

The Spiritual Body

There are several bodies that interpenetrate [to penetrate between, within] the physical body. Each of these various bodies vibrates at different rates—all higher than the rate of the physical body. Our physical body is influenced by these layers of vibrating energy, and each of these layers or bodies has its own particular purpose.

These bodies, especially those with vibration rates closest to the physical body, form a matrix or template for our physical body. These “subtle” bodies establish an interconnected field of energy within and around the physical body. Each subtle body links into the physical body via chakras, which are concentrated spheres of energy. In addition, electro-magnetic energy moves through our central nervous system and out through meridians that connect all the organs and systems of the physical body, and even extend as electro-magnetic fields, in many cases, several feet beyond our physical forms. Most of what is stated here is confirmed through modern, science-based studies in the fields of naturopathic medicine, acupuncture, and Kirlian photography.

Each of the subtle bodies has an “aura” that cannot be seen by most people in the physical except by those who have developed their psychic abilities. These select individuals are able to view the faster vibration rates of one or more of these higher bodies surrounding the physical form.

OUR MAGNIFICENT AFTERLIFE

There are different schools of thought pertaining to the order and naming of these higher bodies. Some schools call the next higher body the “etheric” while others call it the “astral.” Beyond those, most agree that there is an “emotional” body, a “mental” body (sometimes divided into “lower” and “higher” levels), and a “causal” body. For our purposes, there is little need to use these names. Suffice it to say that our physical body is able to be formed and is influenced by these various invisible and more subtle bodies that interpenetrate it.

We have certain hints as to what life will be like without a physical body. When we dream, we are often aware that we have some sort of body, often one that resembles our earthly form, though a more “light-weight” version. Those who have had near-death experiences and others who have had out-of-body experiences frequently report an awareness of their spiritual body.

Rudolph Steiner, in his book *Theosophy*, and using his choice of terms for the various bodies, lists them as follows:

*The physical body as the coarsest structure lies within others that mutually interpenetrate it and each other. The ether body fills the physical body as a life-form. The soul body (astral shape) can be perceived extending beyond this on all sides. Beyond this, again, extends the sentient soul, and then the intellectual soul, which grows the larger the more of the true and the good it receives into itself.*⁵⁴

Robert Crookall, in his analysis of decades of descriptions of the afterlife, believes along with several others that our physical “death” is merely the first of several “unveilings,” each of which results progressively in more harmonious environments. According to Crookall, after physical death, we operate for a brief time from the soul body plus the “vehicle of vitality” (some refer to this as the “etheric double”). During this time, any conscious experience we may have is dreamy or “sub-normal” and we are in an illusory environment. After this usually brief time Crookall says we undergo a “Second Death,”

which consists of the shedding of the “vehicle of vitality” from the soul body. Once this has been shed, the soul body is enabled to experience a higher state of consciousness than was possible while in physical embodiment. We can then enter the “Paradise State” which he defines as:

...the normal ‘next’ world of the average and above-average ‘dead.’ The Soul Body corresponds to this environment. It is ‘semi-physical’ and is not the ‘super-physical’ true ‘Heavens’ of the Bible (which is entered after the ‘Third Death,’ i.e., the shedding of the Soul Body).⁵⁵

Crookall defines the “Third Death” as the shedding of the soul body at the end of the “Paradise State,” when the “True Heavens” (higher realms) are entered. Once this attainment has been achieved “mystical or cosmic experiences” can occur:

There is a third ‘death’—that transition in which the Soul Body itself is discarded. After this event, consciousness operates at Spiritual ‘levels’ in the Spiritual or Celestial Body, with the indescribable true ‘Heavens’ as the environment. The third ‘death,’ more properly described as the third unveiling of the Greater Self, leaves no ‘corpse,’ ‘husk’ or ‘shell’ (as do the first and second): in this process the body undergoes a progressive refinement and purification and consequently an increase in responsiveness. It is mentioned here only to complete the correspondence envisaged between the succession of bodies, ‘levels’ of consciousness and environments.⁵⁶

According to Crookall, when souls leave the Summerland level for higher levels, the “soul body” will be shed. What souls look like then depends not only on their individuality, but which of the several sources of information about these higher realms are accurate. It is not necessary to know now what our ultimate appearance will be like once we have transcended these more known realms of the afterlife to come into

OUR MAGNIFICENT AFTERLIFE

environments more beautiful and different than can be described.

