

*A chant for the neophytes
after their last initiation*



Dirges were chanted first during the Mysteries, over the apparently lifeless and entranced bodies of mystai who were made Eoptai (when they became the “dead in life”) and later over the really dead, the mummies.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. III, No. 16, December 1888, pp. 301-3; republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DIRGE FOR THE DEAD IN LIFE) X pp. 208-12.

The fragments that we publish below form one of the most remarkable instances of so-called automatic writing when the medium, without any previous knowledge of the subject, is impelled to set down upon the paper that which is not in the brain. The medium here is a young lady who knows nothing about this dirge, but we know that it is a portion of the chant which was sung over the entranced body of the neophyte who was about to become an initiate. The original was found in Egypt among the wrappings of a mummy by the grandfather of a gentleman, a Mason, from whom we got it. Although Egyptologists may have seen the fragment, we are certain that the young lady who wrote down the verses had never heard of it before and was much puzzled by the verses, if not by the signature of “Sēpher” given to her. Spiritualists may say it is something from the “spirits,” but we hold the view that it is a reminiscence from past incarnations of the one who wrote. These recollections are not so rare as is supposed, and while frequently they are not recognised as such, they nevertheless account for many strange things heard at séances with mediums and psychographic writers, as we were told it was only in the days of Ptolemy that this dirge began to be chanted over the really dead or the mummy. — ED.¹

KHIOS XXI

Bind up thy head and numb thy limbs, for hence cometh wondrous tidings for him who hath the ear open in the sepulchre.

Drink in of the honied words, and mix them with precision to mingle the bitter with the sweet.

Turn thine heart from all outer knowledge and hold thyself open for the knowledge of the spheres.

Now take quickly the pegs from the tents and let them fall in, for the mighty simoom is nigh at hand.

Art thou ready, pale mortal? Is thy head bandaged and thy blood inert, and hast thou parted with thy blood?

¹ [As appears from H.P. Blavatsky’s explanation in the article “The Dirge for the Dead,” which immediately follows the present one, the last two lines of this Editorial Note are faulty, due to a printer’s error. The second footnote of the next article explains what was the real meaning intended to be conveyed. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Art thou laid down eastward, and is thy inner ear listening for the music of the voice of the spheres?

Listen, pale mortal.

The voice is commencing to emit sound, and the turn of the tide is swiftly ebbing away.

Pale mortal, lying so like an image of Phineus,¹ wherefore art thou disquieted? The glitter of chariots will not reach those dazed eyes.

The sound of the battle-axe will not penetrate thy skull.

Now listen to the voice; thou art gone from hence, pale mortal, and the earth knows thee no more.

Thy bandaged head lies on the death stretcher and thy bloodless body is full of sweet-smelling myrrh.

Thou art a shade, blessed soul!

Thou art a shadowy vapour, pale face!

Thou art a bird of paradise, free soul!

Listen! dost thou hear the freedom of the wind? Thou art no longer on thine earth.

Those groans, pale face, they proceed from the land thou hast quitted.

That burning heat, poor wanderer, that is the desert thou hast passed through.

Now quickly proceed. No more time, poor dove, mayst thou linger, the burning ring is thy resting step.

See thou the circle, it burns with the seared light of a captive fire god!

Quickly step, pale face, and place thyself in the ring of fire.

KHIOS XXII

Now in the ring, does not the past stand out like a sheeted fury?

Dost thou behold the list of evil committed?

Listen! those echoes are the battle shouts, and those shrieking, harsh voices are thine own saved against thee.

Writhe now, poor soul; alas! thou must suffer.

See now the time has passed, and thou art lifted from thy ring of suffering.

Whence comes this change? Thy shadow has gained intensity, and thy form person.

Now take this key, terror stricken dove, and unlock that vast chest.

¹ Phineus, the King of Thrace, who became blind for attempting to see into futurity *without being duly initiated*, and who was killed by Hercules. An allusion to the closed eyes of the entranced seer, or the mummy. — *Ed.*

Why tremble? Those bodies are but the victims which thou hast sacrificed to thy evil lusts.

Those ghastly white, staring skulls thou hast slain with thine own hand.

Oh! those terrible bruised hearts are only those upon whom thou hast trodden.

Blench not, those maimed bodies are thy handiwork.

