore had under-estimated the importance of her qualities, those of compassionate love, tenderness and beauty—all such vitally needed correctives for the spirit of violence and utilitarianism that has increased beyond measure since A.E. had this vision of a more 'feminine' religion.

Therefore if women really want to satisfy the spiritual hunger that undoubtedly still exists even in this materialistic age, they would do well to abandon masculine Churchianity and to return to the original gospel of Jesus Christ. This may be recovered by an unbiassed reading of the New Testament, a study of the history and practices of the Church for the first three centuries, and the teachings of the Essenes, those holy men of the Jewish Faith from

whose sacred books it is evident—since the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls—that Jesus learnt much of his wisdom. The Essenes wholly renounced violence; they would neither fight nor make weapons of war; they were humane even in their diet, and their *Therapeutae* practised spiritual healing. They were also, according to such writers as Pliny and Philo, celibate, having renounced the world in disgust with its ways. By knowing their teachings, the sayings of Jesus may be more fully understood.

There is no doubt that the original Creed of Christ, which seems never to have been taught in its entirety since the days of Paul, would be a most suitable religion for women to adopt and teach, for it still remains the one hope of saving the world from the results of its own violence. But it need not be preached from the pulpits that have so long been associated with that adulterated form of religion referred to by Tolstoi, and others of his way of thinking, as 'Churchianity'. It can best be taught in the lives and homes of the 'priestesses', or, as it was originally, in the open air.

But although the ancients were right in considering spiritual ministry as essentially woman's work, to fit herself for the task the modern woman will have to recover and regain the wisdom from which, first owing to her subjugation by the male, and latterly by apeing him, she has so widely strayed. She must learn once again to worship, and how to teach others to worship, the divine *feminine* qualities of deity so lacking in Jehovah but so evident in Jesus with his unvarying compassion, his maternal sorrowing over Jerusalem, his tender healing of the sick. This divine equipoise of male-female qualities made of him the Perfect Man, the image and likeness of the androgynous Father-Mother God. Paul, who lacked the feminine nature, failed to recognize it in his Master and, in true, Jewish fashion, he insisted that the female should be subordinated to the male. His injunctions, found in 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, and 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, have undoubtedly

largely contributed to the tragic failure of Church Christianity to regenerate and heal mankind.

At the end of the last century it seemed that the priestess or perhaps the female Prophet, had returned in the forms of such Teachers and Seers as Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Besant, Anna Kingsford, Mary Baker Eddy, and, in Japan, Maekawa Miki. For a short period it looked as though women might assume the spiritual leadership of the Western world, and that the Wisdom-religion of the Goddess might be reinstated. But their gentle voices which spoke to the souls of men were soon drowned in the storm of cheers that greeted the dazzling magics of scientific materialism which catered for the physical man, and promised him a heaven on earth instead of in the spiritual spheres.

Sixty years later we find ourselves experiencing, not heaven, but the hell of a perpetual threat of a nuclear, and perhaps final, world war, after already having suffered two major conflicts in less than half a century, with the inevitable moral degeneration that follows the wholesale violation of spiritual laws, all of which has been made possible by that self-styled saviour, materialistic Science. We see now that we should have been wiser not to have forsaken the priestesses of the Wisdom-Goddess for the hierophants of the Cult of Utilitarianism. But, having recognized our mistake, can we not return to them?

A.E. believed not only that women should have their own religion, but that men should learn to worship the Goddess in woman, since we become like that which we contemplate. He wrote:

The man whose spirit has been obsessed by a beauty so long brooded upon that he has almost become that which he contemplated, owes much to the woman who may never be his.

For, as he implies, he will have absorbed her gentleness and other qualities necessary to the evolution of man to a better and more harmless species.

In the final paragraph of his essay, A.E. suggests that woman should return to her role of priestess, which once she so admirably filled, and expresses the hope that "from the temples where woman may be instructed she will come forth with strength in her to resist all pleading until the lover worship in her a divine womanhood: and that through their love the divided portions of the immortal nature may come together and be one as before the beginning of the world."*

Female aspirants to the ministry and to spiritual leadership would do well to read and consider this perceptive essay of a sincere mystic and theosophist.

