

TELEPATHY AND THE ETHERIC VEHICLE

TEACHING ON THE ETHERIC VEHICLE

I. THE NATURE OF THE ETHERIC BODY, 139/48

See Chart Evolution of a Solar Logos

Much that I may say here may be familiar to a certain extent, because there is a vast amount of information anent the etheric body scattered throughout my various books. It will have its value however if students can receive in a few pages a general idea and the basic concepts which underlie the teaching—or should I say, the fact? If they have the time, students would find it of profit to re-read what I said; run their eyes rapidly through the books and papers in search of the word "etheric." They will never regret it. Life itself, the training to be given in the future, the conclusions of science and a new mode of civilisation will all increasingly be focussed on this unique substance which is the true form to which all physical bodies in every kingdom in nature conform. Note that phraseology.

The attitude of occultism is, at this time, relatively negative to the fact and the nature of the etheric body. People are ready to admit its existence, but the dominant factors in their consciousness are the fact of the physical body (around whose comfort, security and care all life seems woven) and the fact of the astral or emotional nature. Not one among them, or among occult students generally, pays any attention to the etheric body, and there is a great hiatus or gap in consciousness today (only this time normally and rightly) between the personality and the Spiritual Triad. This gap will be bridged by the building of the antahkarana, and this can only be built by advanced students. There is no such planned bridge for the gap in [Page 140] consciousness between the physical body and the etheric counterpart. The etheric body exists in subtle etheric matter, and factually there is no true gap; there is simply the ignoring by humanity of an aspect of the physical body which is of far more importance than is the dense physical vehicle. The consciousness of men today is physical-astral, and the factor of conditioning energies is ignored, overlooked, and—from the angle of consciousness—non-existent.

One of the main obligations of occult students today is to testify to the fact of the etheric body; modern science is already thus testifying because its researches have now landed it in the realm of energy. Electro-therapy, the growing recognition that man is electrical in nature, and the realisation that even the atom in apparently inanimate objects is a living vibrant entity substantiate this occult point of view. Generally speaking, science has preceded esotericism in its recognition of energy as a dominant factor in all form expression. Theosophists and others pride themselves on being ahead of human thinking, but such is not the case. H.P.B., an initiate of high standing, presented views ahead of science, but that does not apply to the exponents of the theosophical teaching. The fact of all manifested forms being forms of energy, and that the true human form is no exception, is the gift of science to humanity and not the gift of occultism. The demonstration that light and matter are synonymous terms is also a scientific conclusion. Esotericists have always known this, but their aggressive and foolish presentations of the truth have greatly handicapped the Hierarchy. Frequently the Masters have deplored the technique of the theosophists and other occult groups. When the new presentation of the occult teaching made its appearance through the inspired activity of H.P.B., a number (an increasing number as the years slipped by) of theosophical members presented the occult [Page 141] teaching in such a manner that it travestied the true teaching and outraged the intellectual perception of the mass of enquiring and

intelligent men. The teaching on the etheric body is an instance of this. H.P.B. was largely responsible, because of utilising the word "astral" to cover a mass of information anent the etheric as well as the astral. This was due to the realisation of the fact that the astral body was doomed in a few generations (relatively speaking) to disappear, and for H.P.B. in particular was already nonexistent, owing to the advanced point in evolution reached by this disciple.

Realising that the etheric body was an expression always of the dominant energy controlling mankind in any particular cycle, H.P.B. used the term "astral body" as interchangeable with the etheric body. The etheric body, in the vast majority of cases is the vehicle or the instrument of astral energy. The mass of men are still Atlantean or astral in their natures, and this means a far larger percentage than the average occultist is willing to admit. H.P.B. was, however, truthful and knew that at that time and for several hundred years afterwards (probably about three hundred years) the astral body would continue to govern the mass of human reactions and their consequent daily life expression. Hence the apparent confusion in the writings between these two "bodies."

Here is a basic statement—one that is so basic that it governs and controls all thinking anent the etheric body:

The etheric body is primarily composed of the dominant energy or energies to which the man, the group, the nation, or the world reacts in any particular time cycle or world period.

