

# *Mahatmas and Their Bodies*

This compilation should be studied in parallel with the following articles in:  
*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*:

A DANGER SIGNAL, XI pp. 178-85;

MAHATMAS AND CHELAS, VI pp. 239-41;

FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN, pp. 272-73 & 501-4;

And it should be revisited upon completion of Chapter 6, “Our Watchers and Guardians,” in: *Compassion the Spirit of Truth* (2009).

EDITORS

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## **Mahatmas can:**

- **Travel in their inner or astral body,**
- **Preserve full command of all their intelligence, and**
- **Condense their “phantom” form into visibility or dissolve it into invisibility.**

At Bombay, the astral *sarira* of Mahatma K.H. was seen repeatedly two years ago — by over twenty members in all — some of whom had been very skeptical as to such a possibility before, proclaiming it after the occurrence as “the most glorious, solemn of sights.” Three times, during one evening the “form,” perfectly recognizable, and seemingly solid to a hair of the moustache and beard — glided through the air from a cluster of bushes to the verandah, in brilliant moonlight . . . and then faded out. Again, the case of Mr. Ramaswamier, B.A., affords proof of the most cumulative kind ever recorded in the history of this branch of Esoteric Science: he first saw a Mahatma’s portrait; then saw him in the “double”; and finally met him in the flesh in a lonely pass in Sikkim, conversed with him for above two hours in his (Mr. R’s) own vernacular — a foreign tongue to the Mahatma — had explained to him many facts relating to the Theosophical Society, and was charged with messages to Colonel Olcott about certain confidential matters which none but himself and this particular Mahatma knew about. The existence of the Mahatmas, their power to travel in the inner, or astral body at will, to preserve full command of all their intelligence, and to condense their “phantom” form into visibility or dissolve it into invisibility at their own pleasure, are now facts too well established to permit us to regard it as an open question.

Objectors to the above propositions are found only among the inexperienced, as objectors to every other new thing have been. There must be a particular moment in every case when doubt and disbelief vanish, to give place to knowledge and certainty.



Few, comparatively, of any generation have ever or in the nature of things could ever see the splendid phenomenon of a Mahatma's astral apparition; for merely the magneto-psychic law of attraction and repulsion keeps Adepts and the reeking stew of social corruption far apart.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, under very favourable conditions they may approach an individual devoted to occult research, but this happens rarely; for even he, pure though he be, is wallowing in the world's corrupt *akasa* or magnetic aura and contaminated by it. To his inner self it is as stifling and deadly as the heavy vapour of carbonic oxide to his physical lungs. And, remember, it is by the inner, not the outer, self that we come into relations with Adepts and their advanced Chelas. One would not expect to hold improving conversation with a besotted inebriate, lying in a state of swine-like stupefaction after a debauch; yet it is quite as impracticable for the spiritualised Mahatma to exchange thoughts with a man of society, living daily in a state of *psychic intoxication* among the magnetic fumes of its carnality, materialism, and spiritual atrophy.<sup>2</sup>

#### **But They are not accident-proof.**

The greatest adepts living are but mortal men, after all, and sooner or later have to die. No adept is proof against accident, unless he uses selfishly his acquired powers. For, unless he is constantly watching over his own personality, and cares little for the rest of mankind, he is as liable to fall a victim to disease and death as any other man. The childish, not to say absurd, ideas about Yogis, and their *supernatural* powers — whereas they are at best but *superhuman*, — that we often find current among our own Theosophists, and the superstitious and grotesque tales narrated of these holy personages among that class of Hindus, which being more orthodox than educated, derives all its ideas from the dead-letter traditions of the *Puranas* and *Shastras*, have very little to do with sober truth. An adept, or Raja Yogi (we now speak of the real, not the fictitious ones of idle rumour) is simply the custodian of the secrets of the hidden possibilities of nature; the master and guide of her undiscovered potentialities, one who awakens and arouses them into activity by abnormal yet natural powers, and by furnishing them with the requisite group of conditions which lie dormant and can, rarely, if ever, be brought together if left alone.<sup>3</sup>

