

# GLOSSARY

*Sk.: Sanskrit, Gk.: Greek, Tib.: Tibetan*

Adept. A Mahatma or Initiate.

Arhat (Sk. = "a holy one"). A fourth initiate. It is used in Buddhism to refer to one who has attained liberation and human perfection. An Arhat will no longer be subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth unless it is voluntarily chosen.

Astral body. A term that has two different meanings in theosophical literature (depending on the author). The early theosophists, such as Helena P. Blavatsky, uses it to mean the etheric double or *linga sarira*. In later literature, it refers to the desire body or *kama rupa*. Readers should note how each author uses the term.

Atma (Sk. = "breath"). Spirit. The seventh principle in a human being. It is a universal principle that does not belong to any individual soul. It gets individualized only when coupled with Buddhi. Hence Atma-Buddhi is often termed the Monad.

Atma-Buddhi-Manas. (Sk.) The higher human principles that survive death and which reincarnates.

Aura. The glow or emanation around the human body. It usually refers to the etheric aura, that is, the glow or emanation that is seen by clairvoyants which is part of the etheric double. But it also refers to such emanations from the higher bodies, such as the emotional or mental bodies.

Avatar (Sk. = "divine descent"). An incarnation of a divine being, such as that of Krishna.

Bodhisattva (Sk.). An enlightened being who lives for the benefit of others.

Brahm€ (Sk.). The Creative God of the Hindus, one of the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. It is equivalent to the Third Logos in theosophical literature.

Brahman (Sk.). The unmanifested Deity equivalent to the First Logos in theosophical literature. It is neuter while Brahma is considered masculine.

Buddhi (Sk. = "enlightenment"). The spiritual soul, the sixth principle in a human being. It is the seat of intuition and spiritual consciousness.

Causal body. The vehicle or body of the reincarnating ego. It consists of the higher mental body that is retained even after death, and which envelopes the Atma-Buddhi. It contains the karmic seeds that have been accumulated by the ego, and which will be the causes of future tendencies, actions, relationships and circumstances, hence the term causal. In Sanskrit, it is the *karanopadhi*.

Chain, Planetary. The view that each physical planet is but one of seven globes (six of which are non-material) that constitute a planetary chain. Evolution of plants, animals, human beings, etc. occur in these globes. A "Round" is an evolutionary period when the life-waves have evolved through all the seven globes. There are seven rounds of evolution in each chain.

Chakra (Sk. = "wheel"). Centers of energy in the inner bodies of a human being. They are like transformers of energy from one vehicle to another. There are seven primary chakras: base of spine, spleen, solar plexus, heart, throat, between eyebrows, and crown.

Clairvoyance (Fr. = "clear-seeing"). A human faculty that enables one to see objects or matter beyond the ordinary physical plane. There are many levels of clairvoyance, such as etheric clairvoyance, astral clairvoyance, mental clairvoyance, etc.

Deva (Sk. = "shining one"). A non-physical being who resides in one of the inner planes of nature. Those belonging to the lower mental planes are called devas with form (or rupa devas) and the higher ones are called devas without form (or arupa devas). Some of them are equivalent to the English term "angels."

Devachan (Sk.-Tib. = "land of devas or angels"). A non-physical region where the human soul stays for centuries after death and before the next incarnation. It is sometimes equated with the Christian idea of "heaven," but it is not a permanent state. It is a happy or positive state because only the experiences of devachan originate from the accumulated lofty experiences of the immediately preceding life.

Dharana (Sk. = "concentration"). The practice of concentration that precedes meditation.

Dharma (Sk. = "law," "religion," or "duty"). In theosophical literature, the term is frequently used to refer to the right duties of a person under specific circumstances.

Dhyāna (Sk. = "meditation"). Meditation, which is considered as the seventh of the eight stages of Raja Yoga.

Dweller of the Threshold. A term invented by Bulwer Lytton in his novel *Zanoni*. In theosophical literature, it refers to the astral body left behind by an individual in a previous life but which has not disintegrated by the time the ego is reborn in another body. The remnant astral body is then magnetically drawn to the new incarnation, and it is felt by the living person, usually as a malevolent entity.

