

FOUR GENERAL ABOUT THE ETHERIC ENVELOPE

4.1 The Material Nature of the Etheric Envelope

¹The etheric envelope consists of four main kinds of etheric matter: physical atoms (49:1) and physical etheric molecules of three kinds (49:2-4). The four etheric kinds of matter are sometimes called the four ethers. It is emphasized that etheric matter and, consequently, the etheric envelope are physical material phenomena, thus are part of the physical world. Physical atoms compose and penetrate all physical molecular matter (49:2-7), etheric physical matter (49:2-4) as well as gross physical matter (49:5-7).

²The atoms of which scientists speak are not the true physical atoms, but are etheric molecules of the lowest kind (49:4). In esoterics, the latter are called “chemical atoms” to prevent a confusion of ideas and terms, and not to mix up these false atoms with true physical atoms. Chemical atoms contain, like all other molecular kinds, 49 different layers of matter. These 49 layers of matter are made up of two septenary series of ever lower kinds of matter, which in the case of molecular kind 49:4, for instance, are designated: 49:4:1:1-7, 49:4:2:1-7, etc. to 49:4:7:1-7. To reach the true physical atom (49:1), nuclear physicists would have to penetrate (49 x 3 =) 147 ever higher kinds of matter. However, no physical science is able to do so.

³Etheric matter (49:1-4) is dependent on the energies of all higher atomic kinds (1-48) and is affected by them all in a descending series (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, etc.). There is in the entire cosmos no kind of energy that does not in some way manifest itself in etheric matter and in the etheric envelope. This implies that the etheric envelope is a perfect receiver and mirror of all higher kinds of energies in the whole cosmos.

⁴In respect of energy, the etheric envelope is man’s most important envelope. Only when man has acquired causal consciousness, will he understand this fact on the basis of his own experience. Before then it will, at best, be a hypothesis to the individual, usually not a very probable one.

4.2 The Etheric Envelope is the Essential Physical Envelope

¹Thus the etheric envelope is a physical body, and so it is improper to call the organism the “physical body”. If some specific body were to be called the “physical body”, it should rather be the etheric envelope, for of the two physical envelopes it is the more important one.

²When it is said that the etheric envelope is the essential physical envelope, this is explained by the fact that it contains all the energy centres that control the organism. The organism is simply an automaton or a robot, even though it is indispensable as such.

³Without etheric matter there would be no physical motion. Without etheric forms there would be no visible or gross physical forms. Without etheric envelopes there would be no physical organisms and no physical consciousness. The Moon is an example of a dead planet whose etheric envelope is dissolving. Its lifelessness and stillness are evident.

⁴The etheric envelope is a condition of cell-formation and of the life of the cells and organism. Every cell has its own etheric envelope without which the cell could not have been formed. Without its etheric envelope, the organism could not have been formed and it would be without life. The etheric envelope is the seat and mediator of the various functional energies that are a condition of the life of the organism, those energies to which the ancients gave the generic name of “vital force”. Functional defects in the etheric envelope have repercussions on the organism.

⁵The etheric envelope serves as a mediator of vibrations between the organism and the superphysical envelopes: the emotional, mental, and causal envelopes. No superphysical energies, of whatever kind, can reach the organism otherwise than through the etheric

envelope. All impulses that appear to originate from and to be propagated in the nervous system of the organism actually are expressions of energy activity in the conduit system of the etheric envelope which penetrates the organic counterpart, which is called the nervous system.

⁶The organism is controlled by energies coming from the etheric, emotional, mental, and causal envelopes. The four kinds of energies mentioned come from either the physical, emotional, or mental world, through the corresponding envelopes, or directly from the causal envelope through the heart centre of the etheric envelope.

⁷The etheric envelope assimilates physical etheric energy, which in Sanskrit is called prana. From the etheric envelope prana is conveyed by the blood to all the parts of the organism. This was known by the great German poet and naturalist Goethe, and that was why he wrote that “blood is a quite special fluid”.

⁸The etheric envelope exists before the organism, which is built on the network of the etheric envelope and with etheric energies. Through forces of attraction gross physical matter (49:5-7) is drawn to the energized etheric form and is gradually built into it, until the interpenetration is so complete as to make the two envelopes a unity.

⁹The organism and the etheric envelope function as one single envelope. The best, least misleading designation thus is the “organism with its etheric envelope”. Where the first self is concerned, the etheric envelope has no independent existence. It is functional as long as the organism subsists, then it dissolves with the organism cell by cell.

¹⁰Conditions are different in the case of those higher developed human individuals who will incarnate in the etheric races of the future. Etheric human races living on many other planets are characterized by not possessing organisms but having the etheric envelope as their lowest and only physical envelope. In such people the etheric envelope obviously has an independent existence.

¹¹Of course the same can be said, and with even greater force, about superhuman individuals (second selves and third selves) who have chosen to manifest themselves in the physical world. Such individuals, who consequently have acquired superhuman self-consciousness, thus at least essential (46) consciousness, are able to form their own etheric envelopes by means of the first triad physical atom. No man can do that.

¹²All matter is the carrier of energies, and the same is true of the matter of the etheric envelope. It is the energies that are important, which fact is expressed in the esoteric saying, “all is energy” or “all is vibration”. Matter is the basis, and as such always necessary, yet of less importance. Through the etheric envelope pour emotional, mental, causal, and still higher energies. The energies are predominantly emotional in 85 to 90 per cent of mankind, mental in 10 to 15 per cent, and causal in less than one per cent. Emotional energies find their proper outlet through the solar plexus centre of the etheric envelope. In the majority of people, their emotions rule; in exceptional people, these are the mentally activated emotions.

¹³Each envelope of man belongs to some one of the seven departments. The etheric envelope (49:1-4) normally belongs to the seventh department; and the organism (49:5-7), to the third department. The brain has in this respect a special position, for the nerve cells of the cerebral cortex are as a rule of the same department as the etheric envelope. The cortical nerve cells receive emotional and mental atoms from the respective envelopes and envelope centres. It is the etheric envelopes of the nerve cells that receive the higher atoms.

¹⁴In the study of the etheric envelope lies the possibility of reaching a more complete understanding of the laws of matter and of health. In the current civilization the idea of health has become too restricted, so as to refer only to the wellness of the individual organism. In the future, it will be seen that the health of the organism is dependent not only on the health of the etheric and superphysical envelopes, but also on the health of all the other natural kingdoms in the physical world of the planet, on the harmony and cooperation with them and with the physical matter of the planet.

4.3 *The Appearance and Structure of the Etheric Envelope*

¹The etheric envelope has roughly the same shape as the organism to which it is attached, but extends somewhat beyond the normally visible organic form. At man's higher stages of development, when the crown centre is awakened and functioning, the etheric envelope is of considerably larger extent and then normally does not any longer resemble the organic form but instead has an oval form.

²The etheric envelope of the normal individual is as whole faintly luminous and of a violet-blue-greyish colour. In the state of activation in an individual who has a developed etheric consciousness, the etheric envelope shines with a strong golden light.

³The etheric envelope can be seen when etheric vision is developed. As etheric vision develops, generally just an indistinct, undifferentiated field surrounding the whole body is seen in the beginning. Depending on whether etheric vision is focussed on coarser or subtler layers of matter, the etheric envelope appears to extend from a few millimetres to several decimetres beyond the organism.

⁴The etheric envelope can be looked upon in two ways: as it penetrates the whole organism and all its cells, and as it extends beyond the organism and surrounds it as an aura. How far the etheric envelope reaches beyond the organism – a few centimetres to several decimetres – depends on the individual's stage of development. Those who possess etheric vision find it easier to study the part of the etheric envelope extending beyond the organism than its inner parts. The study of the part penetrating the organism requires a special training and experience, since otherwise it is difficult to tell the gross physical (49:5-7) and the etheric physical (49:1-4) apart in the latter's different radiations.

⁵A somewhat developed etheric vision shows that the part of the etheric envelope extending beyond the organism to be made of several layers: a rather dark and static layer about 1 cm thick next to the skin, and beyond it a much broader, more luminous and apparently more dynamic layer. A detail often noted is of streamers coming from the tips of the fingers. To see the fine structures of the etheric envelope requires a well-developed etheric vision and an ability to focus one's etheric vision.