#### **For, They are living men in living bodies.**

Surely, the existence or *non*-existence of our Mahatmas is a problem of very little importance to those who do not accept their teachings? It interests only those who do; and — Mr. Lloyd is not one of these. It thus becomes simply idle curiosity; and, I am sorry to say, a malevolent desire to embarrass, if possible, to put into a false position those of the Fellows, who, while believing and having confidence in the Mahatmas and their teachings, are unable, so far, to say, as we can — *We know them person-*

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<sup>1</sup> [Responding to Earl of Crawford and Balcarres' pleas to re-establish contact, Master M dictated the following lines to Blavatsky: "My Lord! You are an Englishman and your daily life runs according to the English pattern. Ambition and Parliament began the work of ruin, the meat you eat and the wine you drink finished it . . . For the assimilation of the human soul with the Universal Soul or Parabrahman, there is but one narrow and thorny path, and this you will not tread. The material man killed in you the spiritual. You alone can resurrect the latter; no one else is able to do so for you. . ." *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, p. 446. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PROJECTION OF THE DOUBLE) V pp. 290-91

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (THE DEATH OF A GREAT MAN) VI p. 51; [commenting on the death of Pundit Dayananda Saraswati, Founder and Supreme Chief of the Arya Samaj of Aryavarta.]



*ally*, and look straight into the face of our opponents. I am one of those who have seen them, lived near them, and have as much proof of the existence of these revered Masters as I have of those of Mr. Lloyd and his guru — Mrs. Kingsford. I pause again, to ask! Is Mr. Lloyd prepared to look me straight in the face, as I look into his eyes and say to me that I am a *liar*? And having disposed thus of me, is he prepared to do the same with Colonel Olcott, who has also seen his guru and Mahatma Koot Hoomi *personally*? And with Mohini, and Mr. Brown, to a certain degree, and with Damodar and Dharbagiri Nath and so many others who have been blessed for a longer or a shorter time with the Masters' presence, in their own *living* bodies, not merely astral forms?<sup>4</sup>

**Their Māyāvi-Rūpa is furnished by the Auric Egg.**<sup>5</sup>

Thus the Auric Egg, reflecting all the thoughts, words and deeds of man, is:

(a) The preserver of every Karmic record.

(b) The storehouse of all the good and bad powers of man, receiving and giving out at his will — nay, at his very thought — every potentiality, which becomes, then and there, an acting potency: this aura is the mirror in which sensitives and clairvoyants sense and perceive the real man, and see him *as he is*, not as he appears.

(c) As it furnishes man with his Astral Form, around which the physical entity models itself, first as a foetus, then as a child and man, the astral growing apace with the human being, so it furnishes him during his life, if an Adept, with his Māyāvi-Rūpa, *Illusion Body* (which is not his *Vital* Astral Body); and after death, with his Devachanic Entity and Kāma-Rūpa, or Body of Desire (the Spook).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MR. LLOYD'S QUESTIONS TO MOHINI) VI p. 216

<sup>5</sup> [Cf. "The source of the human aura, taking its name from its shape. It ranges from the divine to the astral-physical, and is the seat of all the monadic, spiritual, intellectual, mental, passionate, and vital energies and faculties. In its essence it is eternal and endures throughout the pralayas as well as during the manvantaras."

"Every being or thing throughout the universe, and indeed the universe itself, has, or rather *is*, its own auric egg. Its primal substance is the akasha . . .

"The auric egg originates in the monad which is its heart or core, and from which, when manifestation begins, it emanates forth in streams of vital effluvia. On the different planes which the auric egg traverses as a pillar of light, from the atmic to the physical, each such auric or pranic effluvia is a principle or element, commonly reckoned in man as seven in number. When the auric egg is viewed on any one plane of the human constitution, we discover that this plane or 'layer' not only corresponds to, but actually *is*, one of the unfolded six principles of man; it would appear to be ovoid or somewhat egg-shaped in outline, and to be a more or less dense, extremely brilliant, central portion surrounded by an enormously active interworking cloud of pranic currents.

"These immensely active and interworking clouds or vital effluvia are actually the pranas of the auric egg on any one plane expressing themselves as auras."