Oh! pale face, take brave hold. Thou hast gloried over these deeds — why shudder now? Life taken is life left.

Slain souls wait in Paradise.¹

Long lost hearts burn in the oil of the lamp of the king.

Hopeless maimed ones rest in the water queen's bosom.

Remember not to forget, but forget to remember.

There now, poor tired one, one more ordeal, one more flame-searching trial.

Jump quickly into the water, mark you its cool, delicate waving; why dost thou shrink? Art thou not hot and weary? It will refresh thee.

Now the time is past. Thou must jump. Days are passing, moments fleeting; jump thou, believe, jump.

There, come up now, and rest in this green grass.

Was it very terrible? Did the water burn thy very life?

Ah! so burned thou the life of others.

Pass, pass, pass!

KHIOS XXIII

Thou art free, see thou how beautiful are thy limbs.

Feel now how perfect is thy health.

Come away to the fire king, thy sufferings are passed.

Thou hast been tormented for a thousand and one years.

Hasten thou, no longer sorrowful wanderer, but bird of Paradise.

Fight no more, thou hast won Elysia.

Weep! Ah! thou canst not, thou hast no fount of tears.

Still thee now, still thee!

See, I bring thee onwards.

Seest thou not that thou art glorified!

¹ [In the *field of Aarzo* in the original.]

BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES
DIRGE FOR THE DEAD IN LIFE

See far, far agone, behind time, thy poor body.

See the bandaged head and the bloodless body, see the stuffed carcass.
Oh, laugh, laugh, laugh.

That was once thy dwelling-place.

Now come quickly, for we pass to the absorption; wait not, tarry not, linger not.

Oh! beautiful, moon-faced angel!

Oh! brilliant and happy soul!

Hark thou to the tinkle of those silver bells, they are the fire king's thoughts.

Listen to the convulsions of the atoms; the demons tremble.

Listen to the beautiful songs; they are the Gunlas.

Oh, happy soul, soon must we part, for I must return to the ferry, for I must
ferry souls across.

I cannot enter where thou canst enter, beautiful Bird of Paradise; tell the Fire
King when thou see'st him in his beauty that I languish to join him.

Now, good-bye, Brilliant-Bird, soar above, thou art free as air.

Thou art as a snowflake carried on the rosy pinions of the morn.

Thou art as the lovely wind that cooleth the hot earth.

Fare thee well, free dove, fare thee well; enter that golden glory and pass for
ever into the Fire King.

Gunla, Gunla, Gunla. . . .

SEPPER



Letter to “Lucifer” by J.H. Mitalmier, annotated by H.P. Blavatsky.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. III (18), February 1889, pp. 526-28. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DIRGE FOR THE DEAD) X pp. 212-17. [This article is published here, out of its actual chronological sequence, because of its direct bearing upon the one that precedes it. The footnotes signed ED. are by H.P. Blavatsky, Editor of *Lucifer*.

The interesting and highly-suggestive specimen of automatic writing that appeared in the December number of *Lucifer* is not a little remarkable in itself, but, pardon my saying, the theory put forward by you in explanation is very far from being satisfactory to the enquiring mind.¹ As to the dirge, I doubt if it be known to Egyptologists; it forms no portion of the *Book of the Dead*; there [213] is no copy among the papyri of the British Museum; and its appearance on the mummy of the Ptolemaic period is probably exceptional.² But my interest in the subject centres in your explanation that the communication in question is a reminiscence of past incarnations, presumably of the higher Ego of the writer. This theory of the Theosophist stands opposed to the hypothesis of the Spiritualist, who maintains such communications to be what they profess to be, viz., revelations by an independent, super-mundane intelligence, given through the medium of another organisation. From the standpoint you occupy, and the superior knowledge you possess, your explanation may, for aught I know to the contrary, be the true one, but permit me to say, you have not succeeded in making [214] it even plausible to the average reader.³ On the contrary, the impression left on my mind after reading the editorial note was that the Theosophical theory was trotted out in support of a preconceived doctrine rather than given as a scientific conclusion deduced from the facts. On the face of it the Theosophical theory fails either to cover the ground or explain the facts. My difficulty in accepting your theory of past reminiscences from former existences is not lessened by the mystery that surrounds the doctrine of reincarnation. As gathered from the lips of Theosophists and Theosophical literature, the doctrine appears to me to be largely tintured by the Buddhistic school of thought through which it has descended. It savours of the company it has kept so long, which may account for the apparently contradictory theo-