**Imaginations And Reveries*, by A.E. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.)

THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP AND DEATH

(Continued from page 10)

within the grand cycle of the evolving individuality. The moral and spiritual activities find their sphere of effects in "devachan." For example: the vices, physical attractions, etc.—say, of a philosopher may result in the birth of a new philosopher, a king, a merchant, a rich Epicurean, or any other personality whose make-up was inevitable from the preponderating proclivities of the being in the next preceding birth. Bacon, for inst: whom a poet called—

"The greatest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind"—

might reappear in his next incarnation as a greedy money-getter, with extraordinary intellectual capacities. But the moral and spiritual qualities of the previous Bacon would also have to find a field in which their energies could expand themselves. Devachan is such field. Hence—all the great plans of moral reform of intellectual and spiritual research into abstract principles of nature, all the divine aspirations, would, in devachan come to fruition, and the abstract entity

previously known as the great Chancellor would occupy itself in this inner world of its own preparation, living, if not quite what one would call a *conscious* existence, at least a dream of such realistic vividness that none of the life-realities could ever match it. And this "dream" lasts—until Karma is satisfied in that direction, the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin, and the being moves into the next area of causes. This, it may find in the same world as before, or another, according to his or her stage of progression through the necessary rings and rounds of human development.—pp. 191-2

No; there are no clocks, no timepieces in devachan, my esteemed chela, though the whole Cosmos is a gigantic chronometer in one sense. Nor do we, mortals, —*ici bas meme*—take much, if any, cognizance of *time* during periods of happiness and bliss, and find them ever too short; a fact that does not in the least prevent us from enjoying that happiness all the same—when it does come. Have you ever given a thought to this little possibility that, perhaps, it is because their cup of bliss is full to its brim, that the "devachanee" loses "all sense of the lapse of time"; and that it is something that those who land in *Avitchi* do not, though as much as the *devachanee*, the *Avitchee* has no cognizance of time—i.e., of our earthly calculations of periods of time? I may also remind you in this connection that *time is something created entirely by ourselves*; that while one short second of intense agony may appear, even on earth, as an eternity to one man, to another, more fortunate, hours, days, and sometimes whole years may seem to flit like one brief moment; and that finally, of all the sentient and conscious beings on earth, man is the only animal that takes any cognizance of time, although it makes him neither happier nor wiser . . . Space and time may be—as Kant has it—not the product but

the regulators of the sensations, but only so far, as our sensations on *earth* are concerned, not those in devachan. There we do not find the *a priori* ideas of those "space and time" controlling the perceptions of the denizen of devachan in respect to the objects of *his* sense; but, on the contrary, we discover that it is the *devachanee* himself who absolutely creates both and annihilates them at the same time.—pp. 193-4

As physical existence has its cumulative intensity from infancy to prime, and its diminishing energy thenceforward to dotage and death, so the dream-life of devachan is lived correspondentially. Hence you are right in saying that the "Soul" can never awake to its mistake and find itself "cheated by nature"—the more so, as strictly speaking, the whole of the human life and its boasted realities, are no better than such "cheating". . . . Nature cheats no more the *devachanee* than she does the living, physical man. Nature provides for him far more *real* bliss and happiness *there*, than she does *here*, where all the conditions of evil and chance are against him, and his inherent helplessness—that of a straw violently blown hither and thither by every remorseless wind—has made unalloyed happiness on this earth an utter impossibility for the human being, whatever his chances and condition may be. Rather call this life an ugly, horrid nightmare, and you will be right. To call the devachan existence a "dream" in any other sense but that of a conventional term, well suited to our languages all full of misnomers—is to renounce for ever the knowledge of the esoteric doctrine—the sole custodian of truth. Let me then try once more to explain to you a few of the many states in Devachan and—Avitchi.

As in actual earth-life, so there is for the Ego in devachan—the first flutter of psychic life, the attainment of prime, the gradual exhaustion of force passing

into semi-unconsciousness, gradual oblivion and lethargy, total oblivion and—not death but birth: birth into another personality, and the resumption of action which daily begets new congeries of causes, that must be worked out in another term of Devachan, and still another physical rebirth as a new personality. What the lives in *devachan* and upon Earth shall be respectively in each instance is determined by Karma. And this weary round of birth upon birth must be ever and ever run through, until the being reaches the end of the seventh round, or—attains in the interim the wisdom of an Arhat, then that of a Buddha and thus gets relieved for a round or two,—having learned how to burst through the vicious circles—and to pass periodically into the Paranirvana.