— *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*; & quoting from G. de Purucker's *Fountain-Source of Occultism*, p. 27.]

<sup>6</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 608



**At death Their apparitional or astral body becomes as solid and tangible as was the late physical body.**

[Theophania<sup>7</sup>] . . . is one of the several mysteries of being and incarnation. Another is that when an Adept reaches during his lifetime that state of holiness and purity that makes him “equal to the Angels,” then at death his apparitional or astral body becomes as solid and tangible as was the late body, and is transformed into the real man.<sup>8</sup> The old physical body, falling off like the cast-off serpent’s skin, the body of the “new” man remains either visible or, at the option of the Adept, disappears from view, surrounded as it is by the Akasic shell that screens it.<sup>9</sup> In the latter case there are three ways open to the Adept:

(1) He may remain in the earth’s sphere (Vāyu or Kāma-loka), in that ethereal locality concealed from human sight save during flashes of clairvoyance. In this case his astral body, owing to its great purity and spirituality, having lost the conditions required for Akasic light (the nether or terrestrial ether) to absorb its semi-material particles, the Adept will have to remain in the company of disintegrating shells — doing no good or useful work. This, of course, cannot be.

(2) He can by a supreme effort of will merge entirely into, and get united with, his Monad. By doing so, however, he would (a) deprive his Higher Self of post-humous Samadhi — a bliss which is not real Nirvana — the astral, however pure, being too earthly for such state; and (b) he would thereby open himself to Karmic law; the action being, in fact, the outcome of personal selfishness — of reaping the fruits produced by and for oneself — alone.

(3) The Adept has the option of renouncing conscious Nirvāna and rest, to work on earth for the good of mankind. This he can do in a twofold way: either, as above said, by consolidating his astral body into physical appearance, he can re-assume the self-same personality; or he can avail himself of an entirely new physical body, whether that of a newly-born infant or — as Samkaracharya is reported to have done with the body of a dead Raja by “entering a deserted sheath,” and living in it as long as he chooses. This is what is called “continuous existence.” The Section entitled “The Mystery about Buddha” will throw additional light on this theory, to the profane incomprehensible, or to the generality simply *absurd*. Such is the doctrine taught, everyone having the choice of either fathoming it still deeper, or of leaving it unnoticed.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [Cf. “. . . the Greek, rarely-used word, ‘Theophania,’ meant more with the Neo-Platonists than it does with the modern maker of dictionaries. The compound word, *Theophania* (from *theos*, ‘God,’ and *phainesthai*, to appear,) does not simply mean ‘a manifestation of God to man by *actual* appearance’ — an absurdity, by the way — but the actual presence of a God in man, a *divine* incarnation.” — *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SOME REASONS FOR SECRECY) XIV p. 52 — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>8</sup> See the explanations given on the subject in “The Elixir of Life,” by G. Mitford (From a Chela’s Diary), Five years of Theosophy, London, 1885; [Theosophy Co. reprint, 1980.]

<sup>9</sup> [Cf. “At the first relaxation of the will it will disperse, and the spiritual self, temporarily losing its personality and all remembrance of it, ascends to higher regions. Such is the teaching. None can overshadow mortals but the elect, the ‘Accomplished,’ the ‘Bhyang-tsiub,’ or the ‘Bodhisattvas’ alone — they who have penetrated the great secret of life and death — as they are able to prolong, at will, their stay on earth after ‘dying.’ Rendered into the vulgar phraseology, such overshadowing is to ‘be born again and again’ for the benefit of mankind.” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TIBETAN TEACHINGS) VI p. 109; translating from letters and manuscripts of “a Gelung of the Inner Temple — a disciple of Bas-pa Dharma, the Secret Doctrine.” — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>10</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SOME REASONS FOR SECRECY) XIV pp. 53-54



- **When the body of an Adept is entirely at the command of the Inner Man,**
- **When the Spiritual Self is completely reunited with its seventh principle even during the lifetime of the personality, and**
- **When the Astral Man or Personal Self has become so purified that he has gradually assimilated all the qualities and attributes of the middle nature (Buddhi and Manas in their terrestrial aspect),**

