

# The cycle of death and rebirth

Compiled by Ingo de Jong



EGYPTIAN DRAWING OF THE ASTRAL BODY LEAVING THE PHYSICAL BODY AT DEATH

It is the changing from the imperfect to the ever more perfect that we grow.

One of the laws of nature is that an entity or being cannot live forever. The child must die in order to become a man. So it is in nature, if the seed does not die the plant cannot come into being. Death is actually part of nature. However we fear death because we do not understand it. Birth on the other hand is not feared because it is already in the past, behind us. The objective universe itself is but a passing illusion on account of its beginning or ending, than both life and death must also be a passing illusion. In the *Secret Doctrine* death is mentioned as a change of state in consciousness.

Occultism tells us that after death we are going to be exactly as we have made ourselves during our life. If we have lived a devout and good life we will have a good and decent after death life, on the other hand if we have lived a life of relative evil we will have a difficult time in the afterlife. We are not going to be saved from the consequences from our past life, nor are we going to burn forever in the hell fires. There is no heaven and there is no hell, both are different states of consciousness. Occultism mentions two deaths. One is the death of the physical body and the other of the psyche, the kama-manasic principle, the fading out of the kama-rupa. [1]

### ***The first death***

When the life or vitality of the dying individual ebbs out of the physical body, it is still connected to astral body through a silver cord. This cord is a connecting link of very fine etheric substance, connecting the physical body to the inner principles. When death occurs the cord breaks and man sees past his mind's eye the whole of his life, with all its events, effects and causes, to the minutest details. [2]

The deceased is noticing and assessing the high lights of his past life in an objective manner. For a short moment, the personal self became one with the divine self, the individual and all-knowing. But this moment is enough to show the dying person the whole chain of causes that has been active during his life. He sees himself as he is, without self-deception, in all his moral nakedness, unadorned by either human flattery or self-adulation. This is a solemn and important undertaking lasting for an hour or two and should not be interrupted by noise and the business of the lying in state etc. When this review is finished, then the deceased falls into unconsciousness. [3] The astral body together with the physical body begins to disintegrate, however the astral body stays close to the physical.

The life atoms of man's physical body fly apart as he is cremated and some of them become part of other humans of whom they feel psycho magnetically attracted to. When the higher principles leave the body, the union composing the body falls apart and these life atoms disperse into the various kingdoms of nature from which they were collected by the reincarnating entity. The reason they disperse is because the human ego is no longer there longer to hold them together. The life atoms "transmigrate" or embody themselves into the mineral-vegetable-animal and human kingdom, depending on their rate of vibration, or magnetic attraction. For example: if a person has led a very basic or materialistic life probably many of his life atoms are attracted to the beast kingdom.

Thus the astral life atoms off man's astral body are drawn into other humans or into animals, or plants, depending on their rate of vibration. However the manasic life atoms are attracted to other living humans in order to feed and build their mental bodies.

The life atoms of man's higher constitution, such as higher manas and buddhi follow the same course and are each attracted to the higher planes

It is important to understand that the life-atoms of our (*Prâna*) "life-principle" are never entirely lost when a man dies. We have stamped these life atoms with our thoughts and feelings during our lifetime; they have so to say become our

"children". For good or bad, we have originated them, born from ourselves; they will be with us throughout eternity. As we evolve life after life and grow in consciousness so do these life atoms trailing along behind us. [4]

The reason that these life atoms are never lost, not even after death, is by thinking man gives form and energy to his thought life. As man thinks thoughts he is continually adding new thoughts into his thought stream. These newly added deposits into his thought stream are called thought deposits. These thought deposits or seeds are imbedded into the aura surrounding the person during life, and they form his personality.

In other words, the results of man's thoughts, desires, emotions, plans, hopes and aspirations during earth life are implanted into the fabric of his being, his aura, by the man himself. It is the psychical and mental attitudes that we create during our lifetime, which are then drawn from the lower parts of the auric egg that form the *desire body* or kama-rupa. However, the more ethereal life atoms are drawn upwards to become part of the higher parts of the auric egg enclosing the permanent principles (manas and buddhi) that HPB talks about.

These latent life atoms from the higher parts of the auric egg join the transmigrating life atoms to build up the new astral form in the next incarnation, as described by HPB. It is essentially these two classes of life atoms which are called skandhas in human incarnation. These attributes or skandhas remain dormant during the after death states, but come back to life again when re-incarnation process takes place, as will be explained later.