But suppose it is not a question of a Bacon, a Goethe, a Shelley, a Howard, but of some hum-drum person, some colourless, flackless personality, who never impinged upon the world enough to make himself felt: what then? Simply that his devachanic state is as colourless and feeble as was his personality. How could it be otherwise since cause and effect are equal.—pp. 195-6

Yes, certainly there is "a change of occupation," a continual change in Devachan, just as much—and far more—as there is in the life of any man or woman who happens to follow his or *her whole life* one sole occupation whatever it may be; with that difference, that to the *Devachanee* his special occupation is always pleasant and fills *his* life with rapture. Change then there must be, for that dream-life is but the fruition, the harvest-time of those psychic seed-germs dropped from the tree of physical existence in our moments of dreams and hopes, fancy-glimpses of bliss and happiness stifled in an ungrateful social soil, blooming in the rosy dawn of Devachan, and ripening under its ever fructifying sky. No failures *there*, no disappoint-

ments! . . . There—all unrealized hopes, aspirations, dreams, become fully realized and the *dreams* of the objective become the *realities* of the subjective existence. And there behind the curtain of Maya its vapours and deceptive appearances are perceived by the adept, who has learnt the great secret how to penetrate thus deeply into the Arcana of being.—p. 197

Deva Chan is a state, not a locality. Rupa Loka, Arupa-Loka, and Kama-Loka are the three spheres of ascending spirituality in which the several groups of subjective entities find their attractions. In the Kama-Loka (semi-physical sphere) dwell the shells, the victims and suicides; and this sphere is divided into innumerable regions and sub-regions corresponding to the mental states of the comers at their hour of death. This is the glorious "Summer-land" of the Spiritualists, to whose horizons is limited the vision of their best seers—vision imperfect and deceptive because untrained and non-guided by *Alaya Vynyana* (hidden knowledge).—p. 198

The stay in Devachan is proportioned to the unfinished psychic impulses originating in earth-life: those persons whose attractions were preponderatingly material will sooner be drawn back into rebirth by the force of *Tanha*.—p. 200

Personality is the synonym for limitation, and the more contracted the person's ideas, the closer will he cling to the lower spheres of being, the longer loiter on the plane of selfish social intercourse. The social status of a being is, of course, a result of Karma; the law being that "like attracts like." The re-ascendant being is drawn into the gestative current with which the preponderating attractions coming over from the last birth make him assimilate. Thus one who died a ryot may be reborn a king, and the dead sovereign may next see the light in a coolie's tent. This law of attraction asserts itself in a thousand "ac-

cidents of birth"—than which there could be no more flagrant misnomer. . . . Nor are your inferences (as regards the well-being and enjoyment of the upper classes being due to a better Karma) quite correct in their general application. They have a eudemonistic ring about them which is hardly reconcilable with Karmic Law, since those "well-being and enjoyment" are oftener the causes of a new and overloaded Karma than the production or effects of the latter. Even as a "broad rule" poverty and humble condition in life are less a cause of sorrow than wealth and high birth, but of that later on.—pp. 200-1

According to the Christian Scriptures, when Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount, those who heard it knew that they listened to one who 'spake with authority.' The passages above quoted from the Master K.H. should convince one who reads them, or listens to them with intelligence and sympathy, that they are also the teachings of one who 'spake with authority.' Did you ever study anywhere such concentrated and illuminating doctrines concerning the mysteries of the after-death state? Almost every sentence, if pondered and analysed, could be used as the text of a lengthy discourse. They are packed full of truths of the utmost, vital importance to every thinking human being.

In the beginning of our study we asked ourselves: Is the veil of death really an impenetrable one? Has anyone ever been able actually to experience the mysteries of death, regain ordinary human consciousness, retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience, and transmit it to his fellows? Above are the answers to these questions in clear-cut, authoritative language. The passages from *The Mahatma Letters* prove to the man of open mind and sympathetic heart that the Master K.H. is telling things about which he is not speculating but which he *knows*. Proof is that which brings conviction to the mind, and the Master's teachings prove conclusively

that the veil of death is not an impenetrable one. Moreover, he tells us specifically in two sentences in the above citations that the adept actually does experience the mysteries of death and regain ordinary human consciousness; and proof that he does retain an accurate and reliable record of his experience and transmit it to his fellows is contained in the teachings which we have quoted. The two especially significant passages referred to are:

