

# The Life of The Astral Body

SOME ADDITIONAL QUOTES TO ACCOMPANY  
CHAPTER V OF "ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY"

"Astral Body, or Astral "Double." The ethereal counterpart or shadow of man or animal. The *Linga Sharira*, the "Doppelganger." The reader must not confuse it with the ASTRAL SOUL, another name for the lower Manas, or Kama-Manas so-called, the reflection of the HIGHER EGO." (H. P. Blavatsky, "Theosophical Glossary" p. 37)

"**Linga Sharira** (Sanskrit.). The "body," i.e., the aerial symbol of the body. This term designates the *doppelganger* or the "astral body" of man or animal. It is the *eidolon* of the Greeks, the vital and prototypal body; the reflection of the men of flesh. It is born *before* and dies or fades out, with the disappearance of the last atom of the body." (HPB, "Theosophical Glossary" p. 190)

"Man has his "double" or *shadow*, properly so called, around which the physical body of the foetus – the future man – is built. ... This "double" is born with man, dies with him, and can never separate itself far from the body during life, and though surviving him, it disintegrates, *pari passu*, with the corpse. It is this which is sometimes seen over the graves like a luminous figure of the man that was, during certain atmospheric conditions. From its physical aspect it is, during life, *man's vital double*, and after death, only the gases given off from the decaying body. But, as regards its origin and essence, it is something more. This double is what we have agreed to call *lingasarira*, but which I would propose to call, for greater convenience, "Protean" or "Plastic Body."'" (HPB, "Dialogues Between The Two Editors: On Astral Bodies, or Doppelgangers")

"In the ordinary man who has not been trained in practical occultism or who has not the faculty by birth, the astral body cannot go more than a few feet from the physical one. It is a part of that physical, it sustains it and is incorporated in it just as the fibers of the mango are all through that fruit. But there are those who, by reason of practices pursued in former lives on the earth, have a power born with them of unconsciously sending out the astral body. These are mediums, some seers, and many hysterical, cataleptic, and scrofulous people. . . . [continued overleaf]

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

7<sup>TH</sup> - **ATMA** - SPIRIT - THE HIGHER SELF, ABSOLUTE UNIVERSAL DIVINE PRINCIPLE

} THE MONAD

6<sup>TH</sup> - **BUDDHI** - SPIRITUAL SOUL - THE VEHICLE OF PURE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

5<sup>TH</sup> - **MANAS**

**HIGHER** - HUMAN SOUL - PERMANENT REINCARNATING INDIVIDUALITY, THE HIGHER EGO



Antaskarana, link between higher and lower manas

**LOWER** - PERSONAL MIND - PRESENT PERSONALITY, THE LOWER EGO

4<sup>TH</sup> - **KAMA** - ANIMAL SOUL - DESIRES AND PASSIONS

3<sup>RD</sup> - **PRANA** - LIFE ENERGY, VITALITY

2<sup>ND</sup> - **LINGA SHARIRA** - ASTRAL BODY - SUBTLE UNSEEN "DOUBLE" OF THE PHYSICAL BODY

1<sup>ST</sup> - **STHULA SHARIRA** - PHYSICAL BODY - VEHICLE OF ALL THE OTHER PRINCIPLES DURING LIFE

THE UPPER TRIAD IS IMMORTAL AND ENDURING; THE LOWER QUATERNARY IS NEW WITH EACH SUCCESSIVE INCARNATION.

REFERENCES & SOURCES: "THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY" BY H.P. BLAVATSKY, P. 91-92, 135-136, 174-176.

... Those who have trained themselves by a long course of excessively hard discipline which reaches to the moral and mental nature and quite beyond the power of the average man of the day, can use the astral form at will, for they have gotten completely over the delusion that the physical body is a permanent part of them, and, besides, they have learned the chemical and electrical laws governing in this matter. In their case they act with knowledge and consciously; in the other cases the act is done without power to prevent it, or to bring it about at will, or to avoid the risks attendant on such use of potencies in nature of a high character." ([WQJ, "The Ocean of Theosophy"](#) p. 41-42)

"The astral body is made of matter of very fine texture as compared with the visible body, and has a great tensile strength, so that it changes but little during a lifetime, while the physical alters every moment. And not only has it this immense strength, but at the same time possesses an elasticity permitting its extension to a considerable distance. It is flexible, plastic, extensible, and strong. The matter of which it is composed is electrical and magnetic in its essence, and is just what the whole world was composed of in the dim past when the processes of evolution had not yet arrived at the point of producing the material body for man. But it is not raw or crude matter." ([WQJ, "The Ocean of Theosophy"](#) p. 39)