*Skandhas*, meaning *to rise, to come to life again*.

Every thought creates a vibration, and every vibration leaves an impression, a picture in the astral light. Because every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself — coalescing, we might term it — with an elemental; that is to say with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the nature kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence, a creature of the mind's begetting, for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions, a current which reacts upon any sensitive or and nervous organization which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his "Skandha".

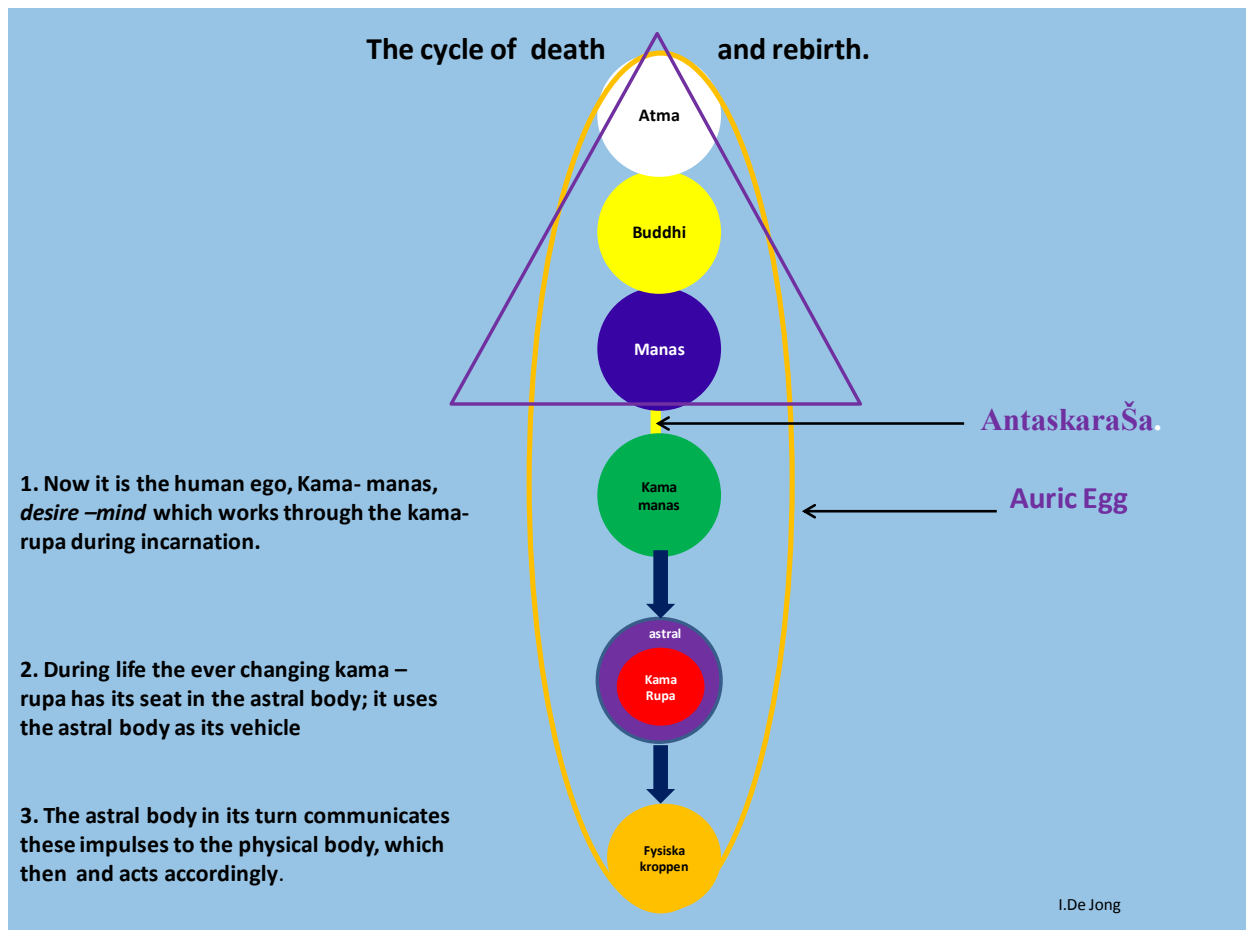
During the after death states the skandhas remain inactive, but they remain as *Karmic effects*, as germs, hanging in the atmosphere of the terrestrial plane. However they are ready to come to life again, as so many avenging fiends, to attach themselves to the new personality of the Ego when it reincarnates. They join together as the child grows, and become part of the person's character.