If you are to understand clearly, it is essential that I lay down certain propositions anent the etheric body which [Page 142] should govern all the student's thinking; if they do not, he will be approaching the truth from the wrong angle; this, modern science does not do. The limitation of modern science is its lack of vision; the hope of modern science is that it does recognise truth when proven. Truth in all circumstances is essential and in this matter science gives a desirable lead, even though it ignores and despises occultism. Occult scientists handicap themselves either because of their presentation of the truth or because of a false humility. Both are equally bad.

There are six major propositions which govern all consideration of the etheric body, and I would like to present them to students as a first step:

1. There is nothing in the manifested universe—solar, planetary or the various kingdoms in nature—which does not possess an energy form, subtle and intangible yet substantial, which controls, governs and conditions the outer physical body. This is the etheric body.
2. This energy form—underlying the solar system, the planets and all forms within their specific rings-pass-not—is itself conditioned and governed by the dominant solar or planetary energy which ceaselessly and without break in time, creates it, changes and qualifies it. The etheric body is subject to ceaseless change. This, being true of the Macrocosm, is equally true of man, the microcosm, and—through the agency of humanity—will eventually and mysteriously prove true of all the subhuman kingdoms in nature. Of this, the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom are already evidences.
3. The etheric body is composed of interlocking and circulating lines of force emanating from one or [Page 143] other, or from one or many, of the seven planes or areas of consciousness of our planetary Life.

4. These lines of energy and this closely interlocking system of streams of force are related to seven focal points or centres to be found within the etheric body. These centres are related, each of them, to certain types of incoming energy. When the energy reaching the etheric body is not related to a particular centre, then that centre remains quiescent and unawakened; when it is related and the centre is sensitive to its impact, then that centre becomes vibrant and receptive and develops as a controlling factor in the life of the man on the physical plane.

5. The dense physical body, composed of atoms—each with its own individual life, light and activity—is held together by and is expressive of the energies which compose the etheric body. These, as will be apparent, are of two natures:

a. The energies which form (through interlocked "lines of forceful energy") the underlying etheric body, as a whole and in relation to all physical forms. This form is qualified then by the general life and vitality of the plane on which the Dweller in the body functions, and therefore where his consciousness is normally focussed.

b. The particularised or specialised energies by which the individual (at this particular point in evolution, through the circumstances of his daily life and his heredity) chooses to govern his daily activities.

6. The etheric body has many centres of force, responsive to the manifold energies of our planetary Life, but we shall consider only the seven major [Page 144] centres which respond to the inflowing energies of the seven rays. All lesser centres are conditioned by the seven major centres; this is a point which students are apt to forget. It is here that knowledge of the egoic and of the personality rays is of prime usefulness.

It can be seen, therefore, how exceedingly important this subject of energy becomes, because it controls and makes the man what he is at any given moment, and likewise indicates the plane on which he should function, and the method whereby he should govern his environment, circumstances and relationships. If this is grasped by him, it will enable him to realise that he will have to shift his whole attention from the physical or the astral planes on to the etheric levels of awareness; his objective will then be to determine what energy should control his daily expression (or energies, if he is an advanced disciple). He will realise also that as his attitude, attainment and comprehension shift to ever higher levels, his etheric body will be constantly changing and responding to the newer energies. These energies he will be will-fully bringing in; this is the right use of the word "will-full."

It is not easy for the average seer or clairvoyant to distinguish the etheric body from its environment or to isolate its particular type of energy or livingness, for the reason that its automaton, the physical body—being composed of vibrant energetic atoms—is itself in constant movement, and such movement involves a necessary radiation as a consequence; animal magnetism is an illustration of this radiation. This emanation from the dense physical body normally and naturally mingles with the energies of the etheric body, and thus only the trained seer can differentiate between the two, particularly within the physical body itself.

