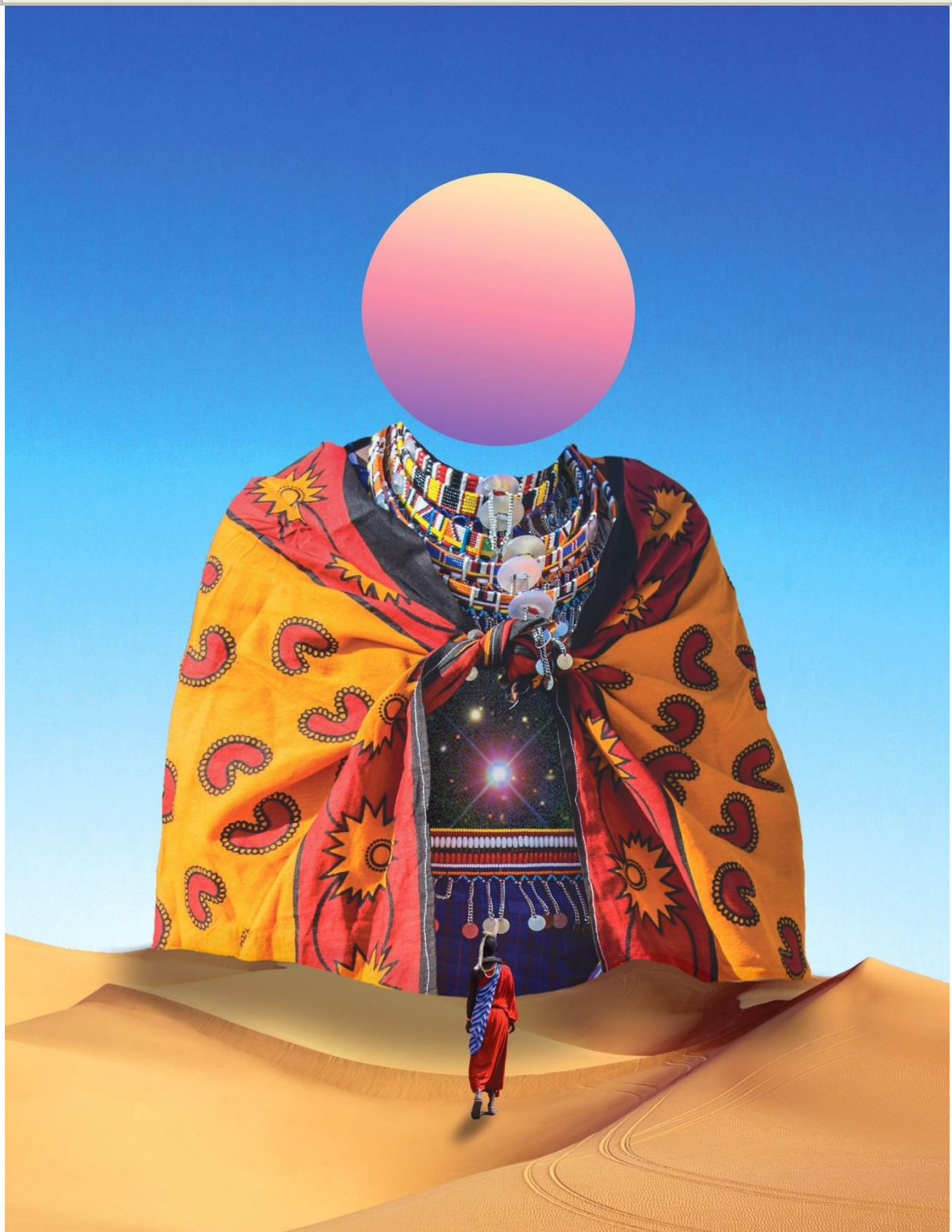


Apparitions of the Blessed Ones



The existence of the Mahatmas, their power to travel in the inner, or astral body at will, to preserve full command of all their intelligence, and to condense their “phantom” form into visibility or dissolve it into invisibility at their own pleasure, are now facts too well established to permit us to regard it as an open question.

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IN ONE OF THE DAILY ISSUES OF THE N.Y. WORLD — an influential journal of the great American metropolis — for the year 1878, appeared a description of the events of an evening at the then Headquarters of our Society, in the city of New York. The writer was one of the Editorial Staff, and among other wonders related was the following:

Some lady or gentleman among the visitors had doubted the possibility of an Adept to leave his physical body in a torpid state in the Himalayas, and come in his astral body (*Māyāvi-rūpa*) across land and seas to the other side of the world. Three or four of the company sat so as to face the two large windows of the room which gave upon the Avenue then brilliantly lighted with the gas of the shops and street lamps. The doubting surmise was barely uttered when these persons simultaneously started in surprise and pointed towards the left-hand window. All looking there saw deliberately and slowly passing on the outside, from left to right, first one, then another figure of Asiatic men, with *fehtas*² on their heads and clad in one of the long white garments of the East. Passing by the window and out of sight, they presently returned, and re-passing the window, were seen no more. Two of the witnesses (Col. Olcott and the Editor of this journal) recognized them, from personal acquaintance, as a certain Mahatma and one of his pupils. The window was nearly twenty feet from the ground and, there being no verandah or other roof for a crow to walk upon — the figures had been moving through the air. Thus, upon the instant and most unexpectedly, the doubter had been silenced and the truth of the Āryan Esoteric Science vindicated. Since we came to India a number of perfectly credible witnesses, Native and European, have been favoured with a sight of similar apparitions of the Blessed Ones, and usually under the most convincing circumstances. Only a few weeks ago at our Madras Headquarters, one appeared suddenly in full light, in an upstairs room and approached within two feet of certain Hindu members of our society, retained the perfectly visible and solid form for about one minute and then receding half a dozen

¹ Frontispiece by David Alabo.