This means that, in addition to the personality that he is creating by this thought process, he is actually at the same time forming his attributes and tendencies for the next incarnation on earth. One can now truly understand that man becomes what he longs for. [7]

**Kama Rupa is a compound word, kama, *desire*, rupa, *body*.**

Kama Rupa is that part of man's inner constitution where the various desires, the feelings of hate and love, in short, the changing mental and emotional energies, have their place of residence.[8]

Now it is the human ego or kama-manas, *desire –mind* which works through the kama-rupa during incarnation. The reason for this is, that the kama-rupa, being the vehicle of the kama-manas, is said to dwell in the physical brain, in the five physical senses and in all the sense organs of the physical body, it has its seat here. During life the ever changing kama-rupa has its seat in the astral body; it uses the astral body as its vehicle. The astral body in its turn communicates these impulses to the physical body, which then responds and acts accordingly.[9] The lower or kama-manas, with the kama-rupa, is one of the most changeable parts of our constitution. It changes as our mood changes; actually it changes with every thought. One could say that the physical man is the kama-rupa, because the kama-rupa is the expression of the personal qualities of the human being, and the personality is a collection of skandhas. Therefore it is only during life that we can form and work on our kama-rupa. After death we cannot form the kama-rupa anymore.[10]



### ***Second death***

As we stated previously, death happens when the silver cord snaps and the astral body separates from the physical body. When the man dies, his lower three principles leave him forever. His remaining four principles, the higher triad atma, buddhi-manas (the reincarnating ego) and the part of kama-rupa with what has been assimilated from the lower manas, find themselves in *Kama-loka or Hades*. The latter is an astral locality, which strictly speaking is a *locality* only in a relative sense. It has neither a definite area nor boundary, but exists *within* subjective space. It is however beyond our sensuous perceptions. [11]

Kama-loka is divided into seven parts or principles. Where we end up depends on what kind of life we have lived here on earth. How long we stay in Kama-loka or the world of desires can vary from a short while, a few hours or days, up to many years, depending on how strong our desire for earthly sphere is. After a certain time has passed in kama-loka the collection of skandhic attributes still continue to function, because the kama-rupa still has a hold upon the reincarnating ego. For a certain time, the kama-rupa retains a certain animal consciousness because of its attraction to the earthly sphere, while the personal man is unconscious.

This condition lasts until the event of the second death, which simply means that the moment has arrived when the reincarnating ego has succeeded in breaking each and every link or attraction which unites it with the kama-rupa of the personal man that was. The second death, therefore, is an astral reproduction of what took place at physical death. The second death occurs when the last spiritual thought or image has been drawn upwards into the reincarnating ego and there remains nothing more to keep it attached to the kama rupa. The kama rupa then is dropped and becomes a shell. [12]

From the above mentioned we can conclude that only the most spiritual attributes from kama- manas till buddhi –manas can be assimilated by the reincarnating ego. The assimilation happens via “the bridge” called antaskarana. HPB states: “*Antaskarana is a narrow strip connecting the higher Manas with the lower Manas*”, or the personality with the individuality. At death it is destroyed as a path of communication, and its remains survive as kama rupa shell. [13] When this happens the *kama-rupic* phantom, remaining bereft of its informing thinking principle, the higher *manas*, and the lower aspect of the latter, the animal intelligence, no longer receiving light from the higher mind, and no longer having a physical brain to work through, collapses.[14]

The Antaskarana is therefore that portion of the lower manas which is one with the higher, the essence, that which retains its purity; on it are impressed all the good and noble aspirations, and in it are the upward energies of the lower manas. It is these energies and tendencies which will become the Devachanic experiences. The whole fate of an incarnation depends on whether this pure essence, Antaskarana, can restrain the lower manas or not, it is the only salvation. Break this and you become an animal. [15]

When the higher principles are finally separated from the desire body there is only a shell, a kama-rupa shell left. This shell which is the real part of the human constitution, which contains, or is the seat of the lower mental and psychic attributes. For a certain period of time the shell retains a kind of animal consciousness, because of the fact that the manasic life atoms of a lower kind, which thought impulses and emotional activity have not yet run down. Much like a machine will keep running for a while after the power is turned off. In other words, the desires and attractions of the former personality are still active. However there is no physical body that can satisfy them. When these thought impulses from the lower life atoms finally leave the kama-rupa, only an empty shell remains, which eventually will fade away.