¹ No doubt it is not satisfactory to the Spiritualists, not any more than the doctrine of Purgatory or any other Roman Catholic tenet is satisfactory to the Protestant Predestinarian. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

² The Editor has premised by saying in the introductory note (which, by-the-by, was mangled out of recognition by some printer's mistake, who dropped out two whole lines) that some Egyptologists *may* have seen it, but never said they did. Of course, it is not in the *Book of the Dead*. Still, the Editor has seen it, and copied its translation in French and in English; and what is more, the *dirge* (a name given to the writing by the editor) is absolutely identical in spirit and form with other such dirges. These were chanted, ages ago, first during the Mysteries, over the apparently lifeless and entranced bodies of the *mystai* who were made *Epoptai* — i.e., passing through the trial of their last initiation, when they became the “Dead in life,” and later over the really dead — the mummies. It is this explanation, given in the two lines, which were omitted, or dropped out in printing, which thus disfigured the whole sense of the sentence; and putting a comma after “psychographic writers” followed only by the tail end of the above explanation, namely — “as we were told it was only in the days of Ptolemy that this dirge began to be chanted over the really dead or the mummy” — it made of the last closing sentence in the editorial preface perfect nonsense. Thus, it was not found on a “mummy of the Ptolemaic period,” but on one of the IVth or Vth Dynasty, if we remember right. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

³ Very likely. But the remark cuts both ways since no more has the Spiritualistic explanation ever satisfied us, or appeared “plausible” to the average Theosophist. Not only does the theory of the returning “Spirits,” so called, militate against the whole teaching of the Occult Sciences as taught in the East (the broad reincarnation theory of the Buddhist and Hindu Esoteric philosophies being assuredly that of the Theosophists), but it goes against the writer's personal experience of about 45 years' duration. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

ries obtaining on the subject of reincarnation.¹ The law of Karma, and the necessary and inevitable periodic return of the ego or astral monad into material existence, and on this planet as the universal destiny of every son and daughter of Adam, I understand to be the view of reincarnation held by Theosophists. But in *Isis Unveiled*, [Vol. I] page 351, the following teaching is given: [215]

Reincarnation, *i.e.*, the appearance of the same individual, or rather of his astral monad, twice on the same planet,² is not a rule in nature; it is an exception, like the teratological phenomenon of a two-headed infant. It is preceded by a violation of the laws of harmony of nature, and happens only when the latter, seeking to restore its disturbed equilibrium, violently throws back into earth-life the astral monad which had been tossed out of the circle of necessity by crime or accident. . . . If reason has been so far developed as to become active and discriminative, there is no [immediate] [216] reincarnation on this earth, for the three parts of the triune man³ have been united together, and he is capable of running the race.

Here, we have propounded a theory of re-incarnation that must, I think, address itself to every mind as at once probable, scientific, and rational;⁴ a reasonable provision of the All-wise for meeting the case of exceptions to a rule of life. But how can this theory of re-incarnation be accorded with the Theosophical teaching of the same

¹ The two theories (those of the Spiritualists and Theosophists) are a matter of personal preference. None of us need enforce his views on the other, or those who may differ from him. Time alone can show which side is right and which wrong. Meanwhile, those who study seriously the doctrine of reincarnation, and those supernal Intelligences who *can*, and *do* communicate with persons still in flesh, will find no contradictory theories among us. No one can judge of such a difficult and abstruse subject on simple *hearsay*. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