² [Or *pheta*, the Marathi name for the traditional turban worn in Maharashtra.]

paces — disappeared upon the spot. At Bombay, the astral *śarīra* of Mahatma K.H. was seen repeatedly two years ago — by over twenty members in all — some of whom had been very sceptical as to such a possibility before, proclaiming it after the occurrence as “the most glorious, solemn of sights.” Three times, during one evening the “form,” perfectly recognizable, and seemingly solid to a hair of the moustache and beard — glided through the air from a cluster of bushes to the verandah, in brilliant moonlight . . . and then faded out. Again, the case of Mr. Ramaswamier, B.A., affords proof of the most cumulative kind ever recorded in the history of this branch of Esoteric Science: he first saw a Mahatma’s portrait; then saw him in the “double”; and finally met him in the flesh in a lonely pass in Sikkim, conversed with him for above two hours in his (Mr. R’s) own vernacular — a foreign tongue to the Mahatma — had explained to him many facts relating to the Theosophical Society, and was charged with messages to Colonel Olcott about certain confidential matters which none but himself and this particular Mahatma knew about.¹ The existence of the Mahatmas, their power to travel in the inner, or astral body at will, to preserve full command of all their intelligence, and to condense their “phantom” form into visibility or dissolve it into invisibility at their own pleasure, are now facts too well established to permit us to regard it as an open question.

Objectors to the above propositions are found only among the inexperienced, as objectors to every other new thing have been. There must be a particular moment in every case when doubt and disbelief vanish, to give place to knowledge and certainty. Few, comparatively, of any generation have ever or in the nature of things could ever see the splendid phenomenon of a Mahatma’s astral apparition; for merely the magneto-psychic law of attraction and repulsion keeps Adepts and the reeking stew of social corruption far apart. Sometimes, under very favourable conditions they may approach an individual devoted to occult research, but this happens rarely; for even he, pure though he be, is wallowing in the world’s corrupt *ākāśa* or magnetic aura and contaminated by it. To his inner self it is as stifling and deadly as the heavy vapour of carbonic oxide to his physical lungs. And, remember, it is by the inner, not the outer, self that we come into relations with Adepts and their advanced Chelas. One would not expect to hold improving conversation with a besotted inebriate, lying in a state of swine-like stupefaction after a debauch; yet it is quite as impracticable for the spiritualised Mahatma to exchange thoughts with a man of society, living daily in a state of *psychic intoxication* among the magnetic fumes of its carnality, materialism, and spiritual atrophy.

But other living persons than the Eastern Adepts can project their double so as to appear at a distance from their bodies. The literature of Western mysticism — not to mention the voluminous records of the Orient — contain many instances of the kind; notably the works of Glanvill, Ennemoser, Crowe, Owen, Howitt, Des Mousseaux and many other Roman Catholic writers, and a host beside. Sometimes the figures talk, but usually not; sometimes they wander while the subject’s outer body sleeps, sometimes while awake; often the apparition is the forerunner of death, but occasionally it seems to have come from its distant body for the mere pleasure of seeing a friend, or because the desire to reach a familiar place outran the physical power of the body to

¹ [Cf. “Mahatmas and Chelas” in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

hurry there soon enough. Miss C. Crowe tells¹ of a German Professor whose case was of the latter kind. Returning to his house one day, he saw the double of himself pass there before him, knock at the door, and enter when the servant maid opened it. He hastened his pace, knocked in his turn, and when the maid came and saw him, she started back in terror saying “Why, Sir, I have just let you in!” (or words to that effect). Mounting the stairs to his library, he saw himself seated in his own armchair as was his custom. As he approached, the phantom melted away into air. Another example of a similar nature is the following, of which the circumstances are as satisfactorily established, as could be desired.²

The story is told of one Emélie Sagée, governess in a ladies’ school, at Riga, in Livonia. Here the body and its double were observed simultaneously, in broad day, and by many persons.

One day all the school, forty-two in number, were in a room on the ground-floor, glass doors leading into the garden. They saw Emélie gathering flowers in the garden, when suddenly her figure appeared on a vacant sofa. Looking instantly into the garden, they still saw Emélie there; but they observed that she moved languidly and as if exhausted or drowsy. Two of the bolder approached the double, and offered to touch it; they felt a slight resistance, which they compared to that of muslin or crêpe. One of them passed through part of the figure; the apparition remained some moments longer, then disappeared, but gradually. This phenomenon occurred, in different ways, as long as Emélie remained at the school, for about a year and a half in 1845 and 1846, with intermittent periods from one to several weeks. It was remarked that the more distinct and material the double appeared, the more uneasy, languid, and suffering was the real person; when, on the contrary, the double became feeble, the patient recovered strength. Emélie had no consciousness of her double, nor did she ever see it.

Much remains to be said upon this most important theme, but it is reserved for another occasion. M. d’Assier’s work³ will be reviewed separately.



“Astral Bodies or Doppelgängers,” in our Constitution of Man Series.

¹ *Night Side of Nature*

² A condensed version is given by the Hon. R.D. Owen in his *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* [pp. 348-57], and all the particulars as to time, place, and witnesses will be found in the recent French work of M. d’Assier *Essai sur l’Humanité Posthume, etc.* [pp. 64-65]. A translation is in *Light* for August 18, 1882 (*q.v.*).

³ See *fn.*