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From one point of view the etheric body can be looked at in two ways: first, as it interpenetrates, underlies and occupies the entire physical organism and, secondly, as it extends beyond the physical form and surrounds it like an aura. According to the point in evolution will be the extent of the area which the etheric body covers beyond the outside of the physical body. It may extend for a few or many

inches. It is only in this area that the vital body can be studied with relative ease, once the emanatory activity of the physical atoms is offset or allowed for.

Within the physical body, the network of the etheric body is to be found permeating every single part. It is peculiarly associated at this time with the nervous system, which is fed, nourished, controlled and galvanised by its etheric counterpart. This counterpart is present in millions of tiny streams or lines of energy, to which the Eastern occultist has given the name "nadis." These nadis are the carriers of energy. They are in fact the energy itself and carry the quality of energy from some area of consciousness in which the "dweller in the body" may happen to be focussed. This may be the astral plane or the planes of the Spiritual Triad, for none of the energies can control the physical body from any plane, no matter how high, except in this manner. According to the focus of the consciousness, the psychic state of awareness, the potency of aspiration or desire, and the point in evolution or the spiritual status, so will be the type of energy carried by the nadis, passing from them to the outer nervous system. This general proposition must be accepted, for the whole subject is as yet too intricate, and the mechanism of observation of the student too undeveloped, for me to enter into greater detail. This will suffice as an initial hypothesis upon which to work.

The amount of energy and the type of energy controlling any aspect of the nervous system is conditioned by the centre [Page 146] in its immediate area. A centre is a distributing agency, in the last analysis. Even though that energy will affect the entire body, the centre most responsive to the quality and type will potently affect the nadis, and therefore the nerves, in its immediate environment. It must always be remembered that the seven centres are not within the dense physical body. They exist only in etheric matter and in the etheric so-called aura, outside the physical body. They are closely related to the dense physical body by the network of nadis. Five of the centres are to be found in the etheric counterpart of the spinal column, and the energy passes (through large and responsive nadis) through the vertebrae of the spine and circulates then throughout the etheric body as it is interiorly active within the physical vehicle. The three head centres exist, one just above the top of the head, another just in front of the eyes and forehead, and the third at the back of the head, just above where the spinal column ends. This makes eight centres but is in reality seven, as the centre at the back of the head is not counted in the initiation process, any more than is the spleen.

The powerful effect of the inflow of energy, via the energy body, has itself automatically created these centres or these reservoirs of force, these focal points of energy, which the spiritual man must learn to use and through the means of which he can direct energy where needed. Each of these seven centres has appeared in the course of human evolution in response to energy from one or other, or from several, of the seven rays. The impact of these rays upon the etheric body, emanating as they do periodically and ceaselessly from the seven rays, is so potent that the seven areas in the etheric body become more highly sensitised than the rest of the vehicle, and these in due time develop into responsive distributing centres. The effect of these seven centres upon the physical body in due time produces a condensation or a [Page 147] state of what is called "attracted response" from dense matter, and thus the seven major sets of endocrine glands slowly came into functioning activity. It must here be remembered that the whole development of the etheric body falls into two historical stages:

1. That in which the etheric energy, flowing through responsive centres and creating the endocrine glands as a consequence, gradually began to have a definite effect upon the blood stream; the energy worked through that medium solely for a very long time. This still remains true, for the life aspect of energy animates the blood, through the medium of the centres and their agents, the glands. Hence the words in the Bible that "the blood is the life."

2. As the race of men developed, and consciousness grew greater and certain great expansions took place, the centres began to extend their usefulness and to use the nadis, and thus to work upon and through the nervous system; this produced conscious and planned activity upon the physical plane, commensurate to the man's place in evolution.

Thus the incoming energy forming the etheric body created a needed etheric mechanism with its corresponding dense physical counterparts; it therefore, as will be noted from its relationship to the blood via the glands, and to the nervous system via the nadis (both through the medium of the seven centres), became the transmitter of two aspects of energy: one of which was kama-manasic (desire-lower mind) and the other atmic-buddhic (spiritual will—spiritual love) in the case of advanced humanity. Herein lies full opportunity for all, as the Law of Evolution proceeds to dominate all manifestation. What is true of the Macrocosm is true also of the microcosm.