**Then it can be said that the material lower self substitutes itself for the spiritual Higher Self, and is thenceforth capable of living an independent life on earth.**

Even in ordinary *mediumistic* life, so-called, it is pretty well ascertained that while the body is acting — even though only mechanically — or resting in one place, its astral double may be appearing and acting independently in another, and very often distant place. This is quite a common occurrence in mystic life and history, and if this be so with ecstasies, Seers and Mystics of every description, why cannot the same thing happen on a higher and more spiritually developed plane of existence? Admit the possibility on the lower psychic plane, then why not on a higher plane? In the cases of higher Adeptship, when the body is entirely at the command of the Inner Man, when the Spiritual Ego is completely reunited with its seventh principle even during the lifetime of the personality, and the Astral Man or personal Ego has become so purified that he has gradually assimilated all the qualities and attributes of the middle nature (Buddhi and Manas in their terrestrial aspect) that personal Ego substitutes itself, so to say, for the spiritual Higher Self, and is thenceforth capable of living an independent life on earth; when corporeal death takes place, the following mysterious event often happens. As a Dharmakāya, a Nirvānī “without remains,” entirely free from terrestrial admixture, the Spiritual Ego cannot return to reincarnate on earth. But in such cases, it is affirmed, the personal Ego of even a Dharmakāya can remain in our sphere as a whole, and return to incarnation on earth if need be. For now it can no longer be subject, like the astral remains of any ordinary man, to gradual dissolution in the Kāma-Loka (the *limbus* or purgatory of the Roman Catholic, and the “Summer-land” of the Spiritualist); it cannot die a second death, as such disintegration is called by Proclus. It has become too holy and pure, no longer by reflected but by its own natural light and spirituality, either to sleep in the unconscious slumber of a lower Nirvānic state, or to be dissolved like any ordinary astral shell and disappear in its entirety.

But in that condition known as the *Nirmānakāya* [the Nirvānī “with remains,”] he can still help humanity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DOCTRINE OF AVATĀRAS) XIV pp. 383-84



**Mahatmas are able to desert their bodies, which live on from that point until the day of death of the body entirely devoid of a soul. But the influence of the Adept on the atoms and consequently on all new physical atoms coming into the form, is such that no evil influence enters and the life led by that body is harmless and often actively good.**

There are many so-called mysteries of life which are additionally mysterious to the mind of the day from the effect of so many centuries of materialistic education, but all such so called mysteries are facts. Many of them are puzzling from the habit so many have of demanding in their minds, if not by words, that everything shall square by the rules they have learned or by their own development. And many facts are avoided by students from a fear that they look as if a belief in them bordered on superstition. Some of these relate to the very matters alluded to in the foregoing. It is well known to certain students, and has often been told them by H.P.B., that Adepts in some cases wholly desert their bodies, which live on from that point until the day of death of the body entirely devoid of a soul, but the influence of the Adept on the atoms and consequently on all new physical atoms coming into the form, is such that no evil influence enters and the life led by that body is harmless and often actively good. Again, sometimes such a body may be given over to an unprogressed but deserving Ego which uses it for what can be gotten out of it. That Ego, however, cannot have such a body except where its Karma permits. But those Adepts who have been called Masters by H.P.B. have not deserted their bodies, and we feel compelled to provide for a question by this statement in advance because it might happen that some of the School might wonder — without giving time to reflect on the question — if those beings could be such as we have just spoken of.<sup>12</sup>



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<sup>12</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. IV) XII pp. 683-84; [1<sup>st</sup> suppl. paper by W.Q. Judge.]



**There are two types of voluntary and conscious incarnations:**

- **Those of Nirmānakāyas, and**
- **Those undertaken by the probationary chelas who are on trial.**

Therefore it is maintained that Gautama, though an Avātara in one sense, is a true human Jīvanmukta, owing his position to his personal merit, and thus more than an Avatāra. It was his personal merit that enabled him to achieve Nirvāna.

Of the voluntary and conscious incarnations of Adepts there are two types — those of Nirmānakāyas, and those undertaken by the probationary chelas who are on their trial.

