

# Man: Bodies, Soul and Spirit – What are they?

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## Abstract

Man is a being with a complex constitution and some of his various aspects have been referred to as soul, spirit, etheric, astral and mental bodies. What are they and how do these different aspects relate to one another in order to form this evolving multifaceted being? Theosophical teachings provide us with insight into these questions and help elucidate the constitution of man.

## The Two-Fold Division – Body and Soul

Almost everyone is familiar with the two-fold division of man - body and soul.

The physical body or dense body is the one that we are most familiar with. The physical body is the one that we or rather our consciousness uses to interact with the physical world. And the *soul* being the immaterial, non-physical and enduring aspect of ourselves that is *separable* from the body at death.

## Soul is an overloaded word

The word *soul* seems to be an overloaded or generic word. It is used in many different ways and is employed in varying senses depending on the context in which it is used.

The same could also be said about the word *spirit*.

## Dictionary

For example **Webster's Dictionary** defines the word Soul as:

- the spiritual part of a person that *is believed to give life to the body* and in many religions is believed to live forever

And the Word Spirit as:

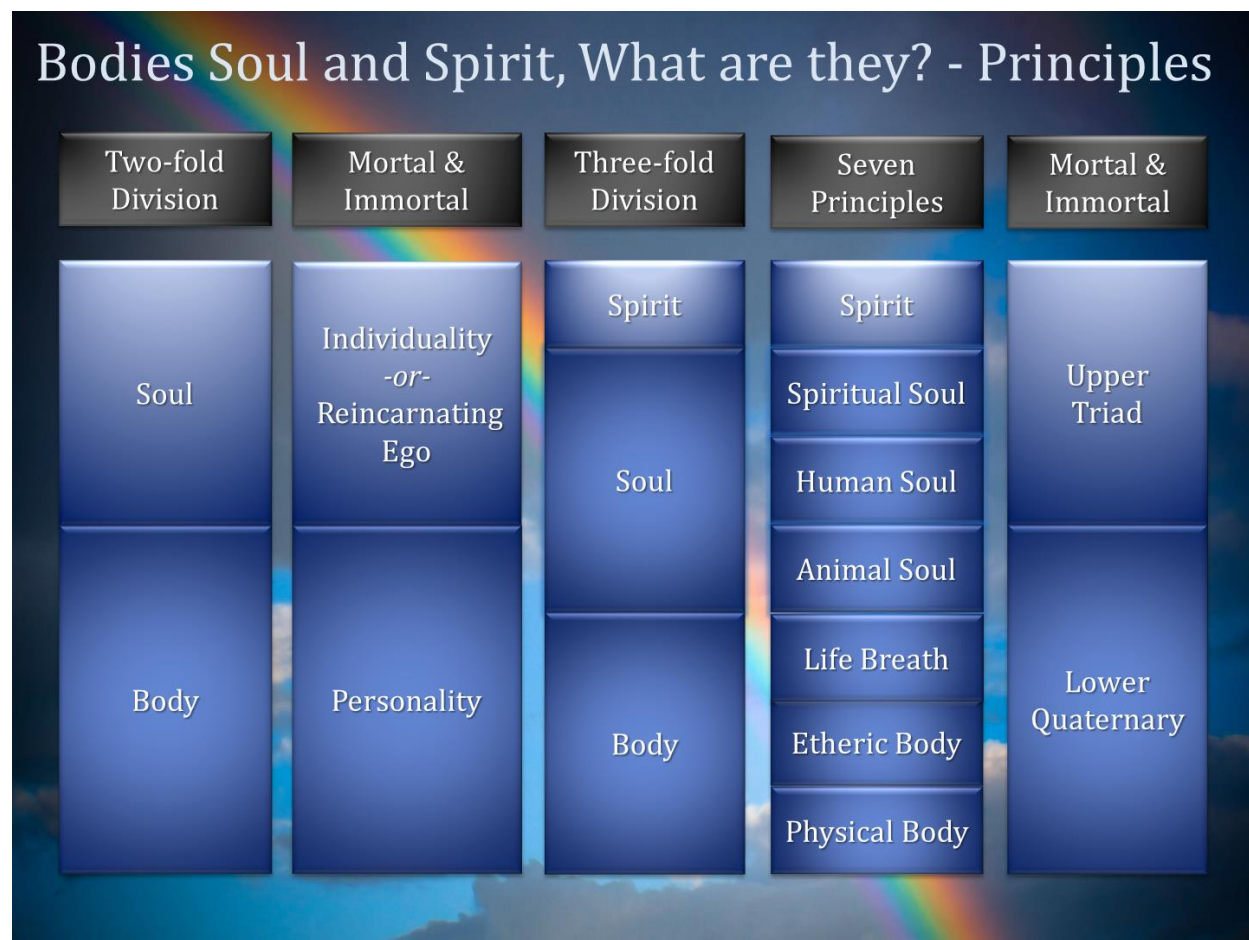
- the force within a person that *is believed to give the body life, energy, and power*

Sometimes we hear the words *soul* and *spirit* being used interchangeably as if they had no definite or distinct meaning. For example, “Man has a body and soul” or a “body and spirit” which is not quite correct because there is a distinction - as we shall see.

Theosophical teachings provide some clarity and definition to the terms Body, Soul and Spirit.

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## The Soul

Annie Besant put it eloquently when she said that, "A soul is a living intelligence, capable of learning by experience and evolving into a nobly intellectual and spiritual entity by the discipline of life on earth. *This is the real man.*"

## Man Is a Soul and Has a Body

We may have heard that man possesses something called a *soul* which is supposed to survive the death of the body.

C.W. Leadbeater writes that: "Man *is* a soul and *has* a body. The body is not the man; it is only the clothing of the man. Death is the laying aside of a worn-out garment, and it is no more the end of the man than it is the end of you when you remove your overcoat."

He also tells us that "We should also take care of our body, treasure it and perform good deeds because a field, a village, possessions or a house may be obtained again but this body - *never again.*"

Without a body, we do not attain the *object of the soul*.

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### Principles

Man according to the Theosophical teaching is a sevenfold being, or, in the usual phrase, has a septenary constitution. Putting it in another way, man's nature has seven aspects, may be studied from seven different points of view, and is composed of seven principles.