Ego. The term may refer to the personal ego, which is kama-manas (emotional and lower mental natures), or the reincarnating ego, which is the Causal Body.

Elementals. Semi-intelligent non-physical nature spirits. They have been called elementals because they are classified according to the primary elements that they belong to. For example, gnomes are earth elementals while salamanders are fire elementals. Elementals

have no forms or shapes. The shapes that are ascribed to them have been due to the thought-forms of people.

Elementaries. Disembodied souls, especially of those who have gross or evil tendencies.

Etheric Double. The invisible part of the physical body but which can be seen by clairvoyants as a body that is a few inches larger than the physical. It is the matrix that determine the shape and condition of the physical body, and is also the vehicle of vital energy or prana; thus is also called pranamayakosa, or the vehicle of prana.

Evolution. The word is used in two senses. The first one refers to the evolution of forms and consciousness of the various kingdoms of nature (as opposed to creationism). The second sense refers to the "path of return" in the cycle of existence of the universe. The "downward" phase is involution, when consciousness "involves" itself in grosser and grosser matter. In the evolutionary or "upward" phase, the consciousness liberates itself from grosser matter.

Fohat (Tib.). The primordial force in nature which in its more manifested form is perceived as electricity and other forms of energy.

Gnosticism (Gk. gnosis = "knowledge"). Mystics or philosophers who taught the "gnosis" during the first three centuries of the common era, such as Valentinus, Basilides, Marcion, etc. They taught doctrines which were at variance with the traditional Christians and hence were declared heretics. H. P. Blavatsky considered that true Christianity were taught some of the Gnostics.

Hell. A term that normally means unending punishment in modern Christianity. In the Old and New Testaments, the original Greek and Hebrew words did not have that connotations. Usually they refer to the abode of the dead, such as Hades or Tartarus. In Buddhism and Hinduism, the different hells are

- temporary states of consciousness of the dead resulting from the selfish qualities of the soul.
- Individuality. The higher ego, consisting of the Atma-Buddhi-Manas. It is contrasted with the Personality, which consists of the transient principles that are discarded after death, namely, the lower mind, desire nature, and the physical body.
- Initiation. A stage of development of an advanced soul after one has developed or discarded certain specific qualities relevant to that stage. There are four degrees of initiation in traditional Buddhist and Hindu traditions. In theosophical literature, in addition to the four stages, the fifth is Adeptship.
- Involution. The phase where the universe is emanating towards grosser and grosser forms up to the material world, as contrasted to evolution, where the progress is "upwards" towards more and more spiritual levels.
- Jivanmukta (Sk. = "soul that is free"). A liberated soul, that is, one who has attained freedom from the bondage of matter, and is free from the cycle of reincarnation. A fully enlightened being.
- Kabbalah (Heb.). The mysticism and occultism of Judaism. Its tenets are derived from such books as the Zohar and Sepher Yetzirah and covers a wide range of teachings that include the genesis of the world as well as spiritual practices.
- Kāma (Sk. = "desire"). The desire principle in a human being. It expresses itself through the desire body or kama rupa (also called astral body in later theosophical literature).
- Kāma-Loka (Sk. = "desire locality"). The desire world to which the human personality enters into immediately after death, after which the soul goes through the second death and then leaves kama loka.
- Kāma-rūpa (Sk. = "desire form"). The desire body of human beings.
- Karma (Sk. = "action"). The principle of cause and effect. It is the law that governs the interaction of all existing entities. It is more particularly applied to the acts and consequences of human actions that determine the destiny of individuals.
- Kuśālin... (Sk. = "serpent" or "life force"). One of the forces of nature. In human beings it is said to reside in the base of the spine in a dormant state. Its activation will increase latent tendencies in a human being. Thus sages advise that before this energy is awakened, the personality must have been purified of harmful tendencies (e.g., anger or desire) otherwise it will greatly strengthen these tendencies, to the harm of the individual.
- Liṅga-śarīra (Sk. = "subtle body"). The etheric double. Also called the "astral body" by H. P. Blavatsky, although the term "astral body" is used in a different sense before Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater to refer to the desire body.
- Lipikas (Sk.) The recorders of Karma, sometimes called the Lords of Karma.
- Logos (Gk. = "word"). In theosophical literature, this refers to the Deity or God. Three types of Logoi are usually referred to. The first Logos is unmanifested, the second is pre-manifestation, and the third is manifested. The Third Logos is the creative deity that form the entire universe.
- Magic. A term used in the medieval times to refer to the knowledge of handling non-physical forces or powers. Whether it is black or white depends upon whether it is used for evil or beneficial purposes.
- Mahātma (Sk. = "great soul"). An adept. One who has attained to human perfection. The two inner founders of the Theosophical Society are the Mahatma Koot Hoomi and Mahatma Morya.
- Manas (Sk. = "mind"). The mind. It is divided into higher (abstract) and lower (concrete) manas.

