

## Astral Bodies or Doppelgangers

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**M. C.** Great confusion exists in the minds of people about the various kinds of apparitions, wraiths, ghosts, or spirits. Ought we not to explain once for all the meaning of these terms? You say there are various kinds of "doubles" what are they?

**H. P. B.** Our occult philosophy teaches us that there are three kinds of "doubles", to use the word in its widest sense. First, man has his "double" or *shadow*, properly so called, around which the physical body of the *foetus* — the future man — is built. The imagination of the mother, or an accident which affects the child, will affect also the astral body. The astral and the physical both exist before the mind is developed into action, and before the *Âtmâ* awakes. This occurs when the child is seven years old, and with it comes the responsibility attaching to a conscious sentient being. This "double" is born with man, dies with him, and can never separate itself far from the body during life, and though surviving him, it disintegrates, *pari passu*, with the corpse. It is this which is sometimes seen over the graves like a luminous figure of the man that was, during certain atmospheric conditions. From its physical aspect it is, during life, man's vital double, and after death, only the gases given off from the decaying body. But, as regards its origin and essence, it is something more. This double is what we have agreed to call *Linga-sarira*, but which I would propose to call, for greater convenience, "Protean" or "Plastic Body."

**M. C.** Why Protean or Plastic?

**H. P. B.** Protean, because it can assume all forms; e.g., the "shepherd magicians" whom popular rumor accuses, perhaps not without some reason, of being "were-wolves", and "mediums in cabinets", whose own "Plastic Bodies" play the part of materialized grandmothers and "John Kings". Otherwise, why the invariable custom of the "dear departed angels" to come out but little further than arm's length from the medium, whether entranced or not? Mind, I do not at all deny foreign influences in this kind of phenomena. But I do affirm that foreign interference is rare, and that the materialized form is always that of the medium's "Astral", or Protean body.

**M. C.** How is this astral body created? [Page 4]

**H. P. B.** It is not created; it grows, as I told you, with the man and exists in the rudimentary condition even before the child is born.

**M. C.** And what about the second?

**H. P. B.** The second is the "Thought" body, or Dream body, rather; known among Occultists as the *Mâyâvi Rûpa*, or "Illusion-body". During life this image is the vehicle both of thought and of the animal passions and desires, drawing at one and the same time from the lowest terrestrial *Manas* (mind) and *Kâma*, the element of desire. It is *dual* in its potentiality, and after death forms what is called in the East *Bhût*, or *Kâma Rûpa*, but which is better known to Theosophists as the "Spook".

**M. C.** And the third?

**H. P. B.** The third is the true *Ego*, called in the East by a name meaning "Causal-body," but which in the *trans-Himalayan* schools is always called the "Karmic body", which is the same. For Karma, or action, is the cause which produces incessant rebirths or "reincarnations." It is *not* the *Monad*, nor is it *Manas* proper; but is, in a way, indissolubly connected with, and a compound of the *Monad* and *Manas* in *Devachan*.

**M. C.** Then there are three doubles?

**H. P. B.** If you call the Christian and other Trinities "three Gods", then there are three doubles. But in truth there is only one under three aspects or phases: the most material portion disappearing with the body; the middle one surviving both as an independent but temporary entity in the land of shadows; the third, immortal throughout the *Manvantara*, unless *Nirvana* puts an end to it before.

**M. C.** But shall not we be asked what difference there is between the *Mâyâvi* and *Kâma -Rûpa*, or as you propose to call them the "Dream body" and the "Spook"?

**H. P. B.** Most likely, and we shall answer, in addition to what has been said, that the "thought-power" or aspect of the *Mâyâvi* or "Illusion-body", merges after death entirely into the Causal body or the conscious, *thinking* *Ego*. The animal elements, or power of desire of the "Dream body", absorbing after death that which it has collected (through its insatiable desire *to live*) during life; *i.e.*, all the astral vitality as well as all the impressions of its *material* acts and thoughts while it lived in possession of the body, forms the "Spook" or *Kâmâ Rûpa*. Our Theosophists know well enough that after death the Higher *Manas* unites with the *Monad* and passes into *Devachan*, while the dregs of the Lower *Manas* or animal mind go to form this Spook. [Page 5] This has life in it, but hardly any consciousness, except, as it were, by proxy; when it is drawn into the current of a medium.

**M. C.** Is it all that can be said upon the subject?

**H. P. B.** For the present this is enough metaphysics, I guess. Let us hold to the "Double" in its earthly phase. What would you know?

**M. C.** Every country in the world believes more or less in the "double" or doppelganger. The simplest form of this is the appearance of a man's phantom, the moment after his death, or at the instant of death,

to his dearest friend. Is this appearance the Mâyâvi Rûpa?