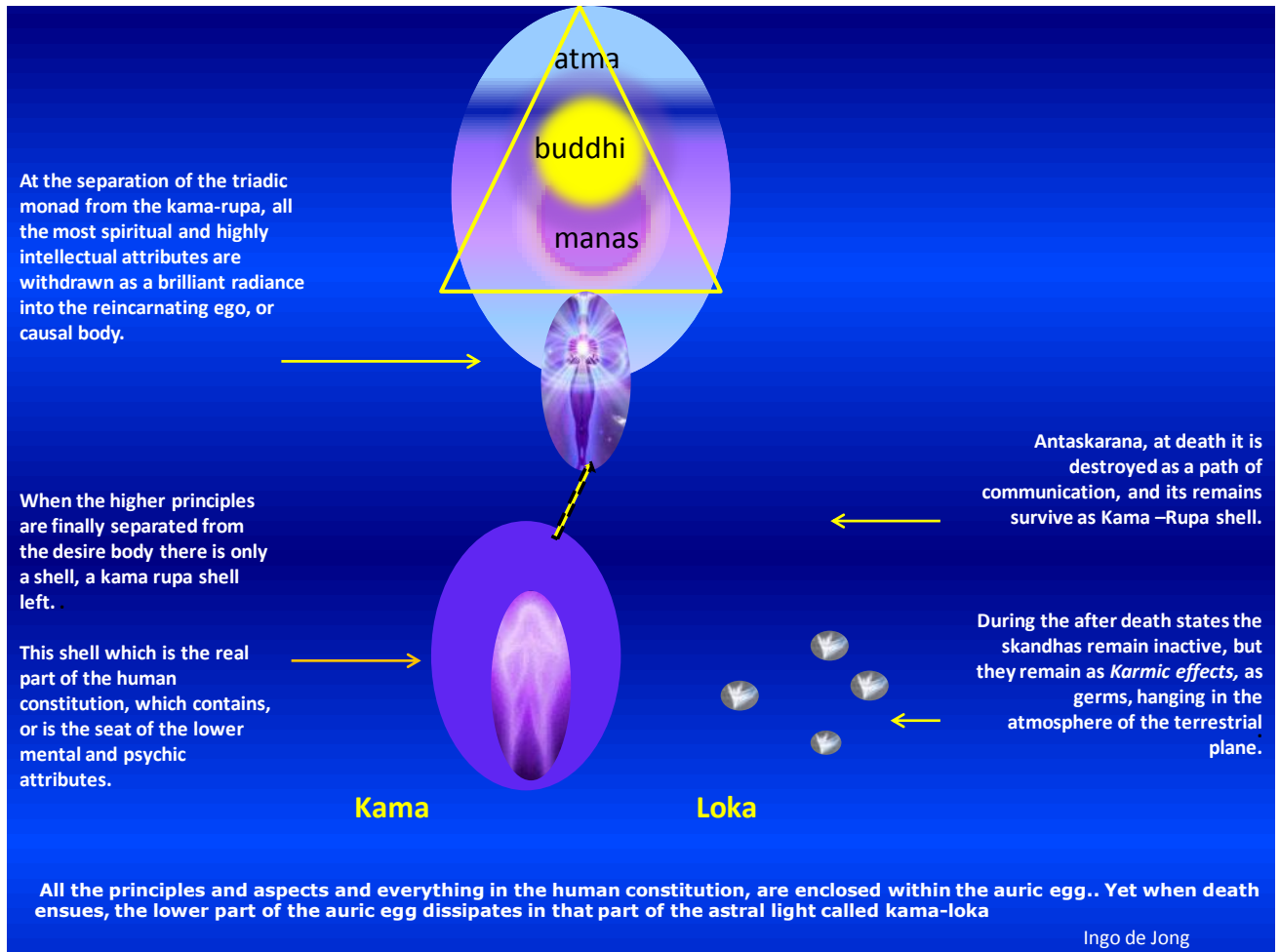
This process can take anything from a couple of hours or days to many years, depending on how strong the desire for earthly sphere is. Interesting to note is what HPB has to say about the kama-rupa shell, she states that: “*It is this empty shell the spiritualists see sometimes appearing in the séance rooms as materialized “forms,” which they foolishly mistake for the spirits of the departed.*”

