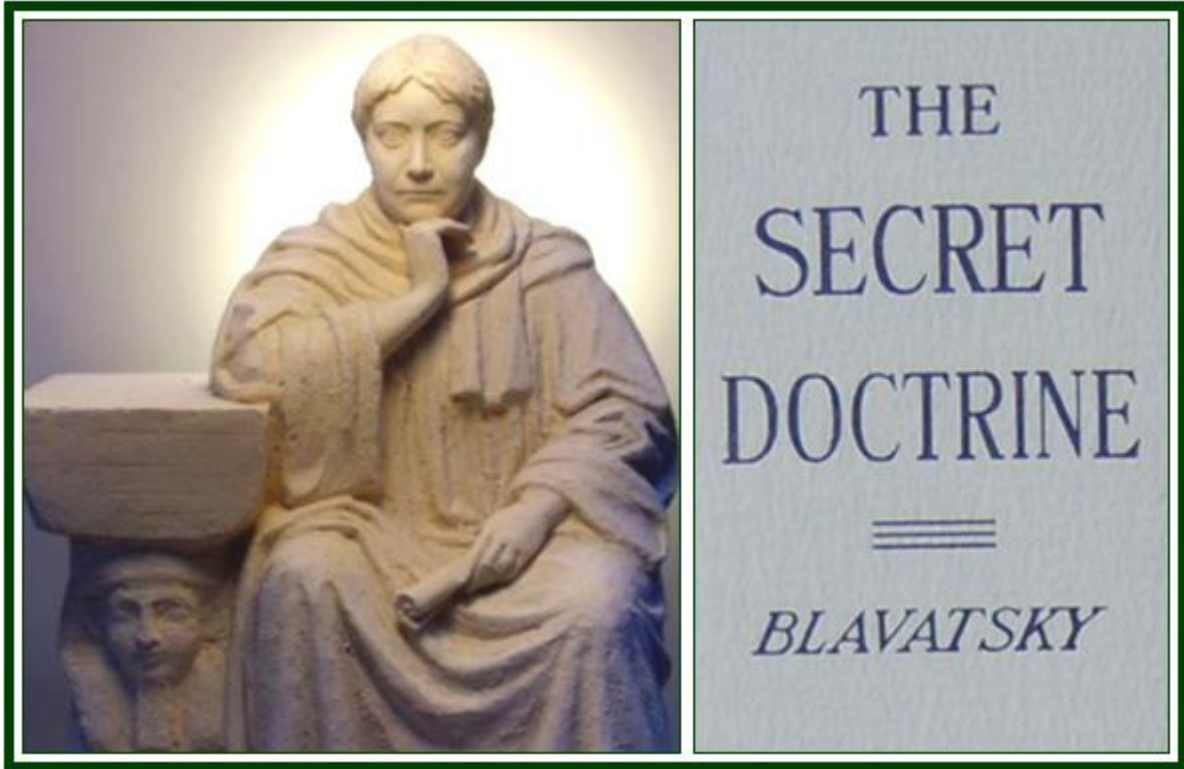


Paradox and Unity in Life

In a Key Passage of “The Secret Doctrine”,
HPB Examines Contrast, Harmony, and Dissociation

Helena P. Blavatsky



On the left, partial view of a statue of HPB made by Alexey Leonov

A 2017 Editorial Note:

In its various divine, human, animal and material dimensions, Life combines contrast and unity, and evolves through constant cyclic change.

In the following passage from “**The Secret Doctrine**”¹, Helena P. Blavatsky examines the levels of association and dissociation between the divine and the human, on one hand, and between the *healthy human* and *animalized human*, on the other.

¹ “**The Secret Doctrine**”, Helena P. Blavatsky, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, volume I, pp. 233-236. (CCA)

Yet this was not the first time HPB wrote about the matter.

More than a decade before “**The Secret Doctrine**”, she had said in “**Isis Unveiled**”:

“... If (...) the ‘soul’, as a half animal principle, becomes paralyzed, and grows unconscious of its subjective half - the Lord - and in proportion to the sensuous development of the brain and nerves, sooner or later, it finally loses sight of its divine mission on earth. Like the *Vourdalak*, or Vampire, of the Servian tale, the brain feeds and lives and grows in strength and power at the expense of its spiritual parent. Then the already half-unconscious soul, now fully intoxicated by the fumes of earthly life, becomes senseless, beyond hope of redemption.”

