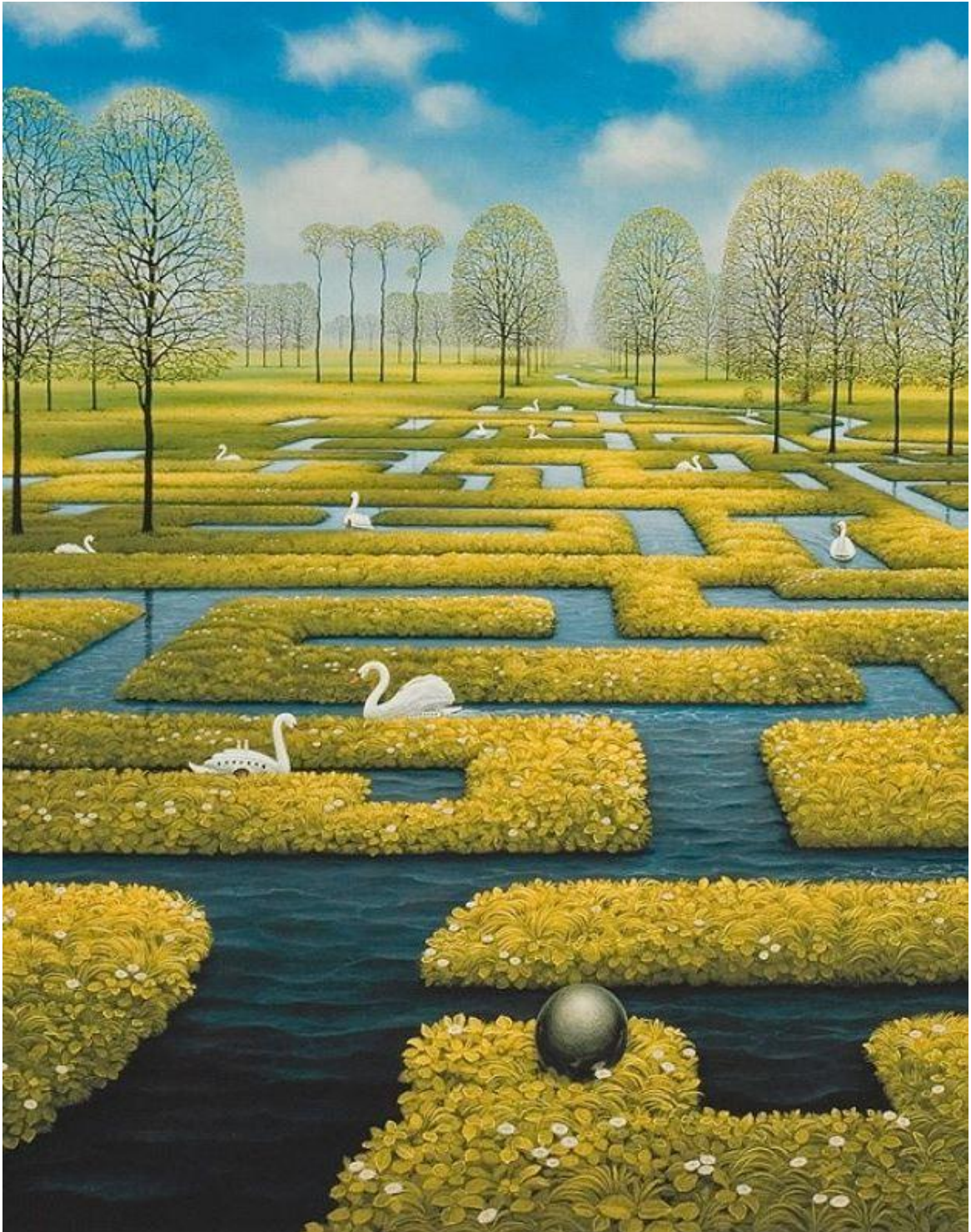


*Blavatsky pays
tribute to Éliphas Lévi*



First published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. II, No. 10, July 1881, pp. 211-12. Republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATION) III pp. 207-9. Frontispiece: Baphomet, emblem of “baptism” or Initiation into Wisdom, from the Greek words βαφω and μητις.¹

WE ARE GLAD TO LAY BEFORE OUR READERS the first of a series of unpublished writings of the late Éliphas Lévi,² one of the great masters of occult sciences of the present century in the West. An ex-Catholic priest, he was unfrocked by the ecclesiastical authorities at Rome, who tolerate no belief in God, Devil, or Science outside the narrow circle of their circumscribed dogma, and who anathematize every creed-crushed soul that succeeds in breaking its mental bondage. “Just in the ratio that knowledge increases, faith diminishes; consequently, those that know the most, always believe the least . . .” said Carlyle. Éliphas Lévi knew much; far more than the privileged few even among the greatest mystics of modern Europe; hence, he was traduced by the ignorant many. He had written these ominous words:

The discovery of the great secrets of true religion and of the primitive science of the Magi, revealing to the world the unity of the universal dogma, annihilates fanaticism by scientifically explaining and giving the reason for every miracle,

¹ Cf. What was in reality that much maligned and still more dreaded goat, that Baphomet regarded even now by the Roman Catholics as *Satan*, the Grand Master of the “Witches Sabbath,” the central figure of their nocturnal orgies? Why, simply *Pan* or *Nature*. (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, IV p. 263.)