**H. P. B.** It is; because produced by the thought of the dying man.

**M. C.** Is it unconscious?

**H. P. B.** It is unconscious to the extent that the dying man does not generally do it knowingly; nor is he aware that he so appears. What happens is this. If he thinks very intently at the moment of death of the person he either is very anxious to see, or loves best, he may appear to that person. The thought becomes objective; the double, or shadow of a man, being nothing but the faithful reproduction of him, like a reflection in a mirror: that which the man does, even in thought, that the double repeats. This is why the phantoms are often seen in such cases in the clothes they wear at the particular moment, and the *image* reproduces even the expression on the dying man's face. If the double of a man bathing were seen it would seem to be immersed in water; so when a man who has been drowned appears to his friend, the image will be seen to be dripping with water. The cause for the apparition may also be reversed; *i.e.*, the dying man may or may not be thinking at all of the particular person his image appears to, but it is that person who is sensitive. Or perhaps his sympathy or his hatred for the individual whose wraith is thus evoked is very intense physically or psychically; and in this case the apparition is created by, and depends upon the intensity of the thought. What then happens is this. Let us call the dying man A, and him who sees the double B. The latter, owing to love, hate, or fear, has the image of A so deeply impressed on his psychic memory, that actual magnetic attraction and repulsion are established between the two, whether one knows of it and feels it, or not. When A dies, the sixth sense or psychic spiritual intelligence of the *inner man* in B becomes cognizant of the change in A, and forthwith apprizes the physical senses of the man by projecting before his eye the form of A as it is at the instant of the great change. The same when the dying man longs to see some one; *his* thought telegraphs [Page 6] to his friend, consciously or unconsciously along the wire of sympathy, and becomes objective. This is what the "Spookical" Research Society would pompously, but none the less muddily, call *telepathic impact*.

**M. C.** This applies to the simplest form of the appearance of the double. What about cases in which the double does that which is contrary to the feeling and wish of the man?

**H. P. B.** This is impossible. The "Double" cannot act, unless the key-note of this action was struck in the brain of the man to whom the "Double" belongs, be that man just dead, or alive, in good or in bad health. If he paused on the thought a second, long enough to give it form, before he passed on to other mental pictures, this one second is as sufficient for the *objectivization* of his personality on the astral waves, as for your face to impress itself on the sensitized plate of a photographic apparatus. Nothing prevents your form, then being seized upon by the surrounding Forces — as a dry leaf fallen from a tree is taken up and carried away by the wind — and made to caricature or distort your thought.

**M. C.** Supposing the double expresses in actual words a thought uncongenial to the man, and expresses it — let us say to a friend far away, perhaps on another continent? I have known instances of this occurring.

**H. P. B.** Because it then so happens that the created image is taken up and used by a "Shell". Just as in séance-rooms when "images" of the dead — which may perhaps be lingering unconsciously in the memory or even the auras of those present — are seized upon by the Elementals or Elementary Shadows and made objective to the audience, and even caused to act at the bidding of the strongest of the many different wills in the room. In your case, moreover, there must exist a connecting link — a telegraph wire — between the two persons, a point of psychic sympathy, and on this the thought travels instantly. Of course there must be, in every case, some strong reason why that particular thought takes that direction; it must be connected in some way with the other person. Otherwise such apparitions would be of common and daily occurrence.

**M. C.** This seems very simple; why then does it only occur with exceptional persons?

**H. P. B.** Because the plastic power of the imagination is much stronger in some persons than in others. The mind is dual in its potentiality: it is physical and metaphysical. The higher part of the mind is connected with the spiritual soul or Buddhi, the lower with the [Page 7] animal soul, the Kâma principle. There are persons who never think with the higher faculties of their minds at all; those who do so are the minority and are thus, in a way, *beyond*, if not above, the average of human kind. These will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane. The idiosyncrasy of the person determines in which "principle" of the mind the thinking is done, as also the faculties of a preceding life, and sometimes the heredity of the physical. This is why it is so very difficult for a materialist — the metaphysical portion of whose brain is almost atrophied — to raise himself, or for one who is naturally spiritually minded to descend to the level of the matter-of-fact vulgar thought. Optimism and pessimism depend on it also in a great measure.

**M. C.** But the habit of thinking in the higher mind can be developed — else there would be no hope for persons who wish to alter their lives and raise themselves? And that this is possible must be true, or there would be no hope for the world.

**H. P. B.** Certainly it can be developed, but only with great difficulty, a firm determination, and through much self-sacrifice. But it is comparatively easy for those who are born with the gift. Why is it that one person sees poetry in a cabbage or a pig with her little ones, while another will perceive in the loftiest things only their lowest and most material aspect, will laugh at the "music of the spheres", and ridicule the most sublime conceptions and philosophies? This difference depends simply on the innate power of the mind to think on the higher or on the lower plane, with the *astral* (in the sense given to the word by St. Martin), or with the physical brain. Great intellectual powers are often no proof of, but are impediments to spiritual and right conceptions; witness most of the great men of science. We must rather pity than blame them.