⁶The etheric envelope appears like a web of manifold threads. In reality, it is made of one single very fine thread woven to form a network. This thread can also be described as a channel or a tube through which energies flow. The continuation of the thread is the magnetic link connecting the etheric envelope with the emotional envelope through the heart centres of the two envelopes. This connecting link is called the sutratma, the thread-soul, in Sanskrit.

⁷It is correct to regard the etheric envelope as the matrix or basic form in which the organism grows and by which it is then always enclosed. The image of the etheric envelope as womb and the organism as the embryo within it is only partially correct, because the womb is hollow, whereas the etheric envelope is filled with inner structures – partly etheric counterparts of the cells, tissues, and organs of the organism; partly its own etheric structures which do not have gross physical counterparts.

⁸The matter of the etheric envelope (molecules and atoms) is held together electromagnetically. Thus the etheric envelope is electromagnetic in character. It is made of force fields that are at right angles to one another, just like an electric field is always at right angles to its related magnetic field. In the etheric envelope, three main currents of force can be observed.

⁹The first force current is vertical, running up and down the central axis of the etheric envelope, corresponding to the spine of the organism. This energy current is similar to an alternating electric current, entering the etheric envelope at the head and at the end of the spine. This primary current, which actually is tripartite, is said to run "between sun and earth", "from heaven above, from earth below". It induces other currents that run at right angles to itself between the spine and the outer confines of the etheric envelope. These currents, which have the appearance of horizontal bands, are the radiations observed and described by people

having etheric vision. The horizontal radiations induce, in their turn, yet other currents. These run in a constant flow round the etheric envelope. Their movement is at right angles to the horizontal bands, consequently “from pole to pole”.

¹⁰The etheric envelope thus consists of interweaving currents of energy, like a basketwork, with the etheric counterpart of the spine as an axis. This axis holds the etheric envelope together and gives it its coherent form. If the central axis is compared to an elongated vertical magnet, the etheric envelope can be compared to the surrounding force fields. Where the organism is concerned, the central axis can be said to resemble the spinal marrow and the central nervous system at large. The horizontal radiations bear a certain similarity to the circulation of the blood, and the vertical circulations resemble the lymph.

¹¹Just as the three gross physical organ systems mentioned are essential to the organism, so the etheric currents mentioned are essential to the continuation and functionality of the etheric envelope. The currents of the central axis are necessary not only to the ability of the etheric envelope to carry physical consciousness and mediate superphysical consciousness, but necessary also to the physical life of the individual. Just as the blood brings necessary nutrient and oxygen to the cells and carry away waste products, so the horizontal radiations in the etheric envelope have the corresponding function where subtler physical matter and energy are concerned. They absorb vitalizing etheric energy from the atmosphere and supply it to the whole etheric envelope, and dispose of etheric waste matter. Just as the lymph is a reservoir of chemical food for the organism, so its etheric counterpart is an accumulator of potential vital energy for the etheric envelope.

¹²The four kinds of physical matter (one atomic kind and three molecular kinds) of which the etheric envelope is composed build up a network of fine channels. These channels reach certain parts of the body via a great number of centres: seven larger and 21 lesser centres, in addition about 300 focal points of which 49 are particularly important.

¹³These centres and focal points for the transfer of energy are all interconnected through greater channels than those channels – the so-called nadis – which in immense numbers make up the etheric envelope as a whole. These greater channels are composed of many lesser ones, which converge in the centres and focal points mentioned.

¹⁴The many lesser energy channels form in every organism a network corresponding to the nervous system. This network has not yet been acknowledged by science, though some scientists have studied it in connection with their research on the acupuncture meridians. The nadis unite the etheric envelope as a whole with both the central nervous system and peripheral nervous system (the latter consisting of the sympathetic system and parasympathetic system). Not the nervous system but the nadi system is the true receiving and reaction apparatus, and via the centres of the etheric envelope and the etheric brain this nadi system is in contact with emotional and mental consciousness. To use the nadi system intentionally and expediently the individual must have become a 46-self.

¹⁵The etheric envelope, the nadi network, and the organism are inseparable during incarnation. Together these three make up the physical body in the proper sense.

¹⁶It is the centres and focal points of the etheric envelope that form the endocrine glands and maintain them; that is, supply them with energy. The nadis form and maintain the two nervous systems, the central and the peripheral.

¹⁷So-called ectoplasm, with which spiritualists experiment, is a part of the matter of the etheric envelope that has been detached from the organism. All esoteric teachers warn emphatically against all such experiments, since there is a very great risk that the medium inflicts incurable harm on himself.

4.4 *The Functions of the Etheric Envelope*

¹The etheric envelope has three main functions, which are closely interconnected. The etheric envelope serves as a receiver of energies, as an absorber of energies, and as a transmitter of energies. By absorption, or assimilation, of energies is meant here their expedient utilization within the individual's etheric envelope and their adaptation to it. If the etheric envelope fulfils these three functions in a state of balance, this is reflected in the organism as a condition of good health. The key to health thus lies in the right reception, the right absorption (assimilation), and the right transmission of energies. By "right" is meant here the mode of functioning as well as the quality of the energies themselves.

²The etheric energies received are nutriment for the etheric envelope. Just as the organism, to be maintained in good health, must receive nutritious food of high value, so the etheric envelope must receive right energy to maintain its health. If the etheric envelope receives ethers of a low quality and scant energy, it will be weakened without fail and may become ill and injured.

³It is among the functions of the etheric envelope to form the organism, to keep the organism alive with its etheric energies (scaled-down energies from higher worlds), and to afford it the ability to move. All the organs of the organism are connected to centres in the etheric envelope.

⁴Everything in nature is kept alive by the energy vibrations of etheric matter. Etheric energies act upon the monads according to the levels they have reached in the different natural kingdoms. The consciousness content that is above the monad's level passes it by unnoticed.

⁵The seed is enclosed by an etheric envelope, and thanks to this envelope the seed is able to grow. In the seed lies hid all the potentiality that is actualized in the plant; in the egg, all the potentiality that is actualized in the animal and in the man. The production of seeds and eggs is a faculty that could be fully manifested in matter, since our solar system is not a new creation but a "rebirth" of an earlier solar system. Therefore, our solar system is said to be of the second degree. In the previous system of the first degree, matter acquired certain qualities which it subsequently preserved in a latent state after the dissolution of that system.

⁶The etheric envelope makes physical perception and consciousness possible. Without his physical etheric envelope the individual would lack sense perceptions. It is the opinion of exoteric, academic physiology that the human faculties of physical perception and consciousness are due to the irritability of nervous cells. According to esoteric physiology, however, organic matter has in itself no faculty of perception. The manifestation of such a faculty in the organism is due to the fact that the organism is penetrated by a complete etheric nervous system, since every nerve-cell has its own etheric envelope. Etheric matter penetrates the organism so completely that it is present also in the lowest physical molecular kind (49:7).

⁷The etheric envelope is the mechanism conveying energy and consciousness between the physical world and the individual, and between the physical world and the superphysical (emotional, mental, causal, etc.) worlds. No impressions whatever – whether they are apprehended objectively or subjectively, whether they are received from the physical world or from superphysical worlds – can reach the brain except through the etheric envelope. If the perceptive functions of the etheric envelope are put out of play by chemical action (alcohol, drugs, anaesthetics), damage, or death, the result is unconsciousness. If the life or energy functions of the etheric envelope are eliminated, the organism dies. If the etheric envelope is partially expelled from the organism, the latter is rendered numb and insensible.

⁸It depends on the quality of the etheric envelope how much of the energies from the emotional, mental, and causal envelopes can penetrate down into the organism and the brain, how much of his latent qualities and abilities man can re-acquire. Then of course it also depends on the general circumstances of life and opportunities of re-acquisition. Therefore, many etheric possibilities are never realized.

⁹The etheric envelope is the envelope of reaping in the proper sense, that is to say: that one

of man's envelopes which the representatives of the law of reaping chiefly use to impose the reaping due to the individual in his new incarnation. The ability of the etheric envelope to assimilate the etheric vibrations pouring through the physical world determines the new incarnation in essential respects. On this ability of the etheric envelope depends the individual's possibility to use the qualities and abilities which he has acquired in the human kingdom (and which are preserved latently in the first triad).

¹⁰Through the channels and tubes (nadis) making up the etheric envelope vitalizing etheric energy streams from the etheric envelope of planet Earth itself, so called planetary prana. In addition, however, emotional, mental, causal, essential (46), or superessential (45) energy pours through these nadis, depending on the stage of development attained by the individual, thus whether he is an emotional, mental, or causal self in the human kingdom; a 46-self or 45-self in the fifth natural kingdom.