The clearest and best way of all in which to think of man is to regard him as one, the Spirit or True Self; this belongs to the highest region of the universe, and is universal, the same for all; it is a ray of God, a spark from the divine fire. This is to become an individual, reflecting the divine perfection, a son that grows into the likeness of his father.

For this purpose the Spirit, or true Self, is clothed in garment after garment, each garment belonging to a definite region of the universe, and enabling the Self to come into contact with that region, gain knowledge of it, and work in it. It thus gains experience, and all its latent potentialities are gradually drawn out into active powers. These garments, or sheaths, are distinguishable from each other both theoretically and practically.

If a man be looked at clairvoyantly each is distinguishable by the eye, and they are separable each from each either during physical life or at death, according to the nature of any particular sheath. Whatever words may be used, the fact remains the same – that he is essentially sevenfold, an evolving being, part of whose nature has already been manifested, part remaining latent at present, so far as the vast majority of humankind is concerned. Man's consciousness is able to function through as many of these aspects as have been already evolved in him into activity. (SPOM)

### The Body (Personality) – The Lower Quaternary

The *Personality* is the mortal part of man which is cast off after what we call death, and renewed for each successive birth.<sup>1</sup>

The *Personality* consists of the four lower aspects which are: the physical or dense body, combined with the etheric body, which is the vehicle of the life-force or vitality also known as Prāna (or the breath of life) and the Desire Body (sometimes called the astral body or kāma), which all together are also referred to as *the lower quaternary*.

### The Ego – The Upper Triad

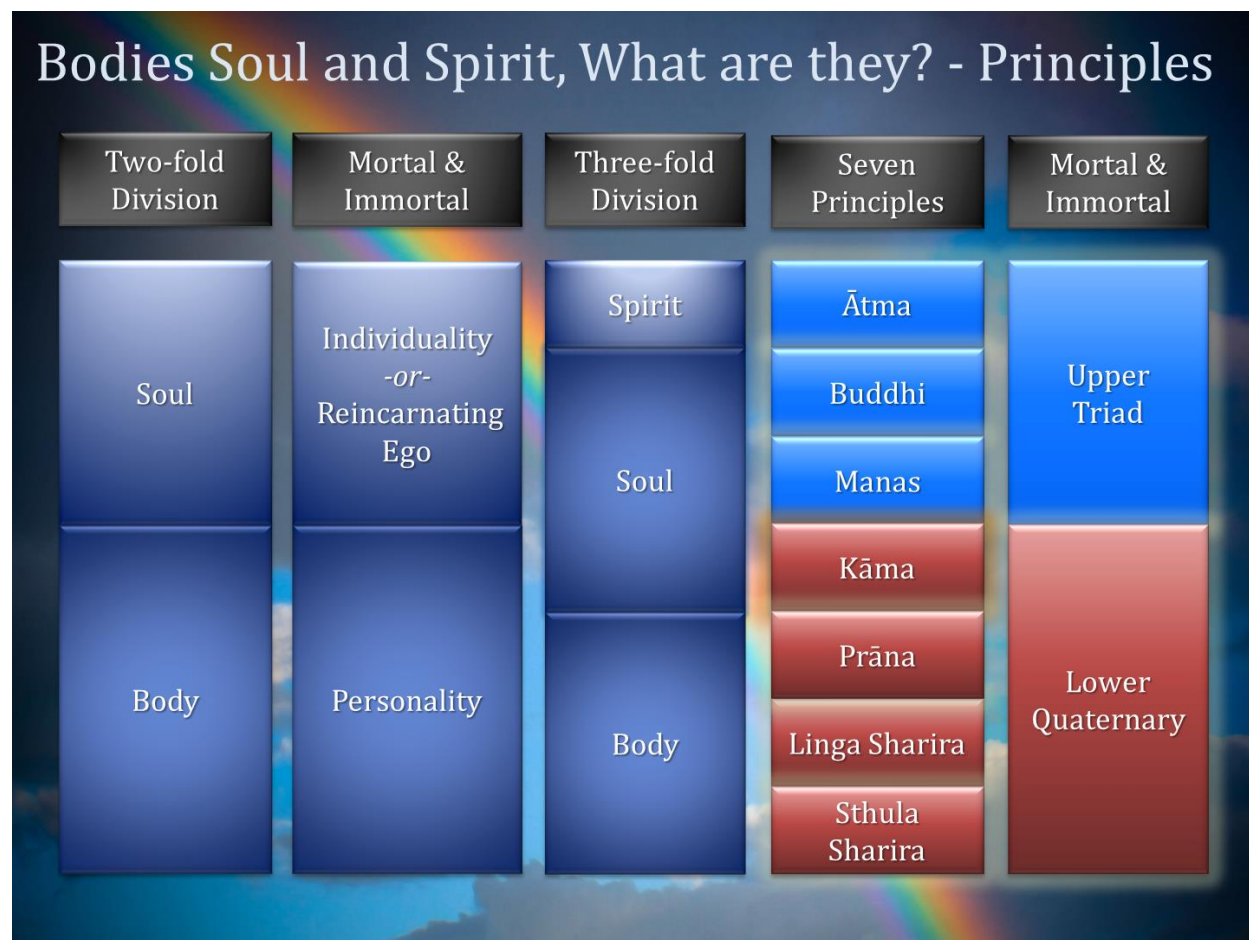
The remaining three higher aspects of man's constitution, Ātma (Spirit), Buddhi (Spiritual Soul) and Manas (Mind), also known as *the upper triad*, are immortal and form Man's *Individuality*, or *Reincarnating Ego* which remains throughout his various incarnations.

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<sup>1</sup> Besant, Annie *Theosophy*

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## The Personality and the Ego

Madame Blavatsky writes:

That which the public in general calls “soul,” we speak of as the “reincarnating Ego.” (CW11, 451)

So instead, of using the terms *body* and *soul*, let’s use the term *personality* for the word *body* and use *Ego* in place of the word *soul*.

### The Ego puts forth the Personality (The Soul puts forth the Body)

The *Ego* puts forth the *Personality* which is the mortal or temporary part of man in order that he may evolve and become more perfect - The object of the soul.

The *Personality* must be used because it is only through that as an instrument what we can reach and interact with other people in the world and gain physical experience.