**M. C.** But how is it that the person who thinks on the higher plane produces more perfect and more potential images and objective forms by his thought?

**H. P. B.** Not necessarily that "person" alone, but all those who are generally sensitives. The person who is endowed with this faculty of thinking about even the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought has, by virtue of that gift which he possesses, a plastic power of formation, so to say, in his very

imagination. Whatever such a person may think about, his thought will be so far more intense than the thought of an ordinary person, that by this very intensity it obtains the power of creation. Science has established the fact that thought is an energy. This energy in its action disturbs the atoms of the astral [Page 8] atmosphere around us. I already told you; the rays of thought have the same potentiality for producing forms in the astral atmosphere as the sunrays have with regard to a lens. Every thought so evolved with energy from the brain, creates, *nolens volens* a shape.

**M. C.** Is that shape absolutely unconscious?

**H. P. B.** Perfectly unconscious unless it is the creation of an Adept, who has a preconceived object in giving it consciousness, or rather in sending along with it enough of his will and intelligence to cause it to appear conscious. This ought to make us more cautious about our thoughts.

But the wide distinction that obtains between the Adept in this matter and the ordinary man must be borne in mind. The Adept may at his will use his *Mâyâvi Rûpa*, but the ordinary man does not, except in very rare cases. It is called *Mâyâvi Rûpa* because it is a form of illusion created for use in the particular instance, and it has quite enough of the Adept's mind in it to accomplish its purpose. The ordinary man merely creates a thought-image, whose properties and powers are at the time wholly unknown to him.

**M. C.** Then one may say that the form of an Adept appearing at a distance from his body, as for instance Ram Lal in *Mr. Isaacs*, is simply an image?

**H. P. B.** Exactly. It is a walking thought.

**M. C.** In which case an Adept can appear in several places almost simultaneously.

**H. P. B.** He can. Just as Apollonius of Tyana, who was seen in two places at once, while his body was at Rome. But it must be understood that not *all* of even the *astral* Adept is present in each appearance.

**M. C.** Then it is very necessary for a person of any amount of imagination and psychic powers to attend to their thoughts?

**H. P. B.** Certainly, for each thought has a shape which borrows the appearance of the man engaged in the action of which he thought. Otherwise how can clairvoyants see in your aura your past and present? What they see is a passing panorama of yourself represented in successive actions by your thoughts. You asked me if we are punished for our thoughts. Not for all, for some are still-born; but for the others, those which we call "silent" but potential thoughts — yes. Take an extreme case, such as that of a person who is so wicked as to wish the death of another. Unless the evil-wisher is a Dugpa, a high Adept in black magic, in which case Karma is delayed, such a wish only comes back to roost.

**M. C.** But supposing the evil-wisher to have a very strong will, without being a Dugpa, could the death of the other be accomplished?

**H. P. B.** Only if the malicious person has the evil eye, which simply means possessing enormous plastic power of imagination working involuntarily, and thus turned unconsciously to bad uses. For what is the power of the "evil eye"? Simply a great plastic power of thought, so great as to produce a current impregnated with the potentiality of every kind of misfortune and accident, which inoculates, or attaches itself to any person who comes within it. A *jettatore* (one with the evil eye) need not be even imaginative, or have evil intentions or wishes. He may be simply a person who is naturally fond of witnessing or reading about sensational scenes, such as murder, executions, accidents, etc., etc. He may be not even thinking of any of these at the moment his eye meets his future victim. But the currents have been produced and exist in his visual ray ready to spring into activity the instant they find suitable soil, like a seed fallen by the way and ready to sprout at the first opportunity.

**M. C.** But how about the thoughts you call "silent"? Do such wishes or thoughts come home to roost?

**H. P. B.** They do; just as a ball which fails to penetrate an object rebounds upon the thrower. This happens even to some Dugpas or sorcerers who are not strong enough, or do not comply with the rules — for even they have *rules* they have to abide by — but not with those who are regular, fully developed "black magicians"; for such have the power to accomplish what they wish.

**M. C.** When you speak of rules it makes me want to wind up this talk by asking you what everybody wants to know who takes any interest in Occultism. What is a principal or important suggestion for those who have these powers and wish to control them rightly — in fact to enter occultism?

**H. P. B.** The first and most important step in Occultism is to learn how to adapt your thoughts and ideas to your plastic potency.

**M. C.** Why is this so important?

**H. P. B.** Because otherwise you are creating things by which you may be making bad Karma. No one should go into Occultism or even touch it before he is perfectly acquainted with his own powers, and that he knows how to commensurate it with his actions. And this he can do only by deeply studying the philosophy of Occultism before entering upon the *practical* training. Otherwise, as sure as fate — HE WILL FALL INTO BLACK MAGIC.