

# H. P. Blavatsky<sup>1</sup>

By Franz Hartmann

Translation from the German by Robert Hutwohl

**W**ith this number we bring a well-chosen portrait of H. P. Blavatsky, the founder of the “Theosophical Society,” who has rightly been called “the sphinx of the nineteenth century” because she was an unsolvable enigma to “science” for most of her lifetime, and like man in general, she will forever remain a mystery as long as one is only able to deal exclusively with the house in which man lives, that is, occupied with his grossly material, externally perceptible body; not only do most not know the inhabitant within it or the inner human being who can only be perceived from the inside, but also denies the inner being’s existence.

The name of Helene Petrovna Blavatsky is known throughout the world as the propagator of a new and yet ancient world view, which throws most of the previous systems into disarray. She brought to Europe, Asia and America a new life and a great change in religion, philosophy and science, having already made itself felt in every branch, moral, legislative, and public life. And much has already been written about her personality, who was adored by many, reviled by some, to necessitate repeating what has already been said.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it is probably time that those who have become acquainted with the teachings of the Adepts on the subject of the seven principles of the constitution of man, reincarnation, etc., should become aware of the dual nature of H. P. Blavatsky. Such knowledge will serve to somewhat lift the veil which surrounds man’s existence on earth.

As is generally admitted, man is a dual being, consisting of spirit and body. The spirit belongs to God (that is, the general principle of Unity), and the body belongs to the earth. The mind as such, is not individualized, the bodies each have their own individuality, organization and form. If the spirit is to achieve an individual existence and spiritual independence and be able to act actively on the spiritual level and to move where the physical body cannot move and cannot exist, then it is necessary that it also possess a substantial form and organization, and this happens on the way of the “spiritual rebirth” by means of the “soul,” whose lower level, which is that closest to physical matter, is what we call the “astral body” (Linga Sharira<sup>3</sup>). It is only through the development of this astral body and the awakening of self-consciousness within it, that the human being reaches a self-

conscious existence on the spiritual level. Without this organization, he is — admittedly also individual — but only similar to a dream image which dreams of living but does not live self-consciously, as an idea which has not yet been realized.

If we now refrain from a more precise explanation of this subject, which would take us too far out of the way, and if we assume that every human being leads an astral soul-life, then we find that the two forms of existence, the earthly and the “spiritual” life, are completely separate and different from each other. That which has recently been called “objective consciousness” is different from what is known as “subjective consciousness.” It is said that when the body is asleep the spirit returns to its heavenly abode, though during that time it is still attached to the body by the facility of a “thread of life.” There, the “spirit” is among its own and lives under conditions which are in accord with its nature; but when the body awakens and again becomes the center of the activity of consciousness, the spirit must also return to its dungeon, but what it experienced while it was at liberty, is not imprinted in man’s memory; the spirit itself cannot impress it on the memory of the human being on earth, since the human being on earth did not take part in it and it appeared to him at most but only as a dream.

But there are also exceptional people in whom the organization of the astral body is so well developed that they can shift the focus of their consciousness between the physical or spiritual level at will, and thus lead a twofold existence possessing self-consciousness. In other words, the inner senses are awake in them, while the ordinary man utilizes only the outer physical senses. They actually and consciously associate spiritually with those people who possess the same faculties, for which distance in space is no obstacle in this state or condition. Outwardly, they associate with those around them on the physical plane. Their ability to perceive extends both to the physical and material world, as well as to the spiritual world, which is just as substantial and objective for them. They live and work in both, objectivity and with full consciousness.

One such rare being who used this ability was H. P. Blavatsky, and this circumstance explains how she could be in a spiritual and yet personal association with the Adepts, even though their bodies were many thousands of miles distant from her. It explains the many occult phenomena which she produced and why the ignorant either marvel at these “miracles” or can only denounce them as “frauds.” During her life on earth she had attained spiritual life, spiritual consciousness and the power to act independently in the “spiritual” world; she was a citizen of two worlds, the physical and the astral plane.

To the “learned” horde, this explanation will be incomprehensible and perhaps seem ridiculous. The occultist and perhaps the spiritualist will have no trouble understanding these explanations. If every human being could grasp it, everyone would also learn to understand their own higher nature better and realize that it is no idle chatter when poets dream of the paradise from which man comes and to which he should return again. They would know that only their earthly spirit inhabits the earth, but their real self is a citizen of the heavenly world, and that it is only in the latter where true knowledge to be found.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Blavatsky. Franz Hartmann, M.D. Lotusblüten 3, no. 16 (January 1893), 63-68. Translation from German to English by Robert Hutwohl, ©2022

<sup>2</sup> See “Lotusblüten,” No. VII.

<sup>3</sup> {R.H.—Commonly known during the Blavatsky era as the etheric body, or astral body. Later, after Blavatsky’s death, it was known as the etheric body or double (the liṅga-śarīra in Sanskrit, whereby the astral body became known as the kāma-rūpa or desire body. This caused much consternation to many Theosophists then. For me, the best way to get around the confusion was to call the bodies or vestures by their Sanskrit names, which have never changed. But even this will not fully appease everyone. Some members even quit the Society over this fact, which makes you tend to wonder why they joined in the first place.}