The *Ego* is far finer and greater than the personality and is a living, evolving self-conscious intelligence. C. W. Leadbeater who was a clairvoyant, wrote that “Until one can see the Ego in men, one has no conception of how great a being an ego really is, how infinitely wiser and stronger than the incarnate entity.”

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#### The Ego Requires Evolution

The Ego is magnificent but it is not perfect and so it needs the personality to perfect itself through evolution. What he needs mainly for his evolution is definiteness, accuracy. He is magnificent but, if we may venture to say so, vague in his magnificence.

#### The Ego Desires To Develop That Fragment of Himself Which Has Incarnated

The Ego desires to develop through that fragment of himself which is incarnated down here. It is through the experiences of the *body* down here that he will learn how to do the things which he desires.

His desire is evolution; he puts some of himself down, a tip of a finger, as it were into lower planes; that fingertip learns definiteness, but when it returns into him at the end of one short cycle of physical, astral, and mental life, what it takes back is only, if one might put it materially, a small amount of definiteness.

#### The Attributes that the Body has Developed Dilute When Returned to the Soul

The *Ego* develops *accuracy* in a *Personality*, but when that accuracy goes back into the *Ego* the same amount has to be spread over the entirety (causal body).

The amount which was quite sufficient to make one *Personality* very accurate, when it goes into the *Ego*, is only a fractional part of his requirement. The *Ego* may need many lives to develop enough of a certain quality to make it prominent in the next life.

Since the *Ego* does not keep a particular piece of himself which is to become the *Personality*, but out of the whole entirety of himself, he puts down something - *yet it is never the same piece twice*.

## Spirit – Ātma – Seventh Principle

The *Ego* is the higher part of man and the highest aspect of man's *Ego* is Spirit, which is also called Ātma and is the same for all.

As said earlier, in dealing with man's constitution, Theosophy divides him in a definite and scientific way . . . and the use of the word Spirit is restricted to that Divine part of man that manifests on the highest planes of the universe, and that is distinguished by its consciousness of unity.

Unity is the key-note of spirit, for below the spiritual realm - *all is division*.

#### The Spirit as Sunshine

Spirit is neither your Spirit nor mine, but like sunlight shines on us all. It is the universally diffused "divine principle," and is inseparable from its one and absolute Meta-Spirit, as the sunbeam is inseparable from sunlight. (KT)

Spirit (*or Ātma*) has no body, no form, is imponderable, invisible and indivisible, that which does not *exist* and yet *is*, as the Buddhists say of Nirvana.



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### Theosophical Division of the Soul

In the *Ancient Wisdom*, Annie Besant writes that “The soul is the human intellect, the link between the Divine Spirit in man and his Body. It is the Soul, the individual, the “I”, which develops by evolution.

Theosophy regards the soul as the *intermediate non-physical* principle that serves as a *vehicle of the Spirit* (or Ātma.)

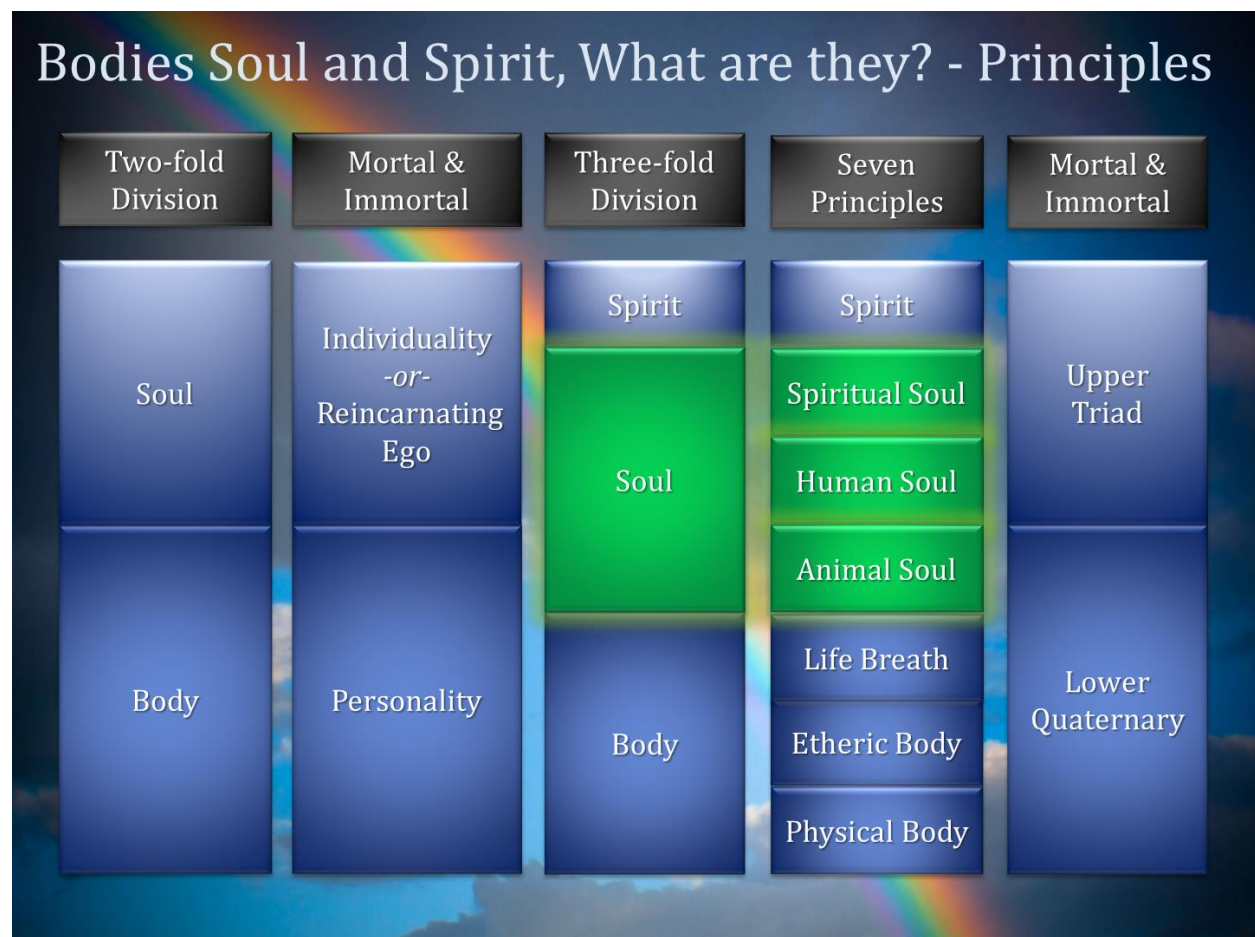
Soul is a generic term and there are in men One Soul with three aspects:

1. Spiritual Soul - Buddhi
2. Human Soul - The mind or Manas or Nous
3. Animal Soul - Kāma - Terrestrial

The *Spiritual Soul* is *immortal*

The *Human Soul* (also referred to as Mind or Manas) is *semi-mortal* and its survival depends on whether it followed the spiritual soul.