¹¹The etheric envelope conveys vibrations between the organism and emotional envelope. It depends on the capacity of the nervous system to what extent or in which manner these vibrations can be apprehended or reproduced by physical man. If a certain portion of nerve-cells is destroyed, undeveloped, or made unserviceable in some other way, there is no possibility of apprehending or reproducing in the organism the vibrations that these cells were intended to assimilate or express.

4.5 The Importance of the Etheric Envelope to the Organism

¹All organic life-forms have two physical envelopes: the organism (49:5-7) and the etheric envelope (49:1-4). The difference between a living and a dead organism is the presence of the etheric envelope in the organism. This is true of plants as well as animals and human beings. If the etheric envelope is expelled from the organism, apparent death (cataleptic trance) ensues. If the connection between the etheric envelope and the organism is severed, the organism dies instantly.

²Not only organisms but natural forms of all kinds are equipped with etheric envelopes, thus even mineral life-forms, crystals. The mineral monad does not have an individual etheric envelope, however, but the etheric envelope belongs to the group-soul. This implies that however many fragments of one and the same bigger crystal are in contact with each other independently of their mutual distances in space. This fact will probably be fully utilized in the communication technology of the future.

³The fact that the etheric envelope, not the organism, is the physical envelope proper becomes clear to us when we study it from all three aspects. The matter aspect: the etheric envelope builds the organism. The motion aspect: the etheric envelope sets the organism in motion and affords it energy. The consciousness aspect: physical consciousness, sense perceptions included, is consciousness of the etheric envelope, not consciousness of the organism.

⁴Both the organism and the etheric envelope are dependent on the first triad physical atom, which provide the two envelopes with the energies necessary to the functions of both organism and etheric envelope. The physical atomic kind (49:1) is the material of the six molecular kinds, which thus are composed of the atomic kind.

⁵The organism is a mechanical robot without consciousness of its own. This becomes evident when the etheric envelope has left the organism, which then is totally unconscious. It is the etheric envelope that enables the organism to perceive: to see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. The quality and functionality of the organism depend on the etheric envelope.

⁶In the physical world man is an organism with an etheric envelope. He has two kinds of physical consciousness. The sense perceptions in his organism allow him to apprehend objectively the material forms in the lowest three molecular kinds. The vibrations in the molecular kinds of the etheric envelope are still apprehended only subjectively by most people. Such mere subjective impressions from the etheric envelope are perceived by the

individual as physical vitality or weakness, and they demonstrate to him his dependence on the etheric envelope, provided he knows of its existence. Objective consciousness in etheric matter – so called etheric vision – implies the faculty of seeing forms of this matter, including, of course, one's own etheric envelope and those of other people. In contrast to subjective consciousness, objective consciousness in a certain matter affords the faculty of ascertaining the objective existence of this matter.

⁷Physical consciousness is not consciousness of the organism, but of the etheric envelope. Examples of this are perceptions in the nervous system of the organism. These perceptions thus are not gross physical (organic), but etheric. The consciousness of the etheric envelope is objective, that is: has the function of perceiving reality which is objective, independent of consciousness. The consciousness of the etheric envelope is ascertainable in the brain. It always makes itself felt in the organism and in the etheric envelope, just as emotional consciousness makes itself felt in the emotional envelope; and mental consciousness, in the mental envelope.

⁸Being in incarnation, involved into an organism and thereby into an "animal body", is for the monad its most limited state of consciousness, and of all kinds of envelopes the organism is the least serviceable for consciousness development. The fact that the individuals of our planet have been endowed with this envelope of suffering depends on the fact that those monads which have been crowded together to our planet have mostly a repulsive basic tendency or, expressed differently, a tendency to unlimited egoism and hatred of everything but their own selves. Obviously we need a particularly effectual lesson to be brought home to us, until we have learnt that the prerequisite of consciousness development in higher worlds is unity, not division.

⁹The lowest envelope in the physical world need not in the least be an organism. On most planets where there are human beings, those people have no organisms, but an electromagnetic energy envelope as their only physical envelope. This envelope is an aggregate of physical atoms and molecules held together electromagnetically, thus an envelope of the same kind as the etheric envelope, although often grosser matter enters into it as well.

¹⁰Diseases arise in the etheric envelope before they appear in the organism. The energy of bacteria is immense, which is seen in their productivity. The etheric envelopes of bacteria reach, via man's etheric envelope, the etheric envelopes of the organic cells. Medical science is quite ignorant of all these things.

4.6 The Organism

¹As was said above, the organism is a mere robot all the functions of which are controlled by the energies of the etheric envelope. These energies, too, work largely automatically, obeying the impulses of emotional consciousness. Furthermore, the organism is dominated, via the etheric envelope, by energies from the causal, triad, and mental envelopes. The organism is directly controlled by the energies stored in the lowest three physical molecular kinds (49:5-7). The energies last mentioned have remained from the previous solar system of the first degree.

²The energies of the envelopes are by nature determined by the departments to which they belong and the percentages of the different molecular kinds in the envelopes. An envelope that is mainly made up of the lower molecular kinds has coarser matter with lesser energy content and a lesser ability to receive and express higher consciousness expressions. An envelope that chiefly consists of the higher molecular kinds is made up of finer matter with much greater energy content and has a greater ability to receive and manifest expressions of higher consciousness.

³The processes of the organism are largely controlled by energies from the various centres (chakras) of the etheric envelope, energies that are still to a great extent poorly adapted to their purpose. When the etheric energies can be made to function properly, the organism will be a perfect automaton, "well" and unassailable by disease in any respect.

⁴The organism is in a certain respect similar to an accumulator that in daytime consumes stored-up energy and during sleep is charged again with etheric energies.

⁵Where the three aspects are concerned, the heart represents the motion aspect with energy from the third triad, the brain represents the consciousness aspect with energy from the second triad, and the spleen represents the matter aspect with energy from the first triad. Vital energy works through the heart and the circulation of the blood; the consciousness energy, through the brain and nervous system.

⁶With the shape of the human organism, biological evolution has reached its goal, its ideal form. What remains is the refinement and ennoblement of the organism, so that it is made almost unassailable by disease. As a result, the organism remains vital and fully functionable to an advanced age, whereupon the individual leaves his physical form voluntarily. At the present stage of the development of mankind, only an essential self (a 46-self, the monad in the second triad) is perfectly unassailable by any kind of disease.

⁷The corresponding work of ennoblement also concerns the organisms of the vegetable and human kingdoms. The work at refining and vitalizing the etheric envelope is one of the future tasks of mankind, because it falls wholly within the worlds of man and the pertaining problems are to be solved by mankind. And mankind will be able to solve them when it has mastered hylozoics, the only correct conception of reality in the worlds of man (47–49).

⁸The human organism belongs to the animal kingdom. On other planets there are no organisms. The “fall” referred to in the Bible consisted in the fact that men as etheric beings did not want to renounce the “experience” offered by animal bodies but, upon causalization, incarnated in the bodies of ape-men about 20 million years ago. This is nowadays impossible. Perhaps it was the esoteric story of this event, the “sin of the mindless”, that gave rise to the doctrine of metempsychosis still taught in India.

⁹According to the doctrine of metempsychosis, the monad reincarnates now in a lower kingdom, now in a higher one, only to relapse into a lower kingdom. This doctrine must be carefully separated from the esoteric doctrine of reincarnation according to which the transition to a higher kingdom is irreversible.

¹⁰As long as the human monad is dependent on the organism for its physical consciousness, it must develop all qualities and abilities when incarnated in the organism. In the emotional and mental worlds after the end of physical life, the human monad does not develop any new qualities or abilities; and in the causal world, after the disintegration of the emotional envelope and the mental envelope, the great bulk of monads sleep, since they lack the faculty of causal consciousness. Therefore, the organism is indispensable to the consciousness development of the human individual. For the organism to be able to perform its functions, however, the etheric envelope must convey all the energies to the organism’s nervous system, glandular system, and blood.

¹¹It is clear from these facts how important it is that the organism is refined to be able to receive and rightly use etheric energies. This does not mean a life of asceticism but an application of the esoteric knowledge of the functions and functionality of the envelopes.