² Since 1882 when the mistake was first found out in *Isis Unveiled*, it has been repeatedly stated in *The Theosophist*, and last year in *The Path*, that the word “planet” was a mistake and that “cycle” was meant, *i.e.*, the “cycle of Devachanic rest.” This mistake, due to one of the literary editors — the writer knowing English more than imperfectly twelve years ago, and the editors being still more ignorant of Buddhism and Hinduism — has led to great confusion and numberless accusations of contradictions between the statements in *Isis* and later theosophical teaching. The paragraph quoted meant to upset the theory of the French Reincarnationists who maintain that the same *personality* is reincarnated, often a few days after death, so that a grandfather can be reborn as his own grand-daughter. Hence the idea was combated, and it was said that neither Buddha nor any of the Hindu philosophers ever taught reincarnation *in the same cycle*, or *of the same personality*, but of the “triune man” (vide note which follows) who, when properly united, was “capable of running the race” forward to perfection. The same and a worse mistake occurs on pages 346 and 347 (Vol. I). For on the former it is stated that the Hindus dread *reincarnation* “only on other and inferior planets,” instead of what is the case, that Hindus dread reincarnation *in other and inferior bodies*, of brutes and animals or *transmigration*, while on page 347 the said error of putting “planet” instead of “cycle” and “personality,” shows the author (a professed Buddhist) speaking as though Buddha had never taught the doctrine of reincarnation!! The sentence ought to read that the “*former life* believed in by Buddhists is not a life in the same cycle and personality,” as no one appreciates more than they do “the great doctrine of cycles.” As it reads now, however, namely that “this *former life* believed in by the Buddhists is not a *life on this planet*,” and this sentence on page 347 just preceded by that other (¶ 2 on page 346), “Thus, like the revolutions of a wheel, there is a *regular succession of death and birth*,” etc. — the whole reads like the raving of a lunatic, and a jumble of contradictory statements. If asked why the error was permitted to remain and run through ten editions, it is answered that

(a) the attention of the author was drawn to it only in 1882; and

(b) that the undersigned was not in a position to alter it from stereotyped plates which belonged to the American publisher and not to her.

The work was written under exceptional circumstances, and no doubt more than one great error may be discovered in *Isis Unveiled*. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

³ “The three parts,” are Ātma, Buddhi-Manas, which this condition of perfect union entitles to a rest in Devachan which cannot be less than 1,000 years in duration, sometimes 2,000, as the “cycle of rest” is proportioned to the merits and demerits of the *Devachani*. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

⁴ So it is, *minus* the erroneous qualification “only this planet,” and the omission of “immediate” before “*re-incarnation*.” If the correction and the substitution of the word planet by that of cycle, are made, there will be no contradiction. — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

doctrine? If the re-incarnation of *Isis* be the truth, then the explanation of automatic communications, such as that of the “Dirge for the Dead in Life,” or the spirit teachings of M.A. Oxon,¹ [217] by the “reminiscences of past existences,” will be found to utterly break down. The re-incarnation theory of explanation will have to be reconsidered and the intelligence who stoutly maintains that he is what he says he is, must be heard in his own defence.

J.H. MITALMIER, F.R.A.S.



Editorial Note by H.P. Blavatsky.

Re-incarnation in *Isis* was made faulty by the mistakes as explained, and no edition has been yet corrected.² The author proposes, as soon as time permits it, to re-edit entirely, to correct and abridge *Isis Unveiled* to one volume.



¹ [William Stainton Moses, 1839–1892, English cleric and spiritualist medium, often writing under the pen name of M.A. Oxon, guided by a spirit called “Imperator.” He was a member of the Spiritualist Group in England, as well as of The Theosophical Society, but he estranged himself from the latter.]

² [A new corrected and revised edition has been provided by Boris de Zirkoff, Compiler of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* <Unnumbered Series>, *Isis Unveiled*, [2-vols.]; Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972. — ED. PHIL.]

Suggested reading for students.



- ALL AVATĀRAS ARE IDENTICAL, WORLD-SAVIOURS GROWN OUT FROM A SINGLE SEED
- ARNOLD NOT AN INITIATE
- ARNOLD'S LIGHT OF ASIA
- AURA OF THE YOGI IN TRANCE
- BLAVATSKY ON APOLLONIUS OF TYANA
- BLAVATSKY ON COUNT ALESSANDRO DI CAGLIOSTRO
- BLAVATSKY ON DIVINE REINCARNATIONS IN TIBET
- BLAVATSKY ON SCHOPENHAUER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE COUNT DE SAINT-GERMAIN
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TRANS-HIMALAYAN FRATERNITY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPH OF INITIATION
- BLAVATSKY PAYS TRIBUTE TO ÉLIPHAS LEVI
- BUDDHISM IN ACTION IS UNCONDITIONAL COMPASSION, WISE AND MERCIFUL
- BUDDHISM, THE RELIGION OF PRE-VEDIC INDIA
- BURNET AND BLAVATSKY ON ANAXAGORAS' IDEAS AND IMPACT
- DATE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA'S DISINCARNATION
- DRAWING 1 - FORCES AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- DRAWING 2 - CHRIST OR HIGHER MANAS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES
- DRAWING 3 - NEOPHYTE ON TRIAL DYING IN THE CHRĒST CONDITION
- DRAWING 4 - NEOPHYTE ASCENDING TO THE CHRIST CONDITION
- DRAWING 5 - THE SECRET HEART SEAL
- DUTIES OF A DHYĀNI CHOCHAN
- EMERSON ON PLUTARCH'S MORALS
- EMPEDOCLES, PAGAN THAUMATURGIST

BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- ESOTERIC VERSUS TANTRIC TATTVAS (TABLE)
- EVERY INITIATE MUST BE AN ADEPT IN OCCULTISM
- G.R.S. MEAD'S ESSAY ON SIMON MAGUS
- GAUTAMA AND JESUS PARALLEL LIVES
- GAUTAMA BUDDHA BEATIFIED!
- GAUTAMA IS THE FIFTH TEACHER IN THE CURRENT PLANETARY ROUND
- HINTS ABOUT THE TRIADIC HYPOSTASIS OF BUDDHA
- HUMILITY IS NO VIRTUE
- IAMBLICHUS ON PYTHAGORAS
- IAMBLICHUS ON THEURGY (1915)
- JESUS BEN PANDIRA, THE HISTORICAL CHRIST
- JUDGE ON THE DWELLERS ON HIGH MOUNTAINS
- JULIAN AND SOCRATES WERE PUT TO DEATH FOR THE SAME CRIME
- KALI-YUGA AND THE KALKI-AVATĀRA
- LOHANS ARE THE MELLIFLUOUS DISCIPLES OF TATHĀGATA
- MAGIC OR THEURGY, PURPOSE AND PITFALLS
- MORALITY IS MAN'S PRISTINE EFFORT TO HARMONISE WITH UNIVERSAL LAW
- OCCULT METAPHYSICS UNRIDDED FROM MATERIALISTIC MISCONCEPTIONS
- OVID ON PYTHAGORAS' TEACHINGS AND ETHICS
- PARACELSUS BY FRANZ HARTMANN
- PARACELSUS ON SYMPATHETIC REMEDIES AND CURES
- PAUL AN INITIATE AND FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY
- PETER NOT AN INITIATE AND THE ENEMY OF PAUL
- PHERECYDES, AN EARLY WESTERN PHILOSOPHER
- PLUTARCH ON PHOCION CHRĒSTOS
- PLUTARCH ON THE TUTELARY DAIMŌN OF SOCRATES
- PORPHYRY ON PYTHAGORAS
- PRINCIPLES AND FORCES IN NATURE AND MAN (DIAGRAM)
- PRINCIPLES AND FORCES IN NATURE AND MAN (INSTRUCTIONS)
- PROCLUS ON SOCRATES' DAEMON (TAYLOR)
- SAMSON AND HERCULES ARE PERSONIFICATIONS OF NEOPHYTES
- SHANKARA WAS A CONTEMPORARY OF PATAÑJALI AND HIS CHELA
- THE ADEPTS DESTROY THE WICKED AND GUARD THE PATH OF THE VIRTUOUS

BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- THE HOLY RITES OF ELEUSIS WERE ARCHAIC WISDOM RELIGION
- THE INITIATE'S CROWN OF THORNS
- THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA LIES IN THE CLEAR APPERCEPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- THE LITTLE ONES ARE ABOVE THE LAW
- THE NOBLE GENIUS OF PARACELSUS
- THE REAL CHRIST IS BUDDHI-MANAS, THE GLORIFIED DIVINE EGO
- THE ROLE OF ADEPTS IN THE GREAT AMERICAN REVOLUTION
- THE TRIPLE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA'S EMBODIMENT
- THEOPHANIA AND OPTIONS OPEN TO THE ADEPT
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS – THE AURA OF SUGATA
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS – THE LOVE OF GODS
- THOMAS TAYLOR, THE ENGLISH PLATONIST
- WHY THE SECRECY OF INITIATES?
- ZANONI BY BULWER-LYTTON