Of the *Animal Soul*, nothing remains after death, it is *mortal*. (KT)



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#### Spiritual Soul – Buddhi – Sixth Principle

Buddhi, a universal principle, which is shared by all living creatures is also the Spiritual Soul in man and the vehicle of Spirit or Ātma.

#### The Spirit Shines on to Man through the Spiritual Soul

The Spirit as we said was universal and a unity belonging to no one and to everyone. Spirit only shines over the mortal and that which enters into him and pervades the whole body being only its omnipresent rays, or light, reflected through the Spiritual Soul, its vehicle. (KT paraphrase)

We can use an analogy to illustrate the relationship between Spirit and Spiritual Soul. Imagine using a mirror to reflect the sunlight in order to brighten a dark room. We can say that the mirror is the means or vehicle by which the sun can be brought to the room. For those who are in the room, the sunlight and the mirror are inseparable, because if there were no mirror, there would be no sunlight there. However, from the point of view of the sun, it remains utterly unaffected by our mirror and darkened room. (PS)

When buddhi is in an impersonal state, that is, when it is not united with manas, and acts merely as the vehicle of the higher self (ātman), it is referred to by Blavatsky as the “Spiritual Soul” and it is only as the sixth principle begins to assimilate the subtlest or more spiritual elements of manas that it acquires an individual consciousness: (PS)

As KH writes in letter number 68 (chronological)

Man's sixth principle, as something purely spiritual could not exist, or have conscious being in the Devachan, unless it assimilated some of the more abstract and pure of the mental attributes of the fifth principle. . . . (cML 68, 192)

And HPB writes:

Buddhi becomes conscious by the accretions it gets from Manas after every new incarnation and the death of man. (SD1, 244)

THE SPIRITUAL divine EGO is the Spiritual soul or Buddhi, in close union with Manas, the mind-principle, without which it is no EGO at all, but only the Atmic Vehicle. (KT, 176)

#### Intuition

Spiritual Soul is the aspect of the soul (or principle in man) which gives to him . . . the faculty which manifests as intuition.

Spiritual Soul is present in *all* of us but latent in *most* of us.

Even before we have any definite consciousness on the intuitional plane we often receive reflections from it. Intuitions occasionally come through into our daily life . . . now and then we receive a flash of the real knowledge of the spirit . . . These priceless flashes bring us a knowledge which we feel to be absolutely certain, though in many cases we cannot give any intellectual reason for it. (CWL, Commentary on Light on the Path)

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### Human Soul – Manas – Fifth Principle

In general, the *Human Soul* is the *Mind* also referred to as *Manas*. (KT)

Let's extend our analogy where the *Spirit* is like the sun and *Spiritual Soul* (Buddhi) its radiation or reflection to include the *Human Soul*.

As we know, sunlight is homogeneously diffused all around us. Now, if we take a magnifying glass *representing the Human Soul*, and concentrate part of that sunlight so that it becomes an individual beam, that beam will be seen as "separate" from the surrounding sunlight. The individualized beam is not really different in nature from the rest of the sunlight, nor is it really separate, but it appears to be so by virtue of the magnifying glass. This "individualized beam" becomes the reincarnating individuality. (PS)

Spirit, Spiritual Soul and Human Soul or Ātma, Buddhi and Manas together form the immortal reincarnating Individuality.

The *Human Soul* is the seat of reason and memory and is the mental faculty which makes of man an intelligent and moral being, and distinguishes him from the animal. (TG)

### The Complex Nature of Manas

When describing the complex nature of the mind, Madame Blavatsky writes that:

It is this nature, mysterious, Protean<sup>2</sup>, [*Readily taking on varied shapes, forms, or meanings. Exhibiting considerable variety or diversity*] beyond any grasp, and almost shadowy in its correlations with the other principles, that is most difficult to realize, and still more so to explain. Manas is a "principle," and yet it is an "Entity" and individuality or Ego. (KT)

### The Dual Nature of Manas

Once incarnated, the Mind or Manas becomes dual in its nature.

It has a higher, "heaven-aspiring" aspect and a lower "human quality of thinking" aspect.

The higher aspect, also known as the "formless", gravitates toward the Spiritual Soul (Buddhi) and its lower aspect "with form" or lower Manas is attracted toward Kāma, which is mortal and the seat of animal desires and passions in man. (KT)

The *Lower Mind*, taken as a whole, is given reason and self-conscious knowledge of right and wrong, of good and evil and in each Earth-Life is what it makes of itself. (CW12, 711 paraphrase)

The lower aspect gathers experience to carry back to its own source, the higher aspect, which accumulates and stores it throughout the cycle of reincarnations. (MAHB)

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<sup>2</sup> 1. Readily taking on varied shapes, forms, or meanings. 2. Exhibiting considerable variety or diversity.



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#### Animal Soul – Kāma Rūpa - Fourth Principle

Animal Soul (Kāma-Rūpa) is the seat of animal desires and passions (*e.g.*, personal desire, lust, hatred, malice, greed, pride, arrogance, jealousy, envy). But it also contains higher desires such as affection, devotion and sympathy. This is the center of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity. (KT)

#### Kāma-Rūpa

When the man dies, his lower three principles leave him forever; *i.e.*, body, life, and the vehicle of the latter, the astral body [*we are calling it the etheric*] or the double of the living man.