¹²The majority of diseases in the organism have their origin in the higher envelopes, which all except the causal envelope evince functional deficiencies. If the vibrations (energies) from the causal envelope could pass all the intervening envelopes without hindrance, the individual would be entirely healthy.

¹³The radiation from people’s etheric envelopes is individually of very different quality. Put simply: good people radiate good, evil people radiate evil. The etheric envelopes of the last category can be spreaders of serious contagion. If mankind is improved and ennobled, also the etheric envelope will be purified in the process.

¹⁴The cell energies, too, can be of very different quality. If the organism is of the kind characterizing a coarsened, brutal, animal nature, the physical effect will be of quite another kind than that issuing from a refined nature. The cell energies have a raising or lowering, a refining or coarsening effect on the entire organism. If the cells have acquired the faculty of

responding to the harmonious rhythm of the physical world, they radiate those energies which, influencing everything in the environment with their harmonious effect, create the characteristic “atmosphere” that people perceive although they cannot explain it.

¹⁵The original energies, issuing from the heart centre of the etheric envelope, are conveyed by the blood mass, which supplies the body cells with etheric energies and transmit the re-radiation of the cells. The blood mass carries necessary vital energies that are distributed in the organism through circulation. The blood of the organism is an energy aspect like sap in the plants.

¹⁶The peripheral nervous system is closely connected with the emotional envelope. The contact between the peripheral nervous system and the emotional envelope is made via the solar plexus, just as vitality has its contact via the heart. In the heart is the centre of physical existence. The central nervous system works in close connection with the molecules of the mental envelope via the frontal centre and the life energies (prana) via the splenic centre.

¹⁷The physical atom in the individual’s lowest triad consists of 49 emotional atoms. Each emotional atom in its turn consists of 49 mental atoms. The physical atom thus contains 2401 mental atoms. The more mental atoms in the physical atoms of brains-cells are vitalized, the more brain-cells can function. A constant interaction takes place between cells and atoms. All atoms are vitalized during development in the human kingdom through tens of thousands of incarnations. Still only about one tenth of brain-cells function in the normal individual. Like all atoms, all cells have consciousness, since they contain all kinds of atoms (1–49). The passive consciousness of cells can be activated through vibrations from without or by the monad in the causal envelope.

¹⁸Just as a man can be born with a diseased organism, so he can be equipped with relatively coarse emotional and mental envelopes as well. The composition of the envelopes is determined by the skandhas (permanent atoms and molecules) accompanying the monad throughout its incarnations. The matter of the envelopes is exchanged and renewed without cease. Also the cells of the organism are renewed, so that all cells (except cells in the central nervous system) are exchanged during a period of seven years (one age of life). People who have eaten coarse food (meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, etc.) for generations are not aided by living on a vegetarian diet for seven years, since skandhas attract new particles from the etheric counterparts of the old diet, so that the newly formed cells of the organism are poisoned anew. And the corresponding is true of the emotional and mental envelopes (what molecular kinds they have had). Generally, it takes a whole series of incarnation before the individual has rid himself of all the toxins (miasms) in his envelopes and their matters function perfectly in accord with the intentions of the energies.

¹⁹A nerve cell consists of a soma with a nucleus and thread-like processes issuing from the soma – dendrites and axons. Axons may be up to a metre long. Many axons are encased in a fatty envelope, which is called a myelin sheath. Myelin sheaths evince at regular distances constrictions that are called nodes of Ranvier. In one and the same axon there is a flow of etheric energy of two different kinds. Whether the nerve is a sensory or a motor one, etheric energy of the lowest kind (49:4) flows constantly from the periphery to the soma. To etheric vision the flow looks like silvery line. If the nerve is damaged or unhealthy, the flow loses its brightness and appears lifeless, like a thread of grey cotton. Within this flow, impulses of etheric energy of higher kinds (49:2 or 3) move, in appearance like beads of brighter light leaping along the nerve fibre from node to node. The “beads” move in different directions in the two kinds of nerves. In sensory nerves, they travel from the periphery to the soma; in motor nerves, from the soma to the periphery. Apparently, the lower silvery energy has the function of carrying etheric nerve energy, which in its turn carries information from the sense organs to the brain or from the brain to the muscles.

²⁰In the organism at large, the lower, silvery energy has the function of operating the chemical activity of the body, whereas the higher, brighter energy is responsible for arranging chemical matter to form physiological life.

²¹Among the many forces working in the etheric envelope and influencing the organism there are both constructive and destructive ones. They interact with and counteract each other, so that tissues either grow and remain healthy or decay, grow old, or become unhealthy.

²²We study the example of bone tissue. This consists of concentric tubes of dense, inert bone substance. The concentric tubes surround central channels where blood vessels run. The tubes of dense bone in their turn are surrounded by layers of living bone cells: constructive osteoblasts and destructive osteoclasts. The etheric structure of bone tissue consists of energy currents circulating in pairs in contrary directions round the central channels of the tissue. The one current is constructive, the other destructive, corresponding to osteoblasts and osteoclasts. The balance between the energy currents determines the condition of the bone tissue. If the constructive is the stronger one, as in children, the bone grows. If the two are balanced, as in young adults, the bone is strong and healthy. If the destructive energy current is the stronger one, as in older people, the bone tends to degenerate and become brittle. The corresponding principle probably applies to all tissues throughout the body except the central nervous system, where new tissue generally is not created.

²³These example of how etheric matter and energy interact with organic nerve and bone tissue, respectively, might suffice to show that the etheric envelope is vitally important to the structure, work, and life of the organism.

4.7 *The Centres of the Etheric Envelope*

¹The etheric envelope consists of a network made up of countless threads or channels (nadis) of etheric matter. These threads consist of etheric molecules held together electromagnetically. They can also be described as lines of force circulating in the entire envelope, crossing each other, and building a system of constant interaction and counteraction of forces. These lines of force emanate from one or several of the worlds of the planet.

²This system of lines of force has its circulating energies particularly concentrated at some spots where many lines cross, and at these spots centres are formed, sometimes called chakras, which have the shape of wheels (Sanskrit: chakra = wheel). The more lines cross in the same place, the bigger is the centre formed. These centres are made up of etheric atomic and molecular matter of different kinds and correspond to nerve centres or organs in the organism.

³Seven major centres are exceedingly important for consciousness and its development. Each of these seven major centres receives its specialized energy. If a centre does not receive its specialized energy, it remains dormant. When it receives its energy and is sensitive to this influence, it becomes one of the factors controlling man's life in the physical world.

⁴The seven major centres are all located in the portion of the etheric envelope reaching beyond the organism. They are all in contact with the organism through the nadi network. Five of these centres are directly attached to the etheric counterpart of the spinal column, and energy flows through major nadis into the organic spinal marrow and then further into the organism.

⁵The positions of the centres in relation to the organism are indicated by the following names. The Sanskrit names, which are often used, are given within brackets:

- 1 crown centre (sahasrāchakra)
- 2 frontal centre (ājñāchakra)
- 3 throat centre (vishuddhachakra)
- 4 heart centre (anāhatachakra)
- 5 solar plexus centre (manipūrachakra)
- 6 sacral centre (svādhishthānachakra)
- 7 basal centre (mūlādhārachakra)

⁶The names of the centres indicate their approximate positions outside the organism. Centres 3–7 (throat centre – basal centre) are in direct contact with the spinal marrow.

⁷Besides the seven major centres there are 21 distributive centres and about 300 minor centres, in addition an uncounted number of very small centres. Each one of these lesser centres is controlled and influenced by some one of the seven big centres.

⁸All these centres, big and smaller ones, serve as centres of reaction, reception, and distribution of etheric energies of innumerable kinds within our planet.

4.8 *The Nadis*

¹The network of the etheric envelope within the organism is particularly closely interwoven with the nervous system, which is nourished, controlled, and vitalized by its etheric counterpart. This counterpart consists of millions of subtle lines of force (Sanskrit: nadis). These nadis carry energy from the molecular kinds where the monad temporarily has its attention centred: emotional, mental, etc. It deserves to be mentioned that no superphysical energies, however high their kinds, can control the organism in any other way than this one. The quality of the energy conveyed by the nadis is directly dependent on the direction of attention, the strength of effort of consciousness, the state of consciousness, and the stage of development. There is a profound truth in the ancient Indian saying, “prana follows thought”.