**Mantra** (Sk. = "sacred word"). In Hindu practice, mantras are considered as sacred words that have spiritual or psychic potency. It is also used as a tool in the practice of meditation, as in mantra yoga.

**Manvantara** (Sk. = "between two Manus"). A period of manifestation or activity of the universe, as opposed to an equivalent period of rest or dormancy, called pralaya. There are minor and major periods of manvantara and pralaya.

**Master**. A spiritual teacher, an Adept or Mahatma who accepts pupils.

**Mēyē** (Sk. = "illusion"). Illusion or appearance. It is the view that the apparent world is not the true reality and hence is ultimately an illusion.

**Mēyēvi-R<sup>m</sup>pa** (Sk. = "illusion form"). The illusory body mentally projected by an individual, either consciously or unconsciously. It is a different phenomenon to the projection of the astral body. It is the form seen in death apparitions when a dead person appears suddenly at a distance at the moment of death.

**Mediumship**. The practice of allowing oneself to be an instrument or medium of a non-physical entity, such as a deceased human being. It is the common practice of spiritualist circles. Theosophical literature strongly warns against the practice of mediumship.

**Mesmerism**. The manipulation of "animal magnetism" as discovered by Anton Mesmer (1733-1815). The invisible fluid in animal magnetism is the same as ch'i (qi), prana, or orgone. Mesmerism is different from hypnotism.

**Metempsychosis** (Gk. = "change in soul"). The theory that the soul transfers from one body to another. It is similar to reincarnation except that it includes the idea that the soul can migrate even to animal bodies.

**Monad**. A term that has two meanings in theosophical literature. Helena P. Blavatsky calls Atma-Buddhi as the Monad because Buddhi individualizes the universal Atma. In later

theosophical literature such as the works of Annie Besant, Monad refers to the spiritual principle higher than Atma and resides in the Anupadaka plane.

**Mysteries**. The ancient Greek and Roman traditions of initiation, found in various places such as Samothrace, Eleusis, etc. The Eleusinian initiations are divided into the Greater and Lesser Mysteries.

**Mysticism**. The study and practice of spiritual life. It entails the experience of intuitive consciousness or spiritual consciousness.

**NirmēṢakēya** (Sk. = "formed body"). An inner body used by an advanced soul to enable one to continue to be of help to humanity in the physical world.

**NirvēṢa** (Sk. = "blown out"). The highest state of attainment in Buddhism that entails the disappearance of all illusion and attachment. It is not annihilation in the sense of absolute non-existence, but the cessation of the activities of the transcendent principles in a human being.

**Occult and Occultism**. Occult means "hidden," and hence occultism is the science of the hidden side of life, which includes the psychic and the spiritual world. The words are used in theosophical literature in this sense, as opposed to the modern usage where it connotes something sinister or evil.

**Path, The**. The road to self-realization, enlightenment or ultimate liberation. Its principles are found in the mystical traditions in the world, whether ancient or modern.

**Planes**. This world is used in theosophical literature to refer to worlds of varying density. Thus the physical earth is in the physical plane, while the desire is in the emotional plane or world. There are seven planes of nature. These seven are but the subplanes of the lowest macrocosmic plane of the Kosmos.