And then, his four principles — the central or middle principle, the animal soul or Kama-rupa, with what it has assimilated from the lower Manas, and the higher triad find themselves in Kama-loka. The latter is an astral locality, the limbus of scholastic theology, the Hades of the ancients, and, strictly speaking, a locality only in a relative sense. (KT)

#### The Blood Is a Good Symbol of Kāma-Rūpa

The Kāma during life does not form a Body which can be separated from the physical Body. It is intermolecular, answering molecule for molecule to the physical Body, and inseparable from it molecularly. Thus it is a form yet not a form; a form within the physical Body, but incapable of being projected outward as a form. This is the Inner, or Astral Man, in whom are located the centres of sensation, the psychic senses, and on whose intermolecular rapport with the physical Body, all sensation and purposive action depend. At death, every cell and molecule gives out this essence, and from it, with the dregs of the Auric Envelope, is formed the separate Kāma-Rūpa; but this can never come during life.

The Blood is a good symbol of Kāma-Rūpa, for while within the Body, filling every portion but confined in vessels, it takes the shape of the Body and has a form, though in itself formless. If the term Kāma-Rūpa be used to indicate this intermolecular structure which is the Psychic Man, then the post mortem separate form must be called the Kāma-Rūpa-Astral, or Astral of the Kāma-Rūpa. (CW12, 708)

#### The Etheric Double – Linga Sharira – Third Principle

This principle will be discussed in the next section on Bodies.

#### Prāna – Life or Vital Principle- Second Principle

The remaining "Principle" "*Prāna*," or "Life," is, strictly speaking, the radiating force or Energy of Ātma — as the Universal Life and the ONE SELF, — ITS lower or rather (in its effects) more physical, because manifesting, aspect. Prāna or Life permeates the whole being of the objective Universe; and is called a "principle" only because it is an indispensable factor and the *deus ex machina*<sup>3</sup> of the living man. (KT)

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<sup>3</sup> *deus ex machina* - an unexpected power or event saving a seemingly hopeless situation, especially as a contrived plot device in a play or novel.

For example, a character or thing that suddenly enters the story in a novel, play, movie, etc., and solves a problem that had previously seemed impossible to solve; an unexpected power or event saving a seemingly

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The exoteric meaning of Prāna is Life, or Vital principle - Necessary only to Sthula-Sharira, Linga Sharira, Kama Rupa, and the functions of the lower *Manas*, which embrace all those limited to the (physical) brain. (KT)

### Jīva and Prāna

Although the student can no longer look on Prāna as one of the Seven Principles, since it is the Universal Life, he must not forget that it vivifies all, as Prānic energy. Every Principle is a differentiation of Jīva, and the life-motion in each is Prāna, “the Breath of Life.” It is Nephesh: and Jīva becomes Prāna only when the child is born. Thus Kāma depends on Prāna, without which there would be no Kāma. Prāna wakes the Kāmic germs to life, and it makes all desires vital and living.

Prāna is not, it must be remembered, the production of the countless “lives” that make up the human Body, nor of the congeries of the cells and atoms of the Body. It is the parent of the “lives,” not their product. As an example, a sponge may be immersed in an ocean; the water in the sponge’s interior may be compared to Prāna; the water outside is Jīva. Prāna is the motor-principle in life.

The Body leaves Prāna, Prāna does not leave it. Take out the sponge from the water, and it becomes dry—thus symbolizing death. (CW12, 707)

Bodies Soul and Spirit, What are they?					
Plane		Principle	Body	Mortality	Realm
Ātmic	Ātma – Spirit			Individuality -or- Reincarnating Ego	Spiritual
Buddhic	Buddhi - Spiritual Soul				
Mental		Higher Manas	Causal Body	Personality	Intellectual
		Lower or Kāma Manas	Mental Body		Psychic
Astral	Prāna	Kāma	Desire Body		
Physical	Linga Sharira		Etheric Body		Physical
		Sthula Sharira	Dense Physical Body		

hopeless situation, esp. as a contrived plot device; a stage device in Greek and Roman drama in which a god appeared in the sky by means of a crane (Greek, mechane) to resolve the plot of a play.

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#### Prāna

The remaining "Principle" "Prāna," or "Life," is, strictly speaking, the radiating force or Energy of Atma — as the Universal Life and the ONE SELF, — ITS lower or rather (in its effects) more physical, because manifesting, aspect. Prāna or Life permeates the whole being of the objective Universe; and is called a "principle" only because it is an indispensable factor and the *deus ex machina* of the living man. (KT)

Prana is in reality the universal Life Principle. (CW12, 523)

Prāna, the Breath of Life, the same as *Nephesh*. At the death of a living being, Prāna re-becomes Jīva [*Atma*]. Prāna, on earth at any rate, is thus but a mode of life, a constant cyclic motion from within outwardly and back again, an out-breathing and in-breathing of the ONE LIFE, or Jīva, the synonym of the Absolute and Unknowable Deity. Prāna is not abstract life, or Jīva, but its aspect in a world of delusion. In *The Theosophist*, May, 1888, p. 478, Prna is said to be "one stage finer than the gross matter of the earth." (CW12, 607)

#### The Physical Dense Body – Sthula Sharira - First Principle

This principle will be discussed in the next section on Bodies.

#### Kama-Manas

H. P. B. divided the astral and the mental into

- kāmīc
- kama-manasic
- lower mānasic

that was one of her divisions. You have here a triple division—pure kāma (mere animal passion); kāma-manasic (mentality mixed with these, thus producing the emotional life); and then the lower manasic, the mind, purified 'from the disruptive influences of passion and emotion, and becoming a relatively pure mentality, with the personal emotions, which were pure and unselfish in their character, added to the mind as an enrichment.

The mortal part, kāma-manas and the lower manas (desire-mind and lower mind)—that has to die. It struggles for its life. The immortal part must either draw out of that all that is valuable, and so enrich itself with the product of the life-period that is over, carrying the whole of that into the immortal part in order to build up the next personality, or it must lose it.

(Annie Besant – Talks with a class)

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### The Bodies

#### What is a Body?

The real man is the individuality or Ego, the living, thinking, conscious Self. Bodies are the various casings in which that Self is enclosed, each casing enabling the Ego to function in some definite region of the universe and man himself is the actor in all his bodies.

#### Body Vehicle Analogy

A man might use a carriage on the land, a ship on the water, an airplane in the air, to travel from one place to another, and yet in all places he remains himself.