Unless he be an adept, who can realize such a state in his *periodical Devachan*—how can one be expected to form a correct picture of the same?—p. 187

And there behind the curtain of Maya its vapours and deceptive appearances are perceived by the adept, who has learned the great secret how to penetrate thus deeply into the Arcana of being.—p. 197

Reverting now to some of our questions: Who am I? Am I my body? What is the difference between me awake and me asleep? According to the teachings of Theosophy I am in my inmost parts a portion of the Infinite, a drop in the great ocean of Cosmic Life, and life, *per se*, is the one factor in Boundless Infinitude (itself made up of countless lives) which for ever is: THAT. *Tat twan asi*: That thou art. But this inmost part of me is the 'I am' consciousness, not the 'I am I' consciousness or Ego with which we are most concerned in dealing with the mysteries of sleep and death. Yet this Ego is certainly not the body, however much it may, to its own great sorrow and loss, identify itself with its house of flesh, the body and its all-varying desires. No, the body is but the lowest, the most evanescent and ever-changing part of man—an illusion according to Occult Science, and even according to ultra-modern physical Science mostly made up of holes, when considered from the standpoint of the electrons composing it. This does not mean that the body is without actual existence, but merely that it is not what it appears to be to the deceptive phys-

ical senses. No, the body is not the real man; for the real man can control his body, direct it, look upon it as his temple, in which case it tends ever more and more to become a fit vehicle for the Man himself, who is the Hierarch of his little universe, made up of countless millions of infinitesimal lives, to whom he must appear as a veritable divinity.

The difference between a man asleep and a man awake is that during sleep the real man loses the awareness of his body and is free to experience in the subjective worlds of etheric nature whatever he has, during consciousness on the objective, self-conscious plane, earned the right to experience; while during waking hours, unless the body is utterly quieted and silenced by force of will and thought, as in complete concentration or spiritual trance, the Ego identifies itself with the objective world of matter.

This brings us to our questions about dreams: Do dreams mean anything, or are they merely chaotic hallucinations? What causes them? Why are some beautiful, others ugly, some inspiring, others degrading, some peaceful, others full of terror? Is their interpretation a matter of guess-work, or are they subject to universal laws? Is there anyone capable of unraveling the mysteries of sleep in a manner that would satisfy the exacting canons of strictly scientific research?

The citations given from *The Mahatma Letters* contain the answers to these questions also—if not direct answers, then answers by implication. Let us remember that the dream-state is, *mutatis mutandis*, exactly comparable with the devachanic state after death, and that in the subjective world of dreams time and space exist not. With this introduction, and in order that we may better understand both the dream-world of earth-life and the longer dream-state of Devachan, I am going to use an illustration drawn from the every-day experience of millions of people, which, while perhaps not absolutely analogous to the mysteries

experienced on the subjective plane of the dream-world, is nevertheless close enough to suggest answers to our questions.

We are taught that the character of our dreams, whether during the short sleep between two days or during the longer sleep between two earth-lives, is dependent in the latter case upon the state of mind at the moment of death, and in the former case upon the state of mind at the moment of the nightly *little* death called sleep. But we must also remember that the state of mind at each of these moments is the resultant of all our thoughts and acts, our aspirations and our emotions, our yearnings and our desires, during the previous day or life, and during all preceding days or lives. So it behooves us to heed the old Pythagorean precept:

Do innocence; take heed before thou act,
Nor e'er let soft sleep upon thine eyelids steal,

Until the day's acts thou has three times
scann'd:

What have I done? What done amiss? What
left unwrought?

Go o'er the whole account, nor aught omit.
If evil, chide thee; or if good, rejoice.

This do, this meditate, this ever love,
And it will lead thee into Wisdom's Path.

Now, as to the character of our dreams and their interpretation: Let us compare the moment of loss of consciousness, in the case of sleep, to the recording microphone of a radio-transmitting instrument, which concentrates all the sounds in the broadcasting station into its small aperture and sends them out over the world, where they may be picked up by any receiving instrument properly attuned to the wave-length of the transmitting instrument. But these sounds which are broadcast, be they harmonious or cacophonous, are only of momentary duration, as are the dreams of ordinary nightly sleep.