²The quantity and quality of the energy controlling some certain part of the nervous system is determined by the etheric centre located in the vicinity. In the last analysis, a centre is an organ of distribution. It is true that the centre reaches out into the organism with its energy, influencing it, but the centre that is the most receptive to a certain energy impinging on it wields the strongest influence on the nadis and hence on the nerves in its immediate surroundings.

4.9 *The Cosmic Energies Vitalizing the Etheric Envelope*

¹The etheric envelope is vitalized by two cosmic energies: cosmic emotional energy (36–42), also called idea emotionalite, and cosmic mental energy (29–35), also called idea mentalite. They are subsequently energies originating from higher worlds than the solar systemic worlds, thus from cosmic worlds. (Another name of the cosmos is the idea manifestation.) Idea emotionalite is a differentiated and differentiating force, whereas idea mentalite is a synthetic and synthesizing force. In the etheric envelope, idea emotionalite is divided into causal and mental energy, and also into etheric energy of its four states of aggregation (49:1-4). These six energies differentiated from idea emotionalite can be called causalite (47:1-3), mentalite (47:4-7), atomite (49:1), subatomite (49:2), superetherite (49:3), and etherite (49:4). The four differentiated etheric energies (49:1-4) are particularly assimilated by four centres of the etheric envelope: the throat centre (49:1), the solar plexus centre (49:2), the heart centre (49:3), and the splenic centre (49:4).

4.10 *The Central Axis and its Function*

¹The central axis running parallel with the spinal cord consists of three etheric currents or channels. The two ends of the axis constitute two opposite poles: the lowest centre, the basal centre, and the highest one, the crown centre. The other five major centres are directly attached to this axis corresponding to the spinal marrow in the organism.

²The three channels are called in Sanskrit sushumna, ida, and pingala. They are the counterpart of the etheric envelope to the thread of life (sutrātma), the energy channel that via the heart centre connects the etheric envelope with all higher envelopes. The central channel, sushumna, connects the centres of the etheric envelope with the third triad; ida, with the second triad; and pingala, with the first triad. The two outer channels wind in a spiral fashion round the central channel, so it is erroneous to describe them as right or left channels. On the other hand, ida is connected with the right brain hemisphere; and pingala, with the left brain hemisphere. Ida and

pingala cross at five points where the five major centres between the crown and basal centres (that is: the frontal, throat, heart, solar plexus, and sacral centres) are located. Sushumna is “passable” only in causal selves. At the present stage of mankind’s development thus ida and pingala are the only usable ones and convey the energies between the different centres.

³Ida is active when the right brain hemisphere is more active and the left nostril is more open. Pingala is active when the left brain hemisphere is more active and the right nostril is more open.

⁴Sushumna is connected with the *corpus callosum*, a bundle of axons that unites the two brain hemispheres, and with the cerebellum. In the normal individual, sushumna is active only very shortly, at the moments when there is a change between ida and pingala as the dominant energy flow.

⁵The activation of ida influences the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland, and therefore the synthesis of growth hormone and the anabolous processes. The activation of pingala influences the thalamus and the hypothalamus – but not the pituitary – and the catabolous processes.

⁶In esoterics it is said that pingala represents the matter aspect; ida, the consciousness aspect; and sushumna, the motion aspect. This must not be understood in an absolute sense, since all three energies mentioned are material consciousness motion energies. However, it is of course correct to say that the matter aspect is the dominant one in the first triad and so in pingala; the consciousness aspect, in the second triad and in ida; and the motion aspect, in the third triad and in sushumna.

4.11 The Atomic Film

¹The etheric envelope is enclosed by an enormously dense film of physical atomic matter. This film forms a protective wall without which man (especially when asleep) would be almost defenceless against all sorts of “phenomena” in the emotional world. This arrangement has also a disadvantage, however. The etheric, emotional, and mental envelopes have corresponding centres, which are so closely interconnected that they form common organs. The atomic film, however, prevents the direct transmission to and from the centres of the etheric envelope, of vibrations from the centres of the other envelopes. When the energy from the base of the spine becomes fully active and runs up the central channel, then this energy bursts the atomic film and thereupon forms a sufficiently strong protective guard.

4.12 Prana

¹In the study of the etheric envelope and the etheric energies lies the possibility of a better understanding of that energy radiation from the sun which is called “solar prana”. The prana that is active within the planet, so called planetary prana, is the effect of the contact of solar prana with the etheric envelope of the planet, a contact that is effected through one of three main channels. This combined effect is different from the effects of other etheric radiation. Prana is stimulating and constructive, produces conditions that further the growth of the cells of the organism and the preservation of their health, stimulate the inherent energy and activity of matter and form building. Prana does little in connection with form-building proper. In contrast, it preserves the form by preserving the health of its component parts. Other solar radiation acts differently: destroys forms, coheres forms, increases motion, decreases motion.

²As solar prana penetrates the planetary etheric envelope, it enters into some of the physical atoms that form atomic ether (49:1), vitalizing them. Such atoms receive a six-fold attractive force, which they bring to bear on other physical atoms. This has the effect that each atom so vitalized immediately attracts six other atoms and arranges them into a definite shape within a globule. Such a composition of seven physical atoms is called a vitality globule. Vitality globules are classed among the subatomic molecular kind of physical matter (49:2). When in the following prana is discussed, planetary prana is intended, and planetary prana thus is the

same as vitalized physical atoms forming vitality globules.

³Thanks to their intensive radiation and immense activity, vitality globules can be seen by the naked eye when they move in the atmosphere in countless numbers, on sunny days in particular. The best way of watching them is to stand with your back to the sun and focus your vision at a distance of about one metre against the background of the blue sky. Vitality globules appear as colourless, luminous, tiny bubbles. There are much fewer of them when the sky is overcast, and they are not at all visible at night.

⁴The etheric envelope is vitalized by prana. Prana enables the activity of the organism and the development of physical consciousness. The action of prana on the organism is threefold: it preserves the health of the organism, it builds the organism and repairs it continually, it is the medium through which people contact each other. Physical magnetism is largely, even if not wholly, dependent on prana.

⁵Where prana is concerned, the etheric envelope has mainly three functions: it is the receiver, assimilator, and transmitter of prana.

⁶The main centre for the reception of prana at present is a centre between the shoulder blades. Another such centre, which has become partially dormant through the abuses of modern civilization, is situated slightly above the solar plexus. More and more in the present fifth root-race and in the beginning of the coming sixth root-race, the necessity for the exposure of these two centres to the rays of the sun will be appreciated, with a corresponding improvement in physical vitality and adaptability. (More information on the root-races is given in Section Ten, The Etheric Envelope in Planetary Respect.)

⁷The two centres mentioned form a so-called triangle of energy together with the main centre for the assimilation of prana, namely the splenic centre.

⁸The process of assimilation takes place in the triangle. Prana enters in either of the three centres and circulates three times around the triangle before being transmitted to all parts of the etheric envelope and from thence to the organism.

⁹The main organ for the assimilation is the etheric splenic centre as well as the corresponding gross physical organ. In the splenic centre prana undergoes a process of intensification or its opposite, devitalization, according to the health condition of the centre and of the individual. In a healthy centre of a healthy individual, prana will be reinforced by his envelope energies. In a diseased centre of an unhealthy individual, prana will be impaired.

¹⁰In the process of assimilation, circulating prana is stamped with the quality of the individual, a stamp that will remain in prana after the individual has transmitted it.

¹¹Prana is transmitted either unintentionally or intentionally. At the present stage of mankind's development, the normal individual transmits his prana almost always unintentionally. At higher stages of development and after special training, the individual can transmit his prana through certain centres of his etheric envelope intentionally and at will. This he does in healing activity where prana carries healing energies (more about this is said in Section Eight, Esoteric Healing). This he also does in activity where etheric centres are used as organs of knowledge, in remote viewing, for instance.

¹²Differentiated prana is assimilated in the etheric envelope as five functional energies. These traverse and vitalize the etheric envelope by rotation during 24 minutes each, so that the same energy recurs every two hours:

- 1) 35, Saturn energy
- 2) 49:1, Mercury energy
- 3) 49:2, Mars energy
- 4) 49:4, Jupiter energy
- 5) 49:3, Venus energy

¹³The pranic radiation of the etheric envelope acts on the organism as thoroughly as the pranic radiation of the sun acts on the etheric envelope of the planet and everything in it. It is all one immense system of energy transmission and interdependence. All receive energy to pass it on in their turn.

