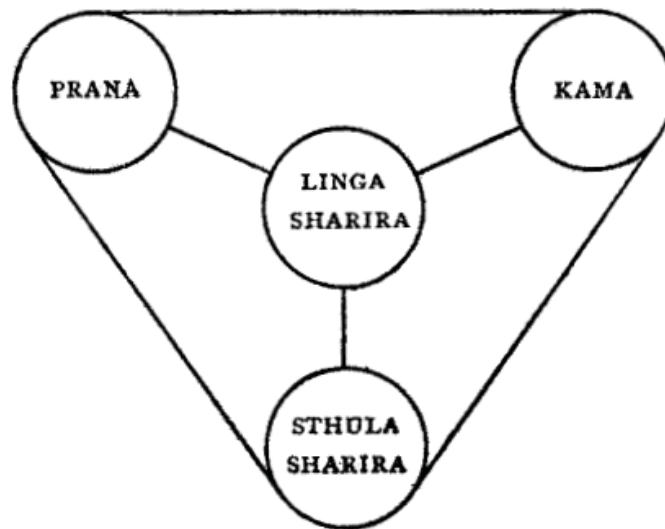


The Quaternary, Or Four Lower Principles

Diagram of the Quaternary; transitory and mortal; see The Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, page 242¹



We have thus studied man, as to his lower nature, and have reached the point in his path of evolution to which he is accompanied by the brute. The quaternary, regarded alone, ere it is affected by contact with the mind, is merely a lower animal; it awaits the coming of the mind to make it man. Theosophy teaches that through past ages man was thus slowly built up, stage by stage, principle by principle, until he stood as a quaternary, brooded over but not in contact with the Spirit, waiting for that mind which could alone enable him to progress farther, and to come into conscious union with the Spirit, so fulfilling the very object of his being. This eonian evolution, in its slow progression, is hurried through in the personal evolution of each human being, each principle which was in the course of ages successively evolved in man on earth, appearing as part of the constitution of each man at the point of evolution reached at any given time, the remaining principles being latent, awaiting their gradual manifestation. The evolution of the quaternary until it reached the point at which further progress was impossible without mind, is told in eloquent sentences in the archaic stanzas on which the *Secret Doctrine* of H.P. Blavatsky is based

*(breath is, the Spirit, for which the human tabernacle is to be built;
the gross body is the dense physical body;
the spirit of life is Prāna;
the mirror of its body is the etheric double; the vehicle of desires is Kāma):*

¹ The etheric double is here named the Linga Sharira, a name now discarded in consequence of the confusion caused by employing a well-known term in Hindu philosophy in an entirely new sense. Before her departure H.P.B. urged her pupils to reform the terminology, which had been too carelessly put together, and we are trying to carry out her wish.

The Breath needed a form; the Fathers gave it.
The Breath needed a gross body; the Earth moulded it;
The Breath needed the Spirit of Life; the Solar Lhas breathed into it its form.
The Breath needed a Mirror of its Body; 'We gave it our own', said the Dhyāni-s.
The Breath needed a Vehicle of Desires; 'It has it', said the Drainer of Waters.
But Breath needs a Mind to embrace the Universe; 'We cannot give that', said the fathers, 'I never had it', said the Spirit of the Earth.
'The form would be consumed were I to give it mine,' said the Great Fire . . . Man remained an empty senseless Bhūta (phantom).

And so is the personal man without mind. The quaternary alone is not man, the Thinker, and it is as Thinker that man is really man.

Yet at this point let the student pause, and reflect over the human constitution, so far as he has gone. For this quaternary is the mortal part of man, and is distinguished by Theosophy as the personality. It needs to be very clearly and definitely realised, if the constitution of man is to be understood, and if the student is to read more advanced treatises with intelligence. True, to make the personality human it has yet to come under the rays of mind, and to be illuminated by it as the world by the rays of the sun. But even without these rays it is a clearly defined entity, with its dense body, its etheric double, its life, and its desire body or animal soul. It has passions, but no reason; it has emotions, but no intellect; it has desires, but no rationalised will; it awaits the coming of its monarch, the mind, the touch which shall transform it into man.