HPB then adds, speaking of the soul:

“It is powerless to discern the splendor of its higher spirit, to hear the warning voice of its ‘guardian Angel’, and its ‘God’. It aims but at the development and fuller comprehension of natural, earthly life; and thus, can discover but the mysteries of physical nature. Its grief and fear, hope and joy, are all closely blended with its terrestrial existence. It ignores all that cannot be demonstrated by either its organs of action, or sensation. It begins by becoming virtually dead; it dies at last completely. It is *annihilated*. Such a catastrophe may often happen long years before the final separation of the *life*-principle from the body. When death arrives, its iron and clammy grasp finds work with *life* as usual; but there is no more a soul to liberate. The whole essence of the latter has been already absorbed by the vital system of the physical man. Grim death frees but a spiritual corpse; at best an idiot. Unable either to soar higher or awaken from lethargy, it is soon dissolved in the elements of the terrestrial atmosphere.”

A few lines after that, she writes:

“Our present cycle is preeminently one of such soul-deaths. We elbow soulless men and women at every step in life. Neither can we wonder, in the present state of things, at the gigantic failure of Hegel’s and Schelling’s last efforts at some metaphysical construction of a system. When facts, palpable and tangible facts of phenomenal Spiritualism happen daily and hourly, and yet are denied by the majority of ‘civilized’ nations, little chance is there for the acceptance of purely abstract metaphysics by the ever-growing crowd of materialists.”²

So far, “**Isis**”.

Each human being constitutes a multidimensional combination of sacred, human and animal consciousness. The challenging topic of contrast, unity and dissociation is again analyzed in the following paragraphs, and more important information is given.

As to the problem of *soulless* individuals, which HPB considered frequent in the 19th century, it is up to the citizens of good-will to evaluate whether the situation has improved or not - in the present century - and what ought to be done about that in practical terms.

(Carlos Cardoso Aveline)

² “**Isis Unveiled**”, Helena P. Blavatsky, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, vol. II, pp. 368-369. (CCA)

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Many are those among the Spiritual Entities, who have incarnated bodily in man, since the beginning of his appearance, and who, for all that, still exist as independently as they did before, in the infinitudes of Space.....

To put it more clearly: the invisible Entity may be bodily present on earth without abandoning, however, its status and functions in the supersensuous regions. If this needs explanation, we can do no better than remind the reader of like cases in Spiritualism, though such cases are very rare, at least as regards the nature of the Entity incarnating³, or taking temporary possession of a medium. Just as certain persons - men and women, reverting to parallel cases among living persons - whether by virtue of a peculiar organization, or through the power of acquired mystic knowledge, can be seen in their "double" in one place, while the body is many miles away; so the same thing can occur in the case of superior Beings.

Man, philosophically considered, is, in his outward form, simply an animal, hardly more perfect than his pithecoïd-like ancestor of the third round. He is a living body, not a living being, since the realisation of existence, the "Ego-Sum", necessitates self-consciousness, and an animal can only have direct consciousness, or instinct. This was so well understood by the Ancients that the Kabalist even made of soul and body two lives, independent of each other.⁴

³ The so-called "Spirits" that may occasionally possess themselves of the bodies of mediums are not the Monads or Higher Principles of disembodied personalities. Such a "Spirit" can only be either an Elementary, or - a Nirmanakaya. (HPB)

⁴ On p. 340-351 (Genesis of the Soul) in the "*New Aspects of Life*", the Author states the Kabalistic teaching: "They held that, functionally, Spirit and Matter of corresponding opacity and density tended to coalesce; and that the resultant created Spirits, in the disembodied state, were constituted on a scale in which the differing opacities and transparencies of Elemental or uncreated Spirit were reproduced. And that these Spirits in the disembodied state attracted, appropriated, digested and assimilated Elemental Spirit and Elemental Matter whose condition was conformed to their own." "They therefore taught that there was a wide difference in the condition of created Spirits; and that in the intimate association between the Spirit-world and the world of Matter, the more opaque Spirits in the disembodied state were drawn towards the more dense parts of the material world, and therefore tended towards the centre of the Earth, where they found the conditions most suited to their state; while the more transparent Spirits passed into the surrounding aura of the planet, the most rarified finding their home in its satellite."

This relates exclusively to our Elementary Spirits, and has naught to do with either the Planetary, Sidereal, Cosmic or Inter-Etheric Intelligent Forces or "Angels" as they are termed by the Roman Church. The Jewish Kabalists, especially the practical Occultists who dealt with ceremonial magic, busied themselves solely with the spirits of the Planets and the "Elementals" so-called. Therefore this covers only a portion of the Esoteric Teaching.