The greatest, as the most puzzling mystery of the first type lies in the fact, that such rebirth in a human body of the personal Ego of some particular Adept — when it has been dwelling in the Māyāvi or the Kāma-Rūpa, and remaining in the Kāma-Loka — may happen even when his “Higher Principles” are in the state of Nirvāna.<sup>13</sup> Let it be understood that the above expressions are used for popular purposes, and therefore that what is written does not deal with this deep and mysterious question from the *highest* plane, that of absolute spirituality, nor again from the highest philosophical point of view, comprehensible but to the very few. It must not be supposed that anything can go into Nirvāna which is not eternally there; but human intellect in conceiving the Absolute must put It as the highest term in an indefinite series. If this be borne in mind a great deal of misconception will be avoided. The content of this spiritual evolution is the material on various planes with which the Nirvānī was in contact prior to his attainment of Nirvana. The plane on which this is true, being in the series of illusive planes, is undoubtedly not the highest. Those who search for that must go to the right source of study, the teachings of the *Upanishads*, and must go in the right spirit. Here we attempt only to indicate the direction in which the search is to be made, and in showing a few of the mysterious Occult possibilities we do not bring our readers actually to the goal. The ultimate truth can be communicated only from Guru to initiated pupil.

Having said so much, the statement still will and must appear incomprehensible, if not absurd, to many. Firstly, to all those who are unfamiliar with the doctrine of the manifold nature and various aspects of the human Monad; and secondly to those who view the septenary division of the human entity from a too materialistic standpoint. Yet the intuitional Occultist, who has studied thoroughly the mysteries of Nirvāna — who knows it to be identical with Parabrahman, and hence unchangeable, eternal and no Thing but the Absolute All — will seize the possibility of the fact. They know that while a Dharmakāya — a Nirvānī “without remains,” as our Orientalists have translated it, being absorbed into that Nothingness, which is the one real, because Absolute, Consciousness — cannot be said to return to incarnation on Earth, the Nirvānī being no longer a he, a she, or even an it; the Nirmanakaya — or he who

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<sup>13</sup> From the so-called Brahmā-Loka — the seventh and higher world, beyond which all is arupa, formless, purely spiritual — to the lowest world and insect, or even to an object such as a leaf, there is perpetual revolution of the condition of existence, evolution and rebirth. Some human beings attain states or spheres from which there is only a return in a new Kalpa (a day of Brahmā): there are other states or spheres from which there is only return after 100 years of Brahmā (Mahā-Kalpa, a period covering 311,040,000,000,000 years). Nirvāna, it is said, is a state from which there is no return. Yet it is maintained that there may be, as exceptional cases, reincarnation from that state; only such incarnations are illusion, like everything else on this plane, as will be shown.



has obtained Nirvāna “with remains,” *i.e.*, who is clothed in a subtle body, which makes him impervious to all outward impressions and to every mental feeling, and in whom the notion of his Ego has not entirely ceased — can do so. Again, every Eastern Occultist is aware of the fact that there are two kinds of *Nirmānakāyas* — the natural, and the assumed; that the former is the name or epithet given to the condition of a high ascetic, or Initiate, who has reached a stage of bliss second only to Nirvāna; while the latter means the self-sacrifice of one who voluntarily gives up the absolute Nirvāna, in order to help humanity and be still doing it good, or, in other words, to save his fellow-creatures by guiding them. It may be objected that the *Dharmakāya*, being a *Nirvānī* or *Jīvanmukta*, can have no “remains” left behind him after death, for having attained that state from which no further incarnations are possible, there is no need for him of a subtle body, or of the individual Ego that reincarnates from one birth to another, and that therefore the latter disappears of logical necessity; to this it is answered: it is so for all exoteric purposes and as a general law. But the case with which we are dealing is an exceptional one, and its realization lies within the Occult powers of the high Initiate, who, before entering into the state of Nirvāna, can cause his “remains” (sometimes, though not very well, called his *Māyāvi-Rūpa*), to remain behind, whether he is to become a *Nirvānī*, or to find himself in a lower state of bliss.<sup>14</sup>



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<sup>14</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DOCTRINE OF AVATĀRAS) XIV pp. 375-77