One body is grosser than another, one shorter-lived than another, one has fewer capacities than another; but all have this in common - that relatively to the man they are transient. Man's bodies are his instruments, his servants, wearing out and renewed according to their nature, and adapted to his varying needs, his growing powers. (MAHB)

- The Physical Body with its Dense and Etheric Parts
- The Astral or Desire Body
- The Mental Body

### Upādhi

Upādhi means that through which a force acts. The word "vehicle" is sometimes used to convey the same idea. If "force" be regarded as acting, "matter" is the upādhi through which it acts. Thus the Lower Manas is the upādhi through which the Higher can work; the Linga-Śarīra is the upādhi through which Prāna can work. The Sthūla Śarīra is the upādhi for all the principles acting on the physical plane. (CW12, 692fn)

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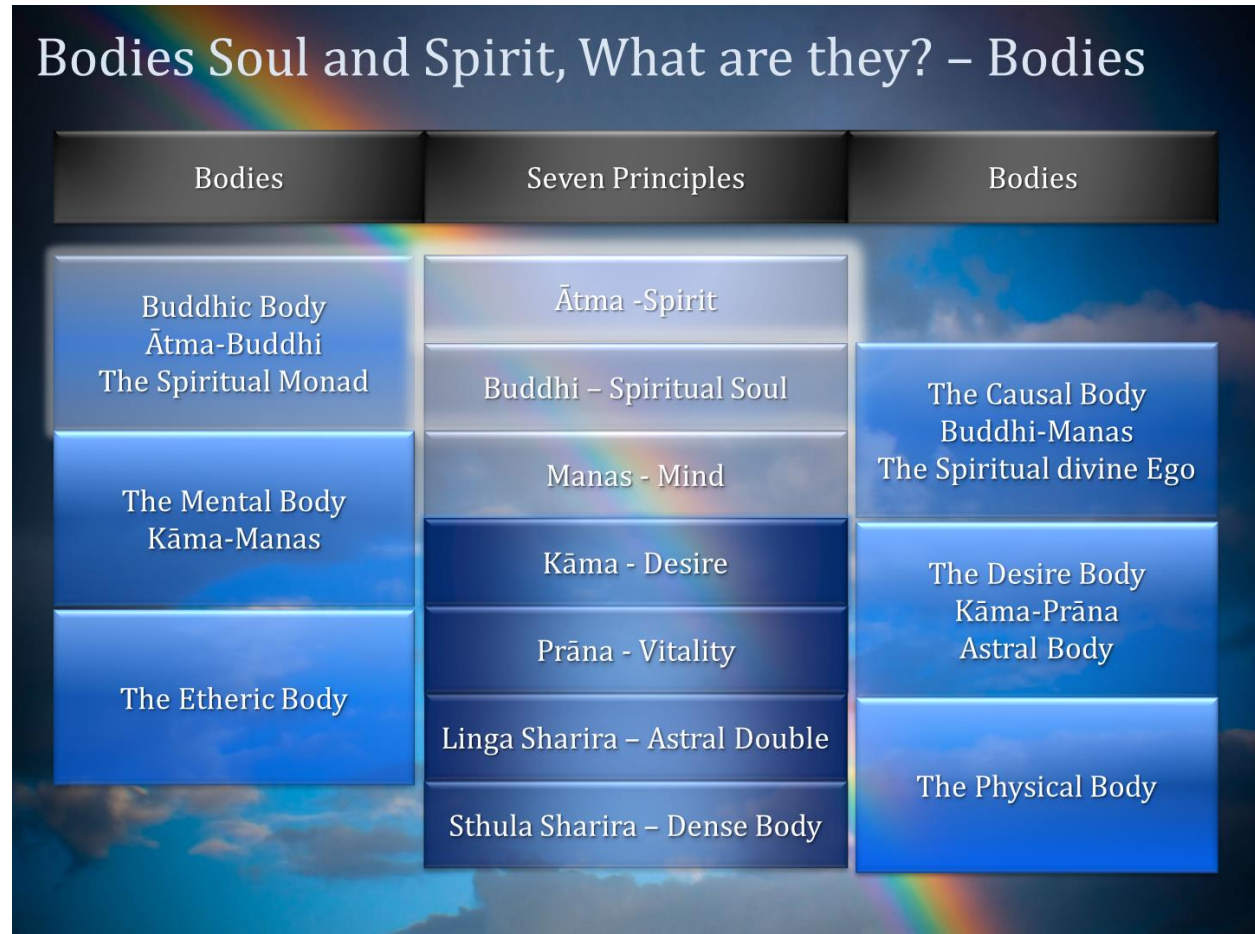
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#### Corresponding Faculties a note from *Invisible Worlds* by Kurt Leland

A problem arises for serious students of Theosophy when trying to reconcile the early teachings of HPB and the masters with those of AB and CWL. The bodies described by the latter do not seem to match up with the seven principles. This has led some people to feel that HPB's Theosophy and that of AB and CWL are irreconcilable. (See Geoffrey Farthing, *The Etheric Double? The Far Reaching Effects of a False Assumption.*)<sup>4</sup>

With respect to the seven principles there are two primary reasons for confusion.

#### The First Reason for Confusion

First Besant's published books generally consist of lectures to mixed audiences of members and nonmembers of the TS. She did not want to frighten off prospective members with abstruse Sanskrit terminology, so she used English equivalents. The following passage relating to one of the ES instructions ... expresses just such a policy.

In speaking to the world and to beginners, it is neither necessary nor useful to be over-particular about words in such a language as English, which is not a scientific one, so long as ideas are expressed so as to be comprehended by such beginners from their standpoint. (CW12, 677)

The result of this policy, which Besant practiced for the next forty years, was that HPB's teachings on the seven principles seemed to go underground. Besant apparently assumed that serious students of Theosophy would go directly to HPB's works for such teachings. However when speaking to members of the TS she would sometimes use HPB's original Sanskrit terms - a practice in accord with her admonition in the same ES instruction that HPB "laid great stress on the definite adoption of terms and their systematic use." (CW12, 677)

Such lectures were rarely collected in book form, though they were sometime published in Theosophical magazines. This material has all but disappeared from the Theosophical canon since Besant's death, leaving the impression that she supplanted HPB's teachings on the principles with others of her own.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.theosophyonline.com/userfiles/FARTHING\\_ETHERIC\\_DOUBLE\\_MAIN\\_TEXT\(1\).pdf](http://www.theosophyonline.com/userfiles/FARTHING_ETHERIC_DOUBLE_MAIN_TEXT(1).pdf)  
<http://www.theosophyonline.com/ler.php?id=3679#.Vj9hsLerSUI>



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### The Second Reason for Confusion

The second reason for the confusion about the principles as taught by HPB and Besant is that Besant was primarily concerned with the subtle bodies.