Let's return to Monsignor Benson for a description of what it is like to be in a "spirit body"—in Paradise conditions, or Summerland. His use of the term "spirit body" probably refers to the "soul body" in Crookall's terms:

The spirit body is, broadly speaking, the counterpart of our earthly bodies. When we come into the spirit world we are recognizably ourselves. But we leave behind us all our physical disabilities. We have our full complement of limbs, our sight and our hearing; in fact, all our senses are fully functioning. Indeed, the five senses, as we know them upon Earth, become many degrees more acute when we are discarnate. Any supernormal or subnormal conditions of the physical body, such as excessive stoutness or leanness, vanish when we arrive in these realms, and we appear as we should have appeared on Earth had not a variety of earthly reasons caused us to be otherwise.

There is a stage in our lives on Earth, which we know as the prime of life. It is towards this that we all move. Those of us who are old or elderly when we pass into spirit will return to our prime-of-life period. Others who are young will advance towards that period. And we all preserve our natural characteristics; they never leave us. But we find that many minor physical features that we can profitably dispense with, we shake off with our earthly bodies.⁵⁷

There exist many forces on Earth that cause imperfection in form, including stress, accidents, and illness. Fortunately, none of these exist in the Summerland or higher realms. Like the perfect well-formed trees in the afterlife, the bodies that a soul utilizes in these realms are more perfect than the one we used on Earth. They require no care or maintenance—as described earlier, they are always in good health.

No physical malnutrition can occur, but in the lower levels of the astral dimension, "spiritual malnutrition" can occur. Spiritual bodies are nourished from many sources, all

part of the one flow of life from our Creator. Spiritual force, or energy, is one of the main components of the air that souls breathe. The light in the atmosphere provides another source of energy, as well as the color in it. Energy is also obtained from the flowers and the water, as previously described, and from the sheer joy of being amidst beauty in all directions. Last but not least, energy is received directly from our loving Father, who blesses us with a constant flow of “magnetic current,” as it has been described, which is constantly charging our spiritual bodies with life force.

All of these forces surround the spiritual body of every soul. No effort need be made to seek these forces out, in stark contrast to life on Earth, where we must daily obtain our food and drink. No effort is required of a spiritual body to eat, digest, and assimilate food that is taken in. It is impossible to block this continual flow of divine life!

What does it feel like to be a “spirit person?” We learn that the soul no longer has to experience fatigue, hunger, thirst, disease, accidents, or stress! Even though the soul’s body feels so much lighter, it is yet possible to feel like a virtual giant, with a fully alert mind. The soul experiences a feeling of supreme well-being and vitality. There are no feelings of being too cold or too hot, or any other discomfort. Everything in the environment of the Summerland and higher realms is perfectly adjusted to the souls who live there—the temperature, the dwellings, the land, the rivers, the lakes and the entire landscape. Most important of all, the inhabitants dwell in love and harmony with one another. All of this presents an environment where unhappiness cannot exist.

As referenced in the previous chapter, matter is ultimately vibration. But what can this literally mean? The higher soul, Zabdiel, through the hand of Reverend Owen, gives us some insight, relating this to the makeup of our spiritual bodies:

OUR MAGNIFICENT AFTERLIFE

Matter itself is the result of the transmutation of spiritual vibrations into those of grosser sort, and these latter are now being analyzed by scientists who have come to the knowledge that matter is indeed the result of vibrations, and that no article of matter is still, but in ceaseless movement. That is correct, but not conclusive, for it does not pursue the matter to the end of it. It were truer to say, not that matter is in vibration, but that matter is vibration, the result of vibration of a quality more refined, which is found, not in the phenomenon of material things, but in those [higher] spheres proper to its quality.

Thus you will see how little it matters that, when the time comes for you to cast off the body of Earth, you stand discarnate. Your Earth body was a body of vibrations and no more. Very well, you now have a body of vibrations more substantial and enduring, because of a higher quality, and nearer to the energizing Will which brought it into existence, and so sustains it. That body will serve you while you sojourn in the lower spheres and, when you have progressed, that body will be transmuted into one still more permanent, and of quality more sublime. This process will be repeated as the ages go by and you proceed from glory to higher glory in the infinite reaches of progress before you.⁵⁸

We know from quantum physics that our bodies and all things physical are ultimately vibration. This is confirmed in numerous quantum experiments involving sub-atomic particles, the “stuff” that comprises all of matter. Our human mind can perhaps only begin to grasp this incredible physical phenomenon.