

# EVOLUTION OF THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

An In-depth Study into  
H. P. Blavatsky's Teachings

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## CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	xiii
Acknowledgments. . . . .	xxi
Introduction . . . . .	xxiii
<b>PART I. THEORY . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Chapter I. Theosophical View on Evolution . . . . .	3
Chapter II. Ātman—The Higher Self . . . . .	15
Chapter III. The Monad. . . . .	33
Chapter IV. Manas—The Ego. . . . .	47
Chapter V. Kāma—The Animal Soul . . . . .	65
Chapter VI. Communication with the Higher . . . . .	79
Chapter VII. Evolution of the Higher Ego. . . . .	93
<b>PART II. PRACTICE . . . . .</b>	<b>111</b>
Chapter VIII. The State of Manas Tajjasa . . . . .	113
Chapter IX. States of Consciousness . . . . .	131
Chapter X. The “Thought-Producer” . . . . .	147
Chapter XI. The Sense of Space. . . . .	163
Glossary . . . . .	181
Bibliography . . . . .	189
Index . . . . .	191

## PREFACE

Helena P. Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, was the main source of the teachings that this organization presented to the world. Her influence, however, is not limited to the Theosophical movement. Produced at the end of the nineteenth century, her writings became the basis of a renaissance of the Esoteric philosophy that inspired the creation of a number of societies, fraternities, and schools, some of which are still active today.

Hers was a difficult task—to call the attention of the public at large to a novel understanding of life, the cosmos, the deity, and human beings. The worldview she proposed was not unprecedented—as she tried to demonstrate in her writings this “ancient wisdom” has been with humanity from its beginnings. Yet, this view remained unknown to the many because it was either veiled in religious allegory, or taught in secret to small circles of initiates. In the West, for example, a few people were aware of some fragments of this esoteric knowledge as presented in traditions such as Alchemy, Kabbalah, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, among others. Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Yoga, etc., were also unknown in the West, except to some scholars. Blavatsky’s mission was to share this deep philosophy with the general public, for the first time in modern history, in a manner that was largely devoid of the garb of veiled language and obscure symbolism. This pioneering work implied that she had to devise the necessary ways and language to best convey the esoteric system she had been initiated into.

Blavatsky had an impressive wealth of knowledge and depth of insight, but she did not have a scholarly disposition. During her seventeen-year literary career she produced a remarkable amount of writing that would have probably been impossible had she had to spend her time carefully checking the quotes she provided, editing her works to ensure their smoothness and eliminate repetition, or presenting her ideas in a systematic way. Her work was more of an outpouring of original esoteric information, leaving to her students the task of organizing the material and creating a system from it.\*

But there was also a deeper reason for her style of writing. It is said that the way in which genuine teachers impart esoteric instructions differs from the methods of modern education. The main concern of these teachers is not to present their insights as clearly as possible. In fact, they often give only fragments of the esoteric information, frequently veiled in allegory, or mixed with exoteric elements. This approach may seem odd to the modern student, who wonders what can possibly be the benefit of making the acquisition of knowledge more laborious than it has to be. The reason lies in the different aims of the modern versus the esoteric methods of learning. Modern education stimulates primarily the cultivation of memory and the accumulation of conceptual content, the so-called “facts.” From the esoteric point of view, however, memory and concepts, although necessary, are of secondary importance. As we explain in the Introduction, the aim of teachers of this philosophy is to stimulate a “trans-conceptual” grasp of the realities described by the teachings. The way in which Blavatsky wrote encourages the student to make an effort to perceive the patterns and realities that stand beyond words. This kind of effort stimulates the faculty of spiritual intuition in the student.

However, the problem we face today, in this busy modern life, is that most people do not have the time or the inclination to undergo this kind

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\**Collected Writings (CW)*, vol. 12, 235.

of work. Consequently, the writings of Blavatsky have remained beyond the reach of many who could profit from them.

### AIMS OF THIS BOOK

The general aim of this work is to bring together what Blavatsky has presented throughout her voluminous writings about the evolution of the higher consciousness. We will examine the nature of our spiritual dimension and why it “descends” to take birth in a body—exploring the purpose of what we call “life.” Efforts have been made here to present these teachings in a systematic way and explain Blavatsky’s frequently obscure words.

We will not, however, limit ourselves to offer only the philosophy and Metaphysics of the subject. In the second part of the book we will explore a series of practices of self-knowledge and meditation suggested by Blavatsky, which aim to help us realize our spiritual nature. This is important because, without combining a sound theoretical foundation and the effort to experience what is learned, the aspirant will remain at the level of either a merely conceptual approach or a superficial practice, which usually cannot take one beyond the first stages of spiritual growth.

We must advise the reader that this is not an introductory book. This work is designed for the student of Theosophy who already has a certain grasp of the basic teachings. However, efforts have been made to present the material in a way that any person interested in Theosophy can profit from its study, even if all the concepts cannot be grasped in a first reading.

### PLAN

As we are going to see, Theosophical literature regards human beings as having seven “dimensions” or Principles. The higher three constitute our eternal and spiritual nature, while the lower four are part of our passing personality. Since the main purpose of this book is to explore our spiritual dimension and its evolution, we will focus on the nature, activities, and

unfolding of the three higher Principles—the universal spirit, *ātman*; the spiritual intuition, *buddhi*; and the human soul, *manas*. While we will not explore what is sometimes called “the lower triad” (the physical body, its astral double, and the vitality or *prāṇa*), we will look at the fourth Principle (the passional nature, *kāma*) but only in regard to its influence on *manas*.

The order in which these Principles are examined here is also important. Contrary to what the modern student would expect, we begin exploring the highest, and, therefore, most abstract and difficult to grasp of the Principles—*ātman*, the universal spirit. From a didactic point of view it is obviously better to start with what is closer and more understandable to us. For example, if we take the triple classification of human beings of body, soul, and spirit; starting with the body would seem most appropriate. The problem with this approach, however, is that it describes what we are from the wrong perspective. Beginning with the body gives the impression that this is what we basically are, while soul and spirit are some kind of attachments that we (the physical beings) have. This is the opposite of the truth. We are the universal spirit, manifesting as different individual souls, which express on this plane through a body. If anything, it is the body that is a transitory attachment to our real nature. Although the didactic approach is more suitable for an introductory book, it is not so for this work, which aims to help the student realize the *esoteric* view of what constitutes a human being. Consequently, the reader may find the early chapters somewhat metaphysical and seemingly of little relation to daily life. As the book advances, we will begin to enter into more familiar terrain, finding more and more practical implications. It is hoped that when coming to these later chapters, however, the reader will be able to study the teachings presented keeping in mind the more universal perspective gained through the early ones. This is in line with Blavatsky’s statement that, as our study addresses the diversity of the manifested world, we should never lose sight of the underlying oneness, which is our real nature.