4.13 On the Energy Aspect of Breathing

¹An example of the periodicity of the functional energies that can be ascertained by everybody is the rhythmic change of breathing. Breathing is done mainly with one lung and through one nostril at the time, so that this can be called right and left breathing (also called sun breathing and moon breathing). Every two hours breathing changes from right breathing to left breathing, or vice versa, unless particular obstacles intervene. In right breathing body temperature rises somewhat; in left breathing it sinks. Colds are characterized by a surplus of Venus energy and seldom occur in right breathing. Fever is characterized by a surplus of Mars energy and by prolonged right breathing.

²A healthy human being changes to left or moon breathing at sunrise the day after new moon. At sunrise on the fourth day after new moon he changes to right or sun breathing. At sunrise on the seventh day after new moon he begins anew by left breathing. On the first day after full moon he begins by right breathing; on the fourth day, by left breathing; on the seventh day, by right breathing. Man yields more easily to wrath in right breathing; more easily to depression in left breathing.

³Breath makes shapes of condensation on a mirror put just below a nostril in accord with the different kinds of functional energies:

ear-shaped (35)
circular (49:1)
triangular (49:2)
square (49:4)
crescent (49:3)

⁴Where there is true idealism, thinking in accordance with reality, and understanding of the energies of the envelopes, when the individual is able to live in agreement with the rhythm of nature and his own envelopes, he can without risk follow an elaborated method of breathing exercises. Before he has reached that stage he is very wise in refraining from such exercises.

4.14 The Etheric World

¹It is important to stress that the etheric world is constructed with and made up of forms that are as objective and real as the forms of gross physical matter. Etheric forms by no means are mere energy fields or secondary effects of electromagnetic currents, but material forms or formations that have a detailed structure.

²Form is the mode of existence of matter. Both the atoms and the material worlds that are built from them are material forms. There are no formless worlds. The term “formless” (Sanskrit: arūpa), applied in yoga philosophy and Buddhism to the causal world and higher worlds, therefore can be understood to mean only that the forms filling those worlds do not correspond to the general human experience of form. This is a truism, however, for there is no general human experience of forms beyond those of the gross three molecular kinds of the physical world.

³Science asserts that all heat comes from the sun. However, physical etheric energies produce 60 per cent of physical heat energy. Only 40 per cent come from the sun. It should be added that the radiation of the sun contains much more than light and heat.

⁴The sun, converting atomic kinds into molecular kinds, radiates all the 42 different molecular matters. It depends on the receptivity of the individuals' envelopes to what extent these

molecular matters function as perceptible energies. Most people perceive them only in their organisms. The knowledge of this fact was the original reason why the sun was regarded as a deity and was made the object of adoration, a method the initiates used to make the minds of men receptive, if possible, to energies of higher kinds. In order to receive higher energies consciously you must, to meet the first condition, have some idea of their existence, however imperfect that idea might be.

⁵The physical etheric world is an exact replica of the gross physical “visible” world (49:5-7) in etheric matter. The material forms of the gross physical world (the organisms of the natural kingdoms, for example) are replicas of the physical etheric forms. In reality, the physical etheric world and the visible world make up one single world. However, before mankind has acquired physical etheric objective consciousness, the etheric world appears to be a world of its own, and this justifies the division of physical reality into two worlds. It should be emphasized, however, that this is a temporal division, which will be abandoned in the future when sufficiently many people have acquired etheric vision.

⁶Thus it is incorrect to call the organism the “physical body”, as if it alone were physical. The designation “visible world” of the lower three states of aggregation in the physical world is misleading, too. Firstly, the physical world is a unity, and the division into “visible world” and “etheric world” is a mere appearance due to mankind’s present general stage of development and the deficient perception of reality concomitant to it. The “visible world” and the etheric world appear to etheric vision as one single world, the physical world. Secondly, there are many people, and their numbers increase, who possess incipient etheric vision, so that the etheric world is not invisible to them, at least not its lowest state of aggregation. Thirdly, anyone who desires to acquire etheric vision should not obstruct his efforts by clinging to a way of looking at things that is based on the inability to see and understand.

⁷Of the energies of the etheric world we may not know much, actually only what can be apprehended subjectively, be perceived as bodily strength or weakness, thus the flood and ebb of vital force. To be able to use etheric vision the individual must have acquired it in physical incarnation. However, his mere possession of etheric vision does not automatically afford him a clear idea of etheric energies or an understanding of their functions. Only causal selves are able to ascertain the objective existence of the etheric world.

⁸The organic life-forms in the physical world are influenced via their etheric envelopes by the changes taking place in the course of long ages in the etheric world. Each new zodiacal epoch of some 2500 years entails the inflow of new zodiacal energies. Independent of the zodiacal epochs, departmental energies (also called the seven rays) change in the course of millennia. All of this influences energetic conditions in the etheric world, reaching all etheric envelopes and so all organisms as well.

⁹The “visible” world (45:5-7) can be called the special world of minerals; the physical etheric world (49:1-4), that of plants; the emotional world (48), that of animals; and the mental world (47:4-7), the special world of man as regards consciousness.

¹⁰The original condition was that the mineral kingdom was vitalized by energies from 49:4; the vegetable kingdom, by energies from 49:3,4; the animal kingdom, by energies from 49:2-4; and the human kingdom, by energies from 49:1-4. This changed as evolution proceeded and interaction was established between all four natural kingdoms. This change was connected with the appearance of human beings of the present type, which happened about 22 million years ago.

¹¹Those beings which folklore and mythology call gnomes, trolls, brownies, dryads, naiads, tritons, undines, sylphs, salamanders, etc., are physical etheric beings of the deva evolution. Some of the names given them refer to the physical natural element they dwell in (earth, water, air, fire). They are irresponsible beings that develop through play. They shun human beings, since they instinctively perceive us as spiteful and dangerous beings who destroy nature.

¹²Day and night reign in the etheric world, too, but night does not exist in the higher, super-physical worlds, just light that is brighter in each higher molecular kind.

¹³The notion of separateness, of individual isolation is an illusion conditioned by man's ignorance and inability objectively to apprehend reality beyond the gross physical, "visible" world. Objective perception of the etheric world gives an overwhelming impression of the fact that every form within the planet, every organism is in contact with all the others through energies from the planetary etheric envelope of which all individual etheric envelopes are parts. Only human beings and the individuals of the black lodge have this illusory perception of individual separateness. In reality, the One Energy of Life traverses and penetrates all the forms making up our planet.

¹⁴Etheric lines of force, like lines of fire, pass from form to form; some are bright, others are dim; some circulate rapidly, others slowly; some circulate easily within a certain natural kingdom, others in another; some come from one direction, others from another. All is in constant motion, however, constant circulation. The basic axiom as regards the motion aspect of existence is: everything moves, nothing rests.

4.15 From the Evolutionary History of the Etheric Envelope

¹The function creates the organ, not the organ the function. The powerful inflow of functional (final) energies into the etheric envelope originally created its centres or reservoirs of energy. 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 departments. The impact of the departmental energies on the etheric envelope was so potent that the seven areas in the etheric envelope particularly acted upon became much more sensitized than the rest of the envelope. This sensitization in due time resulted in the formation of the seven centres. The seven etheric centres in their turn acted particularly strongly on their immediate surroundings, the formation of the seven major endocrine glands being the result.

²The developmental history of the etheric envelope presents two distinct phases. During the first phase the endocrine glands of the organism were formed on the basis of the centres of the etheric envelope; in their turn these endocrine glands began to have a definite effect on the blood. During the second stage and as the consciousness development of mankind had advanced, the centres began to use the nadis more efficiently, and thus also to work on the nervous system; this made consciousness activity in the physical world possible.

4.16 Collective Influence on the Etheric Envelope

¹The etheric envelope consists predominantly of the energies which man, his group, nation, or mankind reacts upon in a certain epoch. The majority of people are chiefly emotional in their consciousness and use unconsciously their etheric envelope as a tool to convey their emotionality to their organism and allow it to find expression through it.

²Every race has its peculiar character that separates it from other races. These racial characters manifest themselves not only in the organism but also in the etheric envelope. Physical matter contains all the higher kinds of matter, and the physical matter specialized for and by the race also has emotional-mental qualities typical of the race. This makes itself felt without fail in all who incarnate in a certain race. Even second selves (46-selves and 45-selves) incarnating in some human race are affected by these qualities. In the various races, the different organs of the etheric envelope have different significance and the exchange of energies between those organs take different paths with different effects.