Now that which is left will be atma-buddhi-manas and the spiritual part of kama. [16]

At the separation of the triadic monad from the kama-rupa, all the most spiritual and highly intellectual attributes are withdrawn as a brilliant radiance into the reincarnating ego, or causal body. Only that which is worthy of the immortal God within us, and identical in its nature with the divine quintessence, can survive. No noble thought, no grand aspiration, desire, or divine immortal love, can come into the brain of the man of clay and settle there, except as a direct emanation from the higher to, and through, the lower Ego; all the rest, intellectual as it may seem, proceeds from the “shadow,” the *lower mind*, in its association and commingling with *kāma*, and passes away and disappears forever. But the mental and spiritual ideations of the personal “I” return to it, as parts of the Ego’s essence, and can never fade out. It is the Higher Ego that is the sole Bearer of all its *alter Egos* on earth.

Thus of the personality that was, only its spiritual experiences, the memory of all that is good and noble, with the consciousness of its “I,” blended with that of all the other personal “I’s” that preceded it — survive and become immortal. All these capabilities and spiritual qualities will be reflected in the next personality. It is the divine Ego’s own emanations which during life time enriched the personality with its own light and is now indrawn back into itself again, to become once more part of its own essence. [17] Nothing of the former personality can survive in the eternal. As the bee collects its honey from every flower, leaving the rest as food for the earthly worms, so does our spiritual individuality, whether we call it Sutratma or Ego, collect from every terrestrial personality, into which karma forces it to incarnate, the nectar alone of the spiritual qualities and self-consciousness.[18] It is this spiritual aroma, the true spiritual man which becomes the devachani, (devachani meaning, “the one entering blissful state”), which is of course the human ego, which is now resting in the bosom of the reincarnating Ego.

It is the reincarnating ego, which only partially manifests itself in every incarnation, in every personality, but which is made up of fragments from all of them.



**Devachan** “*dwelling of the gods*” compound Sanskrit-Tibetan word. Deva = god and chan = dwelling.

It is a state between the earthly life that the human monad enters and where it rests in peace and quiet. [19] Devachan is not a place or an objective sphere but an individual state of consciousness, which corresponds exactly to the person's most dominant consciousness during earthly life. After a short period of unconsciousness the devachani awakens slowly and enters a period of rest and recuperation in devachan. The devachanic entity has clothed itself, or surrounded itself with the spiritual elements of the ideas, aspirations and thoughts of the now disembodied personality. It is these relatively spiritual thought vibrations which form the body surrounding the devachanic entity, and gives it the illusion that it is in a spiritual vehicle. It is a period of fulfillment of all its ambitions, worthy hopes of the late personality. However the objective realizations of these things can only be achieved in the next physical life, and will show itself in the form of ability to do things, special talents, and spiritual insights.