Even serious students of Theosophy sometimes do not grasp the difference between a principle and a body, so when they read Besant's writings on bodies, they appear to be irreconcilable with HPB's teaching on the principles.

*A body is always a compound of two or more principles.* Thus the physical body, as described by Besant in this passage, is a compound of the dense body and the etheric double: Sthula Sharira and Linga Sharira (astral double). Besant made the change from astral to etheric because in HPB's voluminous writings the word *astral* was used in so many ways – it could describe any subtle body, plane, or state of consciousness. HPB did sometimes describe the astral double as ethereal (e.g., in her definition of the astral body or double as “the ethereal counterpart of shadow of man or animal” [TG, Astral Body])

That word too must not have seemed specific enough for Besant since any subtle body could be described as ethereal. The term *etheric* arose in connection with Besant's clairvoyant investigations into occult chemistry.

The desire body corresponds to the principles of *kāma* (desire) and *prāna* (vitality). This compound is called *kāma-prāna* or *prāna-kāma* in HPB's oral teachings, which Besant was about to publish in 1897 as part of the so-called third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. Besant would sometimes call the desire body the astral body, though she often stated that she was not happy with the latter term (e.g., *Man and His Bodies*, footnote p.49).<sup>5</sup>

As Besant notes, the mental body corresponds to “lower mind,” which in HPB's writings is called *kāma-manas*.

Note that *prāna* is listed as a fourth component in our makeup but is not described or listed as a body. Here it is a pure (uncompounded) principle, as in HPB's teachings.

The next body, called the soul or thinker, is elsewhere identified as the causal body or ego - what HPB calls *karana shariria* (Sanskrit: “causal body”). It correlates to the higher mind or buddhi *manas*.

Finally, “spirit in its vehicle” corresponds to *ātma-buddhi* which HPB sometimes called the spiritual monad. The word *vehicle* is a translation of the Sanskrit term *upādhi* (basis). Here the spirit is the seventh principle and its vehicle is the sixth principle, buddhi. Besant would sometimes call this the buddhic body.

(Incidentally the word *monad* often causes confusion for readers new to Theosophy who expect it to mean an invisible whole – yet the spiritual monad seems to have two parts, *atman* and *buddhi*.)

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<sup>5</sup> The word “astral”, starry, is not a very happy one, but it has been used during so many centuries to denote super-physical matter that it would now be difficult to dislodge it. It was probably at first chosen by observers in consequence of the luminous appearance of astral as compared with physical matter. The student is advised to read, on this whole subject, Manual No. V., *The Astral Plane*, by C. W. Leadbeater.]

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HPB used the word to refer to amalgams<sup>6</sup> of a principle and an upādhi *that function as a unit*. Thus the hyphenated term *ātma-buddhi* refers to a monad – as indicated, the *spiritual monad*.)

This notion of an upper principle finding its vehicle in one or more lower principles is the key to the question of how Besant's teachings on the bodies correspond to HPB's teachings on the principles.

In fact, a body always consists of a higher principle using one or more lower principles as a vehicle. A vehicle is required for that higher principle to manifest itself and gain experience on a lower plane. Without the principle associated with the lower plane, the higher principle cannot make contact with that plane.

Thus buddhi-manas – the causal body is the principle of buddhi using manas as a vehicle.

Kama-manas – The mental body - is the principle of manas using kāma as a vehicle.

The desire body is kāma – prāna, the principle of kāma using prāna as a vehicle.

The physical body is kāma using linga sharira and sthula sharira as a vehicle.

### The Physical Bodies – Dense and Etheric

#### Physical Matter

Physical matter consists of seven states, solid, liquid, gas and four etheric states of much subtler matter called Ether I, II, III & IV.

#### The Two Divisions of the Physical Body

Man's physical body has two main divisions : the dense body, made of constituents from the three lower levels of the physical plane, solids, liquids, and gases: and the etheric double, violet-gray or blue-gray in color, interpenetrating the dense body and composed of materials drawn from the four higher levels.

#### Duration of the Physical Bodies

Both are formed for the duration of one physical life and are cast off at death. Both the dense and etheric bodies are subject to the same laws of space and time.

#### The Dense Body – Sthula Śarira

The general function of the physical body is to receive contacts from the physical world (the dense universe), and send the report of them inwards, to serve as materials from which the conscious entity inhabiting the body is to elaborate knowledge. The eye, the ear, the touch, the taste, the smell all are avenues of knowledge of the external universe.

#### Sthula-Sharira – Vehicle of all 6 Principles

The Sthula-Śarira is the Physical body and is the vehicle of all the other "principles" during life. (KT)

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<sup>6</sup> A combination of diverse elements; a mixture:

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### The Etheric Body – Linga Śarira

Its etheric portion has also the duty of acting as a medium through which the life-currents poured out from the sun can be adapted to the uses of the denser particles. It is the vehicle of the life forces, of electric and magnetic energies and is correlated to the ethereal world. In this play the vitality which keeps in orderly activity all the cells and molecules of the physical body.

(AB – Paraphrase, What Theosophy Is)

The etheric double is composed of these four ethers which interpenetrate the solid, liquid and gaseous constituents of the dense body, surrounding every particle with an etheric envelope, and thus presenting a perfect duplicate of the denser form.