**Personality**. The outer ego or nature of human beings. The word comes from the Greek persona, which means "mask." It corresponds to

- the lower mental, emotional and physical vehicles of the individual.
- Prajñē (Sk. = "wisdom"). Intuitive wisdom arising out of Buddhi or enlightened consciousness. Prajñē is the essence of true enlightenment.
- Prēṣa (Sk. = "vital air"). The energy that is present in nature and in all living things. It is equivalent to the ch'i (qi) of Chinese medicine. It circulates through the etheric double, which is also called the pranamayakosa, or the vehicle of prana.
- Psyche (Gk. = "soul"). The soul in Christianity, as described by St. Paul. It is distinguished from the Spirit which is pneuma or breath.
- Psychic powers. The powers latent in the lower principles of a human being, such as clairvoyance, telekinesis, etc. It is contrasted to spiritual powers, which belong to the higher principles of human beings, such as intuition.
- Purēṣas. A set of ancient scriptures that contain Indian mythology. There are eighteen Puranas.
- Reincarnation. The belief that the human soul lives multiple physical incarnations and grows through the experiences and lessons of each life. Theosophical philosophy teaches that human beings do not reincarnate into animals anymore, while some Buddhist and Hindu schools do teach reincarnation into animal bodies.
- Round. Evolution in the seven globes of each Chain. See Chain.
- Samēdhi. The highest state of consciousness in yoga, where the ego center has dissolved and accompanied with the flowering of prajñē or intuitive wisdom.
- Saṅskēra (Sk. = "to do together"). The seeds of karma that create the tendencies or predispositions in the future.
- Second death. The death of the physical body is called the first death, where the material body and etheric double are discarded. The soul for a time resides in the kama rupa or desire body. After some time, this body is also discarded, which is the second death, and the soul enters into Devachan.
- Self. There are several selves in human being: ranging from the outer personality ego, the causal ego, and the Atma. The true inner nature of human beings is the Atma, hence its attainment is called Self-Realization.
- Skandha (Sk. = "aggregate"). In Buddhism, the skandhas are the group of states that constitute the self in human beings. They are body (rupa), feelings (vedana), perceptions (saññē), predispositions (samskara) and consciousness (vijñana).
- Soul. The intermediate bodies or principles of a human being between Atma (Spirit) and the physical body. Theosophical literature distinguishes three kinds of soul: the animal soul (desire nature or kama), human soul (mind or mana s), and spiritual soul (buddhi).
- Spirit. The highest principle or consciousness in a human being, equivalent to Atma. It is distinguished from the soul or psyche, which serve as intermediate vehicles of the Spirit.
- Spiritualism. The belief that the souls of the dead can be contacted. Spiritualists therefore are commonly engaged in the practice of mediumship, or serving as instruments so that the dead can speak through the living while the medium is in a trance state.
- Spiritual soul. An English equivalent to Buddhi, the sixth principle of human beings.
- Sufism. The mysticism of Islam. The ultimate goal of the Sufi is to attain fana or annihilation of all the transient qualities of human life. This is the equivalent of the Buddhist nirvana.
- Theosophy (Gk. = "divine wisdom"). The ageless wisdom of humanity. H. P. Blavatsky states that it is the underlying wisdom of all the great religions when the outer husks of the latter are removed. Its principles have been known in both East and West such as in

Platonism and Neoplatonism, Vedanta, esoteric Buddhism, Kabbalah, Sufism, etc.

Upanisads. A body of sacred writings in India expounding on the mystical meaning of the Vedas.

Vedas. The most ancient sacred writings of the Hindus, consisting of the Rg Vda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda. It contains hymns, rituals, and philosophy.

Yoga (Sk. = "union"). The practice and way of life that leads to union or ultimate Self-realization. The most well-known exposition of Yoga is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali which contains eight limbs or stages: restraints (yama), observances (niyama), postures (asana), breath control (pranayama), sense withdrawal (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana) and contemplation (samadhi).