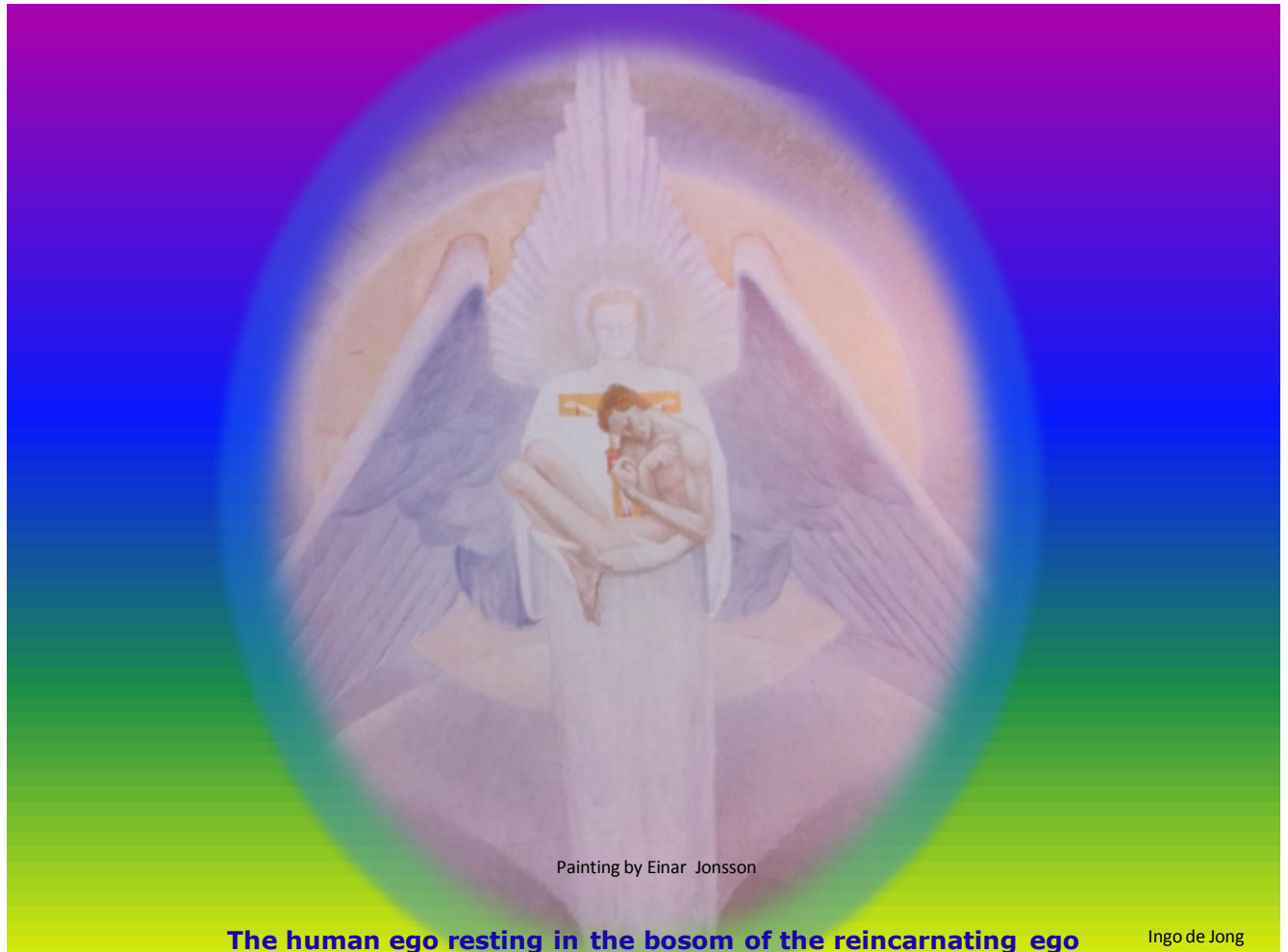
Devachan is an *absolute* oblivion of all that gave pain or sorrow in the past incarnation, and even oblivion of the fact that such things as pain or sorrow exist at all. The devachanee lives its intermediate cycle between two incarnations surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth. It has reached the fulfillment of all its soul-yearnings.

Devachan is a subjective state, but will seem as real as the chairs and tables which surround us. We must remember that to the profound philosophy of occultism, are the chairs and tables, and the whole objective scenery of the world, unreal and merely transitory illusions of sense. As real as the realities of this world are to us, and even more so, will be the realities of devachan to those who go into that state.

The devachanic condition for the average human, who has lived a creditably aspiring and moral life, is one of inexpressible spiritual beauty and mental peace. For every high aspiration and unfulfilled desire to do good find their opportunity for expression in his consciousness, so that his devachan is filled with a glorification of all the noblest that he had hoped to do on earth. In fact, the devachanic dreams are incomparably more real than anything that our physical imperfect senses can report to us.

From this it ensues that the subjective isolation of devachan, as it will perhaps be conceived at first, is not real isolation at all, as the word is understood on the physical plane of existence. It is companionship with all that true soul craves for, whether persons, things or knowledge. [22]

The reincarnating ego freed from all earthly connections, can now continue on its own evolutionary path through the different higher worlds and outer planetary rounds.



### **The rebirthing process, a brief description.**

The blissful state of the devachani comes slowly to an end after a certain time. The time of rebirth comes when the human ego which is locked up in the causal body during its post mortem travels throughout the higher spheres and planets feels the new attraction to the lower spheres, drawing the human ego back to earth. As the ray of the reincarnating Ego works its way downwards, irresistibly drawn back by the reawakening memories of a previous incarnation, it is gradually drawn back to the planet, or world it had lived before, and finally enters the physical part of the planet. [23]

The human ego sinks from his dreaming devachanic state into unconsciousness and the process of rebirthing begins. On awakening from his unconscious state, the ego has a prospective vision of the future life which awaits him, and realizes all the causes that have led to it. He realizes them as he sees his whole future life before himself.