"The structure of the inner astral man is definite and coherent. ... Just as the outer body has a spine which is the column whereon the being sustains itself with the brain at the top, so the astral body has its spine and brain. It is material, for it is made of matter, however finely divided, and is not of the nature of the spirit. ... at birth it is potentially of a certain size, and when that limit is reached it stops the further extension of the body, making possible what are known today as average weights and average sizes. At the same time the outer body is kept in shape by the inner one until the period of decay. And this decay, followed by death, is not due to bodily disintegration *per se*, but to the fact that the term of the astral body is reached, when it is no longer able to hold the outer frame intact." ([WQJ, "Mesmerism" article](#))

"When an Adept reaches during his lifetime that state of holiness and purity that makes him "equal to the Angels," then at death his apparitional or astral body becomes as solid and tangible as was the late body, and is transformed into the real man. [Footnote: See the explanations given on the subject in "The Elixir of Life," by G.M. (From a Chela's Diary), *Five years of Theosophy*.] The old physical body, falling off like the cast-off serpent's skin, the body of the "new" man remains either visible or, at the option of the Adept, disappears from view, surrounded as it is by the Akashic shell that screens it. ... The Adept has the option of renouncing conscious Nirvana and rest, to work on earth for the good of mankind. This he can do in a two-fold way: either, as above said, by consolidating his astral body into physical appearance, he can reassume the self-same personality; or he can avail himself of an entirely new physical body, whether that of a newly-born infant or - as Shankaracharya is reported to have done with the body of a dead Rajah - by "entering a deserted sheath," and living in it as long as he chooses. This is what is called "continuous existence."" ([HPB, "Some Reasons for Secrecy" posthumously published article](#))

"Life is not the result of the operation of the organs, nor is it gone when the body dissolves. It is a universally pervasive principle. It is the ocean in which the earth floats; it permeates the globe and every being and object on it. It works unceasingly on and around us, pulsating against and through us forever. When we occupy a body we merely use a more specialized instrument than any other for dealing with both *Prana* and *Jiva*. Strictly speaking, *Prana* is breath; and as breath is necessary for continuance of life in the human machine, that is the better word. *Jiva* means "life," and also is applied to the living soul, for the life in general is derived from the Supreme Life itself. *Jiva* is therefore capable of general application, whereas *Prana* is more particular. ... whether we are alive or dead, life-energy is still there; in life among our organs sustaining them, in death among the innumerable creatures that arise from our destruction. We can no more do away with this life than we can erase the air in which the bird floats, and like the air it fills all the spaces on the planet, so that nowhere can we lose the benefit of it nor escape its final crushing power. But in working upon

the physical body, this life – *Prana* – needs a vehicle, means, or guide, and this vehicle is the astral body.” (WQJ, “The Ocean of Theosophy” p. 37-38)

“Sleep is a sign that waking life has become too strong for the physical organism, and that the force of the life current must be broken by changing the waking for the sleeping state. Ask a good clairvoyant to describe the aura of a person just refreshed by sleep, and that of another just before going to sleep. The former will be seen bathed in rhythmical vibrations of life currents – golden, blue, and rosy; these are the electrical waves of Life. The latter is, as it were, in a mist of intense golden-orange hue, composed of atoms whirling with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity, showing that the person begins to be too strongly saturated with Life; the life essence is too strong for his physical organs, and he must seek relief in the shadowy side of that essence, which side is the dream element, or physical sleep, one of the states of consciousness.” (HPB, “Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge” p. 71)

“So in sleep we are again absorbing and not resisting the Life Energy; when we wake we are throwing it off. But as it exists around us like an ocean in which we swim, our power to throw it off is necessarily limited. Just when we wake we are in equilibrium as to our organs and life; when we fall asleep we are yet more full of life than in the morning; it has exhausted us; it finally kills the body.” (WQJ, “The Ocean of Theosophy” p. 36)

“This brings us to an interesting theory offered by Theosophy respecting life itself as exhibited by man, his death and sleep. It relates also to what is generally called “fatigue.” The most usual explanation for the phenomenon of sleep is that the body becomes tired and more or less depleted of its vitality and then seeks repose. This, says Theosophy, is just the opposite of the truth, for, instead of having suffered a loss of vitality, the body, at the conclusion of the day, has more life in it than when it waked. During the waking state the life-waves rush into the body with greater intensity every hour, and, we being unable to resist them any longer than the period usually observed, they overpower us and we fall asleep. While sleeping, the life-waves adjust themselves to the molecules of the body; and when the equilibrium is complete we again wake to continue the contest with life. If this periodical adjustment did not occur, the life current would destroy us. ... Children, say the Adepts, sleep more than adults, and need earlier repose, because the bodily machine, being young and tender, is easily overcome by life and made to sleep.

“Of course, in so short an article, I cannot elaborate this theory; but, although not probably acceptable now to Science, it will be one day accepted as true. As it is beginning to be thought that electricity is all-pervading, so, perhaps, ere long it will be agreed that life is universal even in what we are used to calling dead matter.” (WQJ, “Echoes from the Orient” p. 17-18)