This etheric double is perfectly visible to the trained sight, and is violet-grey in color, coarse or fine in its texture as dense body is coarse or fine. (MAHB)

### Prāna – Life Energy

The sun is the great reservoir of the electrical, magnetic, and vital forces for our system, and it pours out abundantly these streams of life-giving energy. They are taken in by the etheric doubles of all minerals, vegetables, animals, and men, and are by them transmuted into the various life-energies needed by each entity. (AW)

### The Etheric Double Distributes the Life Energy across the Physical Body

The etheric doubles draw in, specialize, and distribute them over their physical counterparts. It has been observed that in vigorous health much more of the life-energies are transmuted than the physical body requires for its own support, and that the surplus is rayed out and is taken up and utilized by the weaker. What is technically called the health aura is the part of the etheric double that extends a few inches from the whole surface of the body and shows radiating lines, like the radii of a sphere, going outwards in all directions. These lines droop when vitality is diminished below the point of health, and resume their radiating character with renewed vigor. (AW)

### HPB - Linga Sharira - Etheric Body - Vehicle of Prāna

Linga Sharira (*Sans.*) The "body," *i.e.*, the aerial symbol of the body. This term designates the *döppelgänger* [double], or the "astral body" of man or animal. It is the *eidolon* of the Greeks, the vital and *prototypal* body, the reflection of the man of flesh. It is born before man and dies or fades out with the disappearance of the last atom of the body. (TG)

The Linga-Śarīra . . . is the vehicle of Prāna, and supports life in the Body. It is the reservoir or sponge of life, gathering it up from all the natural kingdoms around, and it is the intermediary between the kingdoms of Prāna and physical life. Life cannot pass immediately and directly from the subjective to the objective, for nature passes gradually from sphere to sphere, overleaping none. The Linga-Śarīra serves as the intermediary between Prāna and Sthūla-Śarīra, drawing life from the ocean of Jīva [*Atma*], and pumping it in the physical Body as Prāna. For life is, in reality, Divinity, Parabrahman, the Universal Deity. But in order that it may manifest on the physical plane it must be assimilated to the matter of that plane; this cannot be done directly, as the purely physical is too gross, and thus it needs a vehicle - the Linga-Śarīra. . . The Linga-Śarīra of one incarnation fades out, as the Sthūla-Śarīra to which it belongs rots out . . . It is the subjective image of the man that is to be, the model of the physical body in which the child is to be formed and developed. . . (CW12 704)

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### The Astral or Desire Body

*A body of desire*; . . . which expresses the collective whole of appetites, cravings, desires and passions which are found in connection with the body. It is the bridge between the Physical body and the mind. Pleasure and pain have in this their seat, Heat and cold, hunger and thirst, sexual desire, love and hatred, in their simplest forms, are contacted by the soul through this body of desire. This body is made of astral matter and is correlated to the astral world. (AB – What Theosophy Is)

### The Astral Body Connects the Physical Body to the Mind

Without the general action through the astral body there would be no connection between the external world and the mind of man, no connection between impacts made on the physical senses and the perception of them by the mind. (MAHB)

### What the Astral Body Looks like – More and Less Developed

It is easy to picture a man in a well-formed astral body; you can think of him as dropping the physical body and standing up in a subtler, more luminous copy of it, visible in his own likeness to clairvoyant vision, though invisible to ordinary sight.

I have said "a well-formed astral body," meaning "that a man has reached a fairly high level of intellectual culture or of spiritual growth."

For an undeveloped person in his astral body presents a very inchoate<sup>7</sup> appearance. Its outline is undefined, its materials are dull and ill-arranged, and if withdrawn from the body it is a mere shapeless, shifting cloud, obviously unfit to act as an independent vehicle; it is, in truth, rather a fragment of astral matter than an organized astral body - a mass of astral protoplasm of an amoeboid type. (MAHB)

### The Mental Bodies (Manas – The Mind)

As said earlier when we talked about the Human Soul, the mind has a dual nature during incarnation.

The lower of these, is called the *Mind Body* which persists after death and passes into Devachan, or the heaven world, but disintegrating when the life on the lower or "with form" levels of Devachan is over.

The higher one is known as the *Causal body* . . . it is the permanent body of the Ego, or man, lasting from life to life. (MAHBp)

### The Mind Body (Lower Manas or Kāma Manas)<sup>8</sup>

*A mental body*; this is made of mental matter and is correlated to the lower levels of the mental world. It is the immediate garment of the *[human]* soul, and is often called the lower mind – the organ for all concrete thinking. (AB – What Theosophy Is)

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<sup>7</sup> inchoate 1. Being in a beginning or early stage; incipient 2. Imperfectly formed or developed; disordered or incoherent:

<sup>8</sup> Annie Besant notes that the Mental Body corresponds to the "Lower mind" which in HPB's writings is called Kama-Manas.

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While it is especially the vehicle of consciousness for that part of the mental plane, it works upon and through the astral and physical bodies in all the manifestations that we call those of the mind in our ordinary waking consciousness.

The mind body is the vehicle of the Ego, the Thinker, for all his reasoning work, but during his early life it is feebly organized and somewhat inchoate and helpless, like the astral body of the undeveloped man. (MAHB)

The mind body of the next incarnation depends on the work we are doing in the mind body of the present; here is, then, the immense importance to the evolution of the man of the use which he is now making of his mind bodies (MAHB)

#### The Causal Body

The second mind body, known by its own distinctive name of *causal body*. The name is due to the fact that all the causes reside in this body which manifest themselves as effects on the lower planes. . . . It is the receptacle, the storehouse, in which all the man's treasures are stored for eternity, and it grows as the lower nature hands up more and more that is worthy to be built into its structure.

The causal body is that into which everything is woven which can endure, and in which are stored the germs of every quality, to be carried over to the next incarnation; thus the lower manifestations depend wholly on the growth and development of this man for "whom the hour never strikes." (MAHB)

#### The Causal Body Is Ultimately a Barrier to Buddhic Consciousness

One whose consciousness works on the buddhic plane during meditation finds that although he is one with all the wonderful consciousness of the plane, yet there is a little circle of emptiness shutting him out from the rest. This little barrier is, of course, the causal body. In order that the buddhic vehicle shall be developed, even that must disappear. Then the man feels the reality of unobstructed Life in a way impossible to describe down here. Madame Blavatsky expressed the idea as a circle with its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere – a very beautiful and expressive description.<sup>1</sup> (1 Ante., Vol. II, p. 67.) Of course it is a paradox, but all things that can be said about these higher conditions must necessarily be paradoxical. (TPO3)

#### The Bodies and the Soul

These first three bodies, with the vitality that throbs through them, are the three garments of the soul, in which he is clad for his experience of life in the corresponding regions of the universe. In these he dwells in our physical world, and may range the astral and mental planes of existence gathering knowledge of each. While man possesses these three garments and vitality, he is a soul, that is, a living intelligence, capable of learning by experience, and evolving into a nobly intellectual and spiritual entity by the discipline of life on earth. This is the real man. (AB – What Theosophy Is)

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