The mystic doctrine of Eastern Occultism teaches that: *“The Spiritual Ego has to revisit, before it incarnates into a new body, the scenes it left at its last incarnation. It has to see for itself and take cognizance of all the effects produced by the causes generated by its actions in a previous life; that, seeing, it should recognize the justice of the decree, and help the law of Retribution [Karma] instead of impeding it.”*[24] It is between devachan and re-birth that the ego regains his full manasic consciousness, and re-becomes for a short time the god he was before. The "golden thread" sees all its "pearls" and misses not one of them. [25]

The memory of every personal life, indeed, is imperishably preserved in the mysterious records of each existence, and the immortal individual spiritual entity will one day — but in a future so remote that it is hardly worth thinking about much at present — be able to look back upon it, as upon one of the pages in the vast book of lives which he will by that time have compiled. This proves that the immortal qualities of the personality such as love, kindness, mercy, etc. are preserved in the immortal self.

The time of rebirth comes, the reincarnating Ego shoots out a ray, a reflection of itself, which becomes the human ego. When the ray-point of the re-embodiment ego, itself a ray from the spiritual monad, reaches its own intermediate sphere, it descends no farther into matter. But its psychomagnetic ray, having stronger affinities for the material worlds, descends still farther, awakening into activity the life-atoms in each one of the planes between that of the re-embodiment ego and the astral-physical matter of our earth.

Just here we see that the ‘life’ or characteristic of each part of the composite human constitution remains on its own plane, but extrudes its excess of life from itself into the next lower one, until finally the physical plane is reached, wherein the tip of the ray, collecting unto itself life-atoms of this plane, builds or forms the physical germinal cell.

Thus the ray gradually works its way downwards into the lower psychic worlds and gathers again the life atoms that belonged to it in an earlier earth's life in order to form its new mental, emotional and physical bodies. At every incarnation a new ray is emitted, and yet in essence it is the same ray, for the essence is always one, the same in you and me, the same in everybody. Thus incarnates the higher ego in a thousand bodies. [26]

A new astral-physical entity then has to be created to become the bearer of all the past “Tanic Elementals” (skandhas) and future karma. It is these human elementals that form the new astral entity which is born within the auric envelope, and of which it is often said “Karma, with its army of skandhas, waits

at the threshold of devachan". The formation of the astral man takes place within the auric egg of the ex-devachanī. [27]

We have to understand the importance of the role that the auric egg plays in the human constitution, for it not only is the field of all the different ranges of consciousness of the embodied man, but it is likewise the ethereal and astral and even spiritual substance or auric envelope out of which are formed every one of the vehicles of the human entity.

With the gradual descend from the spiritual realms; by a ray from the reincarnating Ego the lower portion of the auric egg begin to stir, and swell at the same time, (at death the auric egg shrinks in size, because of the lower four principles having been disposed off).

This swelling begins and continues from the time the devachani leaves devachan. The swelling continues before birth and after birth until the full grown adult is reached. From the moment when the ego leaves the devachanic condition, the astral form becomes steadily more complete or definite.

The auric egg, driven by the force of karma forms automatically from within itself the vague outline of the new astral body. The skandhas who have been dormant in the inter life period and remained in the astral light, are brought back into life by the ray of the reincarnating ego during the incarnation process at the start of a new life. Every elemental or skandha that is produced by man during his previous incarnation returns to him sooner or later, because it is his own vibration. The skandhas are transmitted from one personality to the next. One could say that the new personality is the child of the previous personality. However there are also elementals which live on after the death of a human entity, they are those which we implant in others: the rest remain latent till we are reincarnated, then they come to live in us.) [28]

Thus new skandhas are born from their old parents. The karmic effects of the past life must follow, for the man in his next birth must pick up the skandhas or vibratory impressions that he left behind in the astral light, since nothing can come from nothing in occultism, and there must be links between the lives. They are now drawn by the magnetic attraction and brought back to life when their former creator returns to earth life. Every human being is surrounded by his own emotional and passionate as well as psycho vital atmosphere, which is really a portion of the lower layers of the auric egg. Now this atmosphere is alive and vibrating with varying intensities, has its own frequency.