³The etheric envelope of every life-form is influenced and ruled by the solar systemic or planetary energy that is dominant during a certain epoch. This dominant energy works without cease and shapes the etheric envelope, changing and determining its properties. The etheric envelope is subject to constant change.

4.17 *The Four Ethers*

¹Physical matter (49) presents seven states of aggregation, atomic matter, 49:1, and molecular matter of six successively lower kinds, so called molecular kinds, 49:2-7. The three higher ethers, 49:1-3, constitute the one pole; the gross physical matters, 49:5-7, the other pole; and the lowest ether, the life ether, 49:4, constitutes the field between the poles. The three higher ethers carry the energies that form the life ether, and the life ether is the subtle material pattern for the formation of the organism with its cells, tissues, and organs. The life ether also is the bridge conveying consciousness functions from the mental and emotional envelopes via the higher ethers to the central nervous system. The higher ethers are very receptive to impressions from the centres of the mental and emotional envelopes: 49:1 from the mental envelope via the throat centre; 49:2 and 49:3 from the emotional envelope via the solar plexus centre and the heart centre, respectively.

²The four kinds of etheric matter, the four ethers, should not be regarded primarily as arranged in different layers, but as making up a coherent energy structure containing innumerable frequencies, forms, and formations. At the same time, however, the etheric matter of our planet, thus the planetary etheric envelope, is ordered concentrically, so that each ether of a higher kind extends further from the centre of the planet than the ether of the next lower kind and so has its own layer of matter outside the next lower ether. In other words: each of the four ethers is present in the entire solid, liquid, and gaseous matter of the entire gross physical planet and has in addition its own layer and its own world beyond the atmosphere. In its lowest layer, which the ancients called the “sphere of fire”, this exclusively etheric physical world consists of all four ethers. Thereupon follow three higher layers consisting, in turn, of 49:1-3, 49:1,2, and exclusively 49:1. Each of these four etheric layers constitutes a world of its own, populated by etheric beings belonging to the deva evolution.

³This concentric arrangement of the molecular layers is not difficult to understand if you consider how gross physical matters are ordered in our planet. The solid physical (49:7) globe we call the Earth is the inmost core of the planet. Then follows the “watery layer” (49:6), which, if the Earth were a perfect sphere without mountains and valleys, would cover this sphere everywhere to a height of approximately 2000 metres. This is succeeded by the “gaseous layer”, that is, the atmosphere (49:5). We realize that there is water in the earth, just as there are air and other gasses in both the earth and the water, but not earth in the water, nor water in the atmosphere save its lowest layers. The general rule is that higher molecular layers penetrate lower, but lower do not penetrate higher.

⁴Each one of the four ethers is specialized for diverse functions and activities, such as vitalizers (according to the motion or force aspect), vehicles for perception (according to the consciousness aspect), and builders of form (according to the matter aspect). This is how each ether vitalizes its particular centre in the etheric envelope, is the vehicle of certain kinds of sense perception or other information, builds forms of a certain appearance.

⁵Atomic ether, 49:1, also called warmth ether, tends to build spherical forms. Subatomic ether, 49:2, also called light ether, rather builds triangular forms. Superether, 49:3, also called chemical ether, builds crescent forms. Life ether, 49:4, builds square forms.

⁶All physical phenomena originate in electricity and in physical atomic matter, that is to say, atomic ether, 49:1. Physical light has subatomic ether as its medium. Sound works through superether. Colours manifest themselves through the lowest ether, 49:4.

⁷The forms built by these four different ethers are seen in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms. For example, superether, or chemical ether, (49:3) is the predominant force at the formation of the cardiac valves. Etheric energies of this kind reach the heart centre from the splenic centre. Life ether (49:4) is obviously active in the formation of common salt crystals. Plant leaves and crystal forms afford us many graphic examples of the activity of various etheric morphogenetic forces.

⁸It should be mentioned in this connection that the “elements” of the alchemists (at which chemists laugh), namely earth, water, air, fire, and quinta essentia, were their terms of the five lowest molecular kinds, or states of aggregation.

4.18 *Solar Systemic Ether and Cosmic Ether*

¹In the study of the etheric envelope and prana lies the possibility of understanding the process of manifestation in the solar system. Etheric matter corresponds to worlds 43–46; and gross physical matter, to worlds 47–49. The study of recurring analogies may clarify many conditions.

²Every septenary of higher matter, energy, and consciousness can be divided into three higher and four lower, or four higher and three lower: 1–3 and 4–7, or 1–4 and 5–7. Four takes the middle position; it is either the highest of the lower or the lowest of the higher. This middle position is crucial, marking the critical transition from the lower to the higher in every process of ascension.

³For our study of the etheric envelope we apply the 1–4 and 5–7 division. We notice at once that of the seven physical molecular kinds 49:5-7 form the organism and 49:1-4 form the etheric envelope.

⁴The middle molecular kind, 49:4, is of crucial importance. In the majority of people the bulk of the matter of their etheric envelopes, and the major centres in particular, consist of this molecular kind. Etherization, the process starting with man’s shifting of his focus of physical attention from the gross physical (49:5-7) to the etheric (49:1-4), must begin with his acquisition of objective consciousness in 49:4.

⁵There is a very interesting analogy with the conditions just mentioned in the relation between the three worlds of man, 47–49, and the worlds of the planetary hierarchy, 43–46. Because from the cosmic viewpoint, the worlds of the solar system, 43–49, may be looked upon as one single world, the cosmic physical world. Correspondingly, worlds 36–42 are the cosmic emotional world; worlds 29–35, the cosmic causal-mental world, etc. For the necessary distinction of terms we now call world 49 the solar systemic physical world. Just as the systemic physical world (49) has seven solar systemic principal subdivisions (one atomic kind and six molecular kinds):

- 49:1 atomic
- 49:2 subatomic
- 49:3 superetheric
- 49:4 etheric
- 49:5 gaseous
- 49:6 liquid
- 49:7 solid,

so the cosmic physical world (43–49) has its seven cosmic principal subdivisions:

- 43 atomic
- 44 subatomic
- 45 superetheric
- 46 etheric
- 47 gaseous
- 48 liquid
- 49 solid.

⁶The worlds of man, 47–49, thus are the cosmic analogy with the gross physical world visible to man, 49:5-7, whereas the worlds of the planetary hierarchy cosmically correspond to the etheric world, 49:1-4. If we understand this, many analogies at once are obvious to us.

Just a few of them will be cited in the following. Man has objective consciousness in 49:5-7, only subjective consciousness in 49:1-4. On the whole, the human normal individual has consciousness only in 47–49, scarcely any consciousness in 43–46. It is particularly important to understand these analogies to understand consciousness development, human and super-human. More information on this is given in Section Nine, The Etheric Envelope and Consciousness Development.

4.19 The Fourth Solar Systemic Ether (49:4)

¹The fourth ether (49:4) is the ether which the seventh department (seventh ray) uses as a medium. It is the ether of which the majority of the etheric envelopes of men are made. It is the ether where the “devas of the shadows”, those violet devas which are closely concerned with the physical evolution of man, have their principal influence. It is the ether where, in the future, the human and the deva evolutions will touch. From the fourth ether the organisms are created. In the fourth ether occurs causalization in physical respect; only when the animal monad about to causalize is fully conscious in 49:4, is it possible to coordinate the physical, emotional, and mental consciousness of the monad so that the animal is able to causalize. The fourth ether has to be completely mastered and controlled by mankind in this eon; every human individual has to attain this mastery before the end of this eon. The fourth ether is the sphere where the first two initiations are undergone. The fourth ether holds the key to the mastering of gross physical matter (49:5-7). When the individual acquires objective consciousness in this ether, he begins to be able to control his emotional envelope and to pass into it and dwell in it increasingly often. When the individual can feel and see the fourth ether, the atomic film of the etheric envelope can begin to dissolve.

4.20 The Essential World, the Fourth Cosmic Ether (46)

¹The essential world, 46, is the great meeting-ground where groups of different kind meet to form greater communities.

²The essential world is characterized in a peculiar way by the violet colour, and the seventh ray has a special relationship to the essential world. The violet colour marks the end of a cycle and the beginning of a new one.

³The human evolution and the deva evolution are partially united in world 46, in such a manner that groups made up of both human and deva monads are formed there. Earlier, at certain fixed points, they temporarily approximated each other. In world 46, however, definite and permanent alliances are formed.