Let us compare the moment of death to the needle-point of a phonographic recording instrument. Into that point (marvelous phenomenon, so commonplace that we take

it for granted and forget the marvel that it really is) is concentrated the combined resultant of every note being played by every instrumentalist in, let us say, the London Symphony Orchestra; and the phonographic record thereby made will be played over and over and over again, as long as the owners of the reproducing disk enjoy listening to it. For purposes of illustration we may compare everything that goes from this objective world through the doorway of *sleep* into the land of dreams, to the vibrations that are transmitted through the microphone along the etheric waves to radio-receiving sets attuned to vibrate synchronously with the broadcasting instrument. These vibrations are heard and then are heard no more; but they certainly do not perish, for radio-broadcasts may be preserved and reproduced months or years later.

To continue the illustration: we may compare the net result of the life just lived and synthesized in the state of mind at the moment of *death*, which determines the character of the devachanic dreams to be enjoyed by the Ego, to the point of the needle of the recording phonograph, which synthesizes the sounds produced by the whole of the Symphony Orchestra, and the record thus made is repeated over and over again—in the case of the phonograph as long as its owner cares to wind up the machine; in the case of the dream, until the original spiritual force of the love or hate which gave birth to the dream either of sleep or of the after-death state, has expended itself—until “the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin,” and the soul is reborn for another day in the same body, or another life in a new body.

And now as to the interpretation of these dreams: let us continue our illustration. Let us say that the London Symphony Orchestra broadcasts or records on a phonographic disk some standard work—a Beethoven symphony, Tschaikowsky's '1812', the Bridal Chorus from 'Lohengrin,' or the Overture to 'William Tell.' When these are

heard by those either listening in over the radio or merely listening to their reproduction from the phonographic record, what will be the various interpretations thereof? The casual hearer will merely say: "Oh, that's nice. It sounds familiar. I must have heard it before." The music-lover will greet it as an old friend. The student of music will listen even more attentively and may recall having studied the piece and perhaps performed some part of it. The one who has had the privilege of playing in a symphony orchestra himself will eagerly listen for the various movements, will know which instruments are playing the solo and which the accompaniment, whether it is the strings, the brass, the wood-winds, or the traps, which are producing a certain given effect.

(To Be Continued)

THE FALL OF NONCONFORMISM

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, minister of City Temple, London, England, the "Cathedral of Nonconformism" recently retired after twenty-four years of service. Dr. Weatherhead was a very liberal-minded man, the author of *The Case for Reincarnation* and during his term of ministry he had urged that religion should work in alliance with medicine and psychiatry. A staff of ten psychiatrists was constantly employed at the Temple. His sermons attracted huge crowds and at a time when most of the British Churches were all but empty, City Temple often had overflow congregations. One official said, "At nearby St. Paul's Cathedral, which holds 3,000, there are seldom more than 30 people at Evensong. If we have less than 1,500, we wonder what is the matter."

Dr. Weatherhead will be succeeded by Dr. Leonard Griffith, who for the past eleven years served at the United Church, Ottawa, Ontario. Dr. Griffith accepts the Bible as divinely inspired, is not interested in psychiatry and is an advocate of a return to orthodoxy. In his first sermon he

said that he intended to preach "sin and redemption . . . historic gospel, timeless, Bible-centred messages, which the church and only the church is capable of speaking."

THE WHITE LIE

There is no such thing as a white lie or a black lie or any other kind of lie. A lie is a lie, and the purpose of a lie is to deceive. We all deceive, consciously or unconsciously, whenever we wish to conceal what would otherwise have to be told. And there are few if any of us who do not have anything we want to avoid disclosing. It is human nature to want to be well thought of by others. In our contacts with others, we always try to give a good impression of ourselves, but in everyone's life there are mistakes and failures and perhaps bad habits that no one likes to make known unnecessarily, and so these things are concealed. When there is danger of such a thing being revealed, we are on our guard not to do so, even if it necessitates deception to some degree, or even a downright lie. To many of us who consider ourselves honest, this is a crisis we avoid if possible by making the lie as "white" as the circumstances permit. In fact, there are those of us who will not tell an obvious lie knowingly under any circumstances but manage a concealment in some other way.

When we understand all of this, and the injury to ourselves of wanting others to see us different from what we really are, we lose the desire to conceal anything. We are content to be our real selves at all times and under all circumstances. We are no longer concerned about what others think of us. We begin to know ourselves (as we are admonished by all the great Teachers down the ages), and life is easier and happier. Our friends can know us as we are, like us better that way, and have no desire to change us to a more hypocritical way of living.

—G. H. HALL

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