It becomes obvious therefore that the ray-point, which likewise possesses its own frequency, is drawn more or less on the line of magnetic attraction to the atmosphere of the parents whose vibrating frequency is most sympathetic to its own and with whom its karmic affinities are strongest. [29] A new soul is then

born into its own world and awaits parents to give it birth on earth in a new physical body.

The entity thus preceding rebirth is attracted to the family through karmic ties. Each parent contains in his or her constitution appropriate life-atoms belonging to and used by the reincarnating entity in past lives.

The reincarnating entity has in a sense very little choice in the matter, if by this we mean a deliberate selecting of one's future family. Such a choice as we understand it is almost non-existent, because the human ego has just left devachan and is sunken into the relative unconsciousness throughout the assimilation period preceding rebirth, and thus is in no condition to choose with self-conscious intent. It is karma, which controls these things; and karma is infallible in its action. *CW12p649-52*

For no sooner is the devachanic state of reward ended, than the human ego is indissolubly united with the new astral form. Life atoms are finally attracted back to the reincarnating ego. The life atoms on the different planes reassemble the substances for the reconstruction of a new psyche (kama-manas) and the astral body.

The new astral form, composed partly of the pure akasic essence of the auric egg, and partly of the terrestrial elements of the punishable sins and misdeeds of the last personality, is drawn into the woman. [30] Once there, nature models the fetus of flesh around the astral out of the growing materials of the male seed in the female soil. In other words, when the astral form has definite union with the human ovum, it begins to grow as the fetus

The more material part of the new astral form is drawn first into the woman's aura and then into the womb wherein it produces the living ovum and finds its suitable milieu. [31] The inner and more mānasic portion of the astral form, which is the more ethereal part of the tip of the ray from the reincarnating ego, flashes to the male parent.

The lower or grosser portions of the astral form become the astral body of the child, whereas its higher portions, the vehicles of the 'ray' from the reincarnating ego (as the embryo and later as the child grows), become the intermediate parts of the constitution of the man. The female parent is the vehicle of what may be called the vegetative or passive side of the ray-point, and the male parent the vehicle for the positive or active side. The father sows the seed; the mother receives it, fosters it, and brings it forth. [32]

One can truly say that, the new person is a reflection or image of his creator, the old personality.

- 1: *G.de Purucker (GdP) "Fountain Source of Occultism" . p. 587-8 ( F.S.o Oc)*
- 2: *G. Farthing "Exploring The Great Beyond" p .75-76*
- 3: *HPB "Collected Writings. (CW) vol. 10 s. 176*
- 4: *The Secret Doctrine vol. 4. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Also "Transmigration of Life Atoms" (CW) 5. P. .109.*
- 5: *CW vol. 12 .p. 649.*
- 6: *Mahatma Letters: (ML) KH första brev till A.O. Hume CW. 12. p. 646.*
- 7: *HPB "Key to Theosophy" (KT) sectionr 9*
- 8: *GdP "Occult Dictionary"" p.103-4*
- 9: *CW. vol.12. p. 708*
- 10: *GdP. FSoOc. p. 579*
- 11: *KT: section 9*
- 12: *GdP. FSoOc: p. 579-80*
- 13: *HPB. CW. vol. 12. p. 633.*
- 14: *KT. section. 9*
- 15: *CW.vol. 12. p. 710*
- 16: *CW. Vol. 12 s.633*
- 17: *GdP. FsoOc.s.581-2*
- 18: *CW. vol. 12. s. 627*
- 19: *GdP Ock. ordbok s.52.*
- 20: *CW. vol12. s.647*
- 21: *KT. Section 9*
- 22: *A.P. Sinnett. "Esoteric Buddhism".s.62 (EB)*
- 23: *GdP. FSoOC s. 637*
- 24: *CW. vol. 7. s. 113*
- 25: *KT. Section 9*

- 26: *CW. vol .12. p. 652-709*
- 27: *CW.vol. 12.p. .649-52*
- 28: *HPB. CW. 12. p. .609*
- 29: *GdP. FSoOC. P.. 625.*
- 30: *HPB CW. Vol. 12.p. 610*
- 31: *HPB CW.vol .12. p. 650.*
- 32 *HPB.CW.vol. 12. p..650-2*