4.21 The Connection between the Fourth Solar Systemic Ether (49:4) and the Fourth Cosmic Ether (46)

¹Simultaneously as the lowest ether (49:4) is now being investigated by scientists, world 46 is gradually becoming known to those advanced beings who are individually able to cognize their place in the planetary collective being. The energies of world 46 are beginning to make themselves felt in the causal envelopes of men simultaneously as the energies of fourth ether, 49:4, are starting to be utilized by man for mechanical purposes, for transportation, for illumination, and for healing. These four domains of utilization of etheric energy are actually the working out in the physical world of the corresponding utilization of essential (46) electromagnetic force.

²Just as the majority of human etheric envelopes are built predominantly of 49:4 matter, four of the seven planetary collective beings (thus the majority) have their etheric envelopes composed of the fourth cosmic ether, that is: essential (46) matter.

³Another correspondence between 46 and 49:4 lies in the fact that they are both primarily spheres of activity of the “greater builders”, those devas who build the envelopes of collective

beings in etheric matter. In world 46 exist the “devas of the shadows” who build the planetary chains (see chapter 10.1), being the counterparts, in this higher world, of those “devas of the shadows” of a lesser order who build the etheric envelope of man. Analogies between lower and higher, such as the one just mentioned regarding the “devas of the shadows” in 46 and 49:4, are more relevant for the consciousness aspect than for the matter aspect.

⁴The gross physical (cosmic, 47–49, and solar systemic, 49:5-7) envelopes are not so much the result of the work of the devas mentioned as it is the result of the further condensation of the energies these devas primarily work with.

⁵The congestion of etheric energy into gross physical is actually the result of the activity displayed by negative involutory atoms before they have been vitalized through the presence of sufficiently many positive evolutionary atoms. In involution the negative atoms preponderate, in evolution the positive atoms preponderate. In the elementals the negative atoms are so numerous and the positive atoms so few that the latter only serve to keep the form coherent. In evolution the negative atoms are vitalized through energies from worlds 29–35, so that these atoms either dissipate back into the central reservoir or merge with positive atoms. This results in synthesis, homogeneity, and the rarity instead of the density of matter.

4.22 *Terminological Confusion as to the Etheric Envelope*

¹The word “astral” in reference to some one of man’s subtle material envelopes was first used by Swiss physician and esoterician Paracelsus, also known as Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1490–1541). By “astral body” he meant the etheric envelope, just as H.P. Blavatsky did later. This is connected with the fact that those who have etheric vision see thrice as many stars (“star” in Latin is *astrum*) in the etheric world than the normal individual sees in the gross physical world. Therefore, when currently theosophists and others use the term “astral body” for the emotional envelope and the term “astral world” for the emotional world, this must be called improper for historical reasons. However, also for factual reasons it is unsuitable to call the emotional world the “astral world”, for in that world, in contrast to the etheric world, you do not see any stars at all.

4.23 *Mankind’s Ignorance of the Etheric Envelope*

¹The etheric envelope is the most overlooked of all the envelopes of man because desires, feelings, and thoughts appear to be incomparably more important. It needs to be pointed out that the etheric envelope is of enormous importance for the individual in incarnation. Not only the health of the organism depends on it but also the possibility of right perception and assimilation of the energies of higher envelopes. If the etheric envelope is vitalized in an expedient manner, the individual will acquire objective consciousness of the etheric molecular kinds of states of aggregation and thereby a totally different and much more correct perception of physical reality.

²The present, generally accepted conception of reality (consensus) is erroneous to an incredible degree. It stands to reason that if physical reality has seven successively higher basic states of matter or aggregation and if the individuals of the human kingdom perceive only the lowest three of these seven, their perception cannot be correct. The fact that the general human perception of reality is erroneous because of its being restricted to the lower three molecular kinds is most clearly seen in the case of man’s etheric envelope. The exclusive study by medical science of the organism and its ignorance of the etheric envelope is the biggest obstacle to its progress.

³The nescience of physical science as to the true physical atom (49:1) makes it impossible for it to acquire true knowledge of physical reality. What physicists call atoms are physical etheric molecules (49:4). The physical atom consists of seven spirals of which only three are wholly vitalized and in proper function at present. Even the vitalization of a fourth spiral

would liberate the organism from most of its diseases. If all seven were activated, there would be no organic illnesses. Medical science rejects homeopathic remedies, since it cannot explain their efficacy. When, some time in the future, it humiliates itself to explore the energy effect of the thousandth or millionth potency, it will make more revolutionary discoveries concerning the structure of matter than the physicists with their so-called splitting of atoms.

⁴Mankind may know very little about the various energies of the etheric envelope, for these energies are the key to the ever-abused powers that are counted among the magical ones. Very few individuals have attained the stage of culture and acquired the love of all living beings. This love should not be confused with sentimentality, which is devoid of common sense and has brought much misery.

⁵We human beings may still have to learn that higher emotional qualities are nothing we possess merely because we try to imitate saints. Self-realization through service of mankind, evolution, and unity is required.

⁶It is only as a disciple of the planetary hierarchy that the individual receives real knowledge of the etheric envelope, its functions and energies. Through the pertaining methods the disciple learns how to use certain radiatory energies and magnetic energies and to establish a direct connection between the etheric envelope and causal envelope.

⁷Our planet, too, has an etheric envelope. What damage we human beings do to the planetary etheric envelope by our nuclear weapon tests, our “peaceful” utilization of nuclear power, and our pollution of earth, water, and air with petrochemical substances and heavy metals will be gradually found out by future science when it has discovered the existence of etheric envelopes. According to the law of reaping, mankind must take the consequence of such madness.

⁸Bodily beauty has an attractive effect that most people “fall for”. In their ignorance of life they attach importance to the form and appearance of the organism. To those having esoteric knowledge, however, only the quality of the aggregate envelopes is essential. In those envelopes, the stage of development and percentage of acquired qualities are seen by the knower. What is said here concerns things that no clairvoyants are able to ascertain. Etheric vision reveals defects not only of the etheric envelope, but also of the organism.

⁹When human beings have acquired the ability to ascertain the existence of the etheric and emotional envelopes, they must admit that there are three kinds of envelopes (the organism, the etheric, and emotional envelopes). It will be long before mankind recognizes the existence of the mental envelope, however, because mental objective consciousness is exceedingly rare in the current eon, the emotional eon.

4.24 *The Ignorance of Theologians*

¹What do modern theologians know of man’s four subtle material energy envelopes, of which the etheric envelope is the lowest one? They speak of “body, soul, and spirit”, words that are to be found in the Bible, but cannot explain the meaning of these originally esoteric terms. They do not know that “soul” has reference to that envelope of man which is immortal during all his incarnations in the human kingdom, the causal envelope, and that “spirit” refers to his future superessential (45) envelope.

²Theologians do not even know anything of that energy envelope of man which in material respect is closest to the organism, the etheric envelope. They are ignorant of everything beyond the gross physical, and in this ignorance of theirs they try to expunge all allusions to a higher reality there are in the Bible. In the Revision of the Authorised Version (King James’ Bible), published in May 1881, contradicting the Greek original, the well-known, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (τί γὰρ ὠφεληθήσεται ἄνθρωπος, ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῆ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ;) *The Gospel*

according to *Saint Matthew*, 16:26, had been changed into “For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” The Greek word ψυχή (accusative ψυχὴν, genitive ψυχῆς) means “soul”, not “life”. I encourage my readers to reflect on the profound meaning of this falsification of the original text.

³One reference to the etheric envelope and to realities connected with it that theologians have not expunged from the Bible, probably because the Bible using symbolism has succeeded in hiding the true state of the matter from those representatives of learned ignorance who intentionally or unintentionally do their best to destroy all truth there is in religion and who are called theologians. This is the scriptural passage in question:

⁴“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken”... “then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” *Ecclesiastes*, 12:6,7.

⁵The “silver cord” is the sutratma (the “thread soul”), the tie which unites the etheric envelope with all three triads and which is severed at physical death. The “golden bowl” is the very etheric envelope, which in the developed and activated state no longer has the shape of the organism, but the form of an egg, or of a bowl, that shines with a golden light. The “spirit” is the vivifying etheric energy, prana.

The above text constitutes Section Four of the book *The Etheric Envelope* by Lars Adelskog. Translated from the Swedish by the author. Copyright © by Lars Adelskog 2005.