The soul, whose body vehicle is the Astral, ethero-substantial envelope, could die and man be still living on earth - *i.e.*, the soul could free itself from and quit the tabernacle for various reasons - such as insanity, spiritual and physical depravity, etc. ⁵

Therefore, that which living men (Initiates) can do, the Dhyanis, who have no physical body to hamper them, can do still better. This was the belief of the Antediluvians, and it is fast becoming that of modern intellectual society, in Spiritualism, besides the Greek and Roman Churches, which teach the ubiquity of their angels. The Zoroastrians regarded their Amshaspends as dual entities (Ferouers), applying this duality - in esoteric philosophy, at any rate - to all the spiritual and invisible denizens of the numberless worlds in space which are visible to our eye. In a note of Damascius (sixth century) on the Chaldean oracles, we have a triple evidence of the universality of this doctrine, for he says: "In these oracles the seven Cosmocratores of the world, ('The World-Pillars',) mentioned likewise by St. Paul, are double - one set being commissioned to rule the superior worlds the spiritual and the sidereal, and the other to guide and watch over the worlds of matter." Such is also the opinion of Jamblichus, who makes an evident distinction between the archangels and the "Archontes". (See "De Mysteriis", sec. ii., ch. 3.) ⁶

The above may be applied, of course, to the distinction made between the degrees or orders of spiritual beings, and it is in this sense that the Roman Catholic Church tries to interpret and teach the difference; for while the archangels are in her teaching divine and holy, their doubles are denounced by her as devils.⁷ But the word "ferouer" is not to be understood in this sense, for it means simply the reverse or the opposite side of some attribute or quality. Thus when the Occultist says that the "Demon is the lining of God" (evil, the reverse of the medal), he does not mean two separate actualities, but the two aspects or facets of the same Unity. Now the best man living would appear, side by side with an Archangel - as described

⁵ The possibility of the "Soul" (*i.e.*, the eternal Spiritual Ego) dwelling in the unseen worlds, while its body goes on living on Earth, is a pre-eminently occult doctrine, especially in Chinese and Buddhist philosophy. See "Isis Unveiled", vol. i., p. 602, for an illustration. Many are the *Soulless* men among us, for the occurrence is found to take place in wicked materialists as well as in persons "who advance in holiness and never turn back". (See *ibid* and also "Isis", vol. ii., p. 369.) (HPB) [**Sub-note of the Editor**: *The complete passage of "Isis", vol. II, pp. 368-369, is reproduced in the 2017 Editorial Note that precedes the present article.*]

⁶ The book "**On the Mysteries**", by Iamblichus, in the classical version of Thomas Taylor, was published in 1997 by Wizards Bookshelf in the USA and has 365 pages. (CCA)

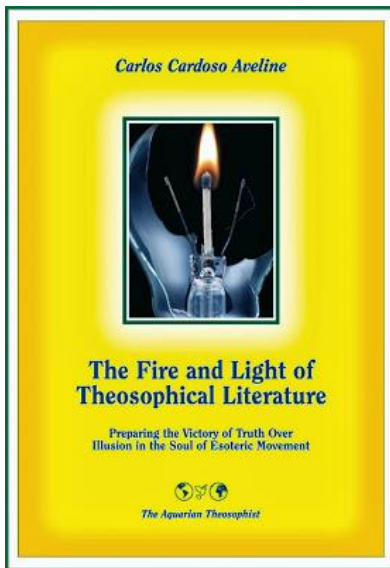
⁷ This identity between the Spirit and its material "double" (in man it is the reverse) explains still better the confusion, alluded to already in this work, made in the names and individualities, as well as the numbers, of the Rishis and the Prajapatis; especially between those of the Satyayuga and the Mahabharatan period. It also throws additional light on what the Secret Doctrine teaches with regard to the Root and the Seed Manus (see Book ii. "On the primitive Manus of humanity"). Not only those progenitors of our mankind, but every human being, we are taught, has its prototype in the Spiritual Spheres; which prototype is the highest essence of his seventh principle. Thus the seven Manus become 14, the Root Manu being the Prime Cause, and the "Seed-Manu" its effect; and when the latter reach from Satyayuga (the first stage) to the heroic period, these Manus or Rishis become 21 in number. (HPB)

in Theology - a fiend. Hence a certain reason to depreciate a lower “double”, immersed far deeper in matter than its original. But there is still as little cause to regard them as devils, and this is precisely what the Roman Catholics maintain against all reason and logic.

(From “**The Secret Doctrine**”, vol. I, pp. 233-236)

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On the role of the esoteric movement in the ethical awakening of mankind during the 21st century, see the book “**The Fire and Light of Theosophical Literature**”, by Carlos Cardoso Aveline.



Published in 2013 by **The Aquarian Theosophist**, the volume has 255 pages and can be obtained through [Amazon Books](#).

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