Also cf. Éliphas Lévi shows it [the “Androgyne Goat of Mendes] very truly “a force in Nature,” by means of which “a single man who can master it . . . might throw the world into confusion and transform its face”; for it is the “great Arcanum of transcendent Magic.” Quoting the words of the great Western Kabalist in their translated form (see *The Mysteries of Magic*, by A.E. Waite), we may explain them perhaps the better by the occasional addition of a word or two to show the difference between Western and Eastern explanations of the same subject. The Author says of the great Magic Agent:

This ambient and all-penetrating fluid, this ray detached from the [Central or ‘Spiritual’] Sun’s splendour . . . fixed by the weight of the atmosphere (?!) and the power of central attraction. . . the Astral Light, this electro-magnetic ether, this vital and luminous caloric, is represented on ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis which twines round two poles . . . and in ancient theogonies by the serpent devouring its own tail, emblem of prudence and of Saturn” [emblem of infinity, immortality, and Chronos — “Time” — not the god Saturn or the planet]. “It is the winged dragon of Medea, the double serpent of the caduceus, and the tempter of *Genesis*; but it is also the brazen snake of Moses encircling the Tau . . . lastly, it is the devil of exoteric dogmatism, and is really the blind force [it is not blind, and Lévi knew it], which souls must conquer, in order to detach themselves from the chains of Earth; for if they should not, they will be absorbed by the same power which first produced them and will return to the central and eternal fire. (*Secret Doctrine*, I p. 253 fn.)

² [Nom de plume of Alphonse Louis [Abbé] Constant, 1810–1875]

and these words sealed his doom. Religious bigotry persecuted him for disbelieving in “divine” miracle; bigoted materialism for using the word “miracle” and “prodigy”; dogmatic science, for attempting to explain that which she could not yet explain herself, and in which, therefore, she disbelieved. The author of *The Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, of *The Science of Spirits* and of *The Key to the Great Mysteries*,¹ died, as his famous predecessors in the occult arts, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus and many others did — a pauper. Of all the parts of the world, Europe is the one which stones her true prophets the most cruelly, while being led by the nose by the false ones the most successfully. Europe will prostrate herself before any idol, provided it flatters her preconceived hobbies and loudly appeals to, and proclaims her *superior* intelligence. Christian Europe will believe in divine and demoniacal *miracles* and in the infallibility of a book condemned out of its own mouth, and consisting of old exploded legends. Spiritualistic Europe will fall into ecstasies before the eidōlon of a medium — when it is not a sheet and a clumsy mask — and remain firmly convinced of the reality of the apparitions of ghosts and the spirits of the dead. Scientific Europe will laugh Christians and Spiritualists to scorn, destroy all and build nothing, limiting herself to preparing arsenals of materials which she knows not in most cases what to do with, and whose inner nature is still a mystery for her. And then all the three agreeing in everything else to disagree, will combine their efforts to put down a science hoary with age and ancient wisdom, the only science which is capable of making religion — *scientific*, science — *religious*, and of ridding human Intelligence of the thick cobwebs of CONCEIT and SUPERSTITION.

The article that follows is furnished to us by an esteemed Fellow of the Theosophical Society, and a pupil of Éliphas Lévi. Having lost a dear friend who committed suicide, the great master of the occult science was desired by our correspondent and his pupil to give his views upon the state of the soul of the *felo-de-se*.² He did so; and it is with the kind permission of his pupil, that we now translate and publish his manuscript. Though personally we are far from agreeing with all his opinions — for having been a priest, Éliphas Lévi could never rid himself to his last day of a certain theological bias — we are yet prepared to always lend a respectful ear to the teachings of so learned a Kabbalist. Like Agrippa and, to a certain extent, Paracelsus himself, Abbé Constant may be termed a Biblical or Christian Kabbalist, though Christ was in his sight more of an ideal than a living Man-God or an historical personage.³ Moses and Christ, if real entities, were human *initiates* into the arcane mysteries in his opinion; Jesus was the type of regenerated humanity, the deific principle being shown under a human form but to prove humanity alone divine. The mysticism of the official church which seeks to absorb the human in the divine nature of Christ, is strongly criticized by her ex-representative. More than anything else Éliphas Lévi is then a *Jewish* Kabbalist. But were we even so much disposed to alter or amend the teachings of so great a master in Occultism, it would be more than improper to do so now, since he is no longer alive to defend and expound his positions. We leave the unenvi-

¹ [The original French titles of these works being: *Dogme et Rituel de la haute magie*; *La Science des Esprits*; and *La Clef des Grands Mystères*. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

² [Latin for “felon of himself,” archaic legal term for suicide.]

³ [Consult “The Real Christ is Buddhi-Manas, the Glorified Divine Ego” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

able task of kicking dead and dying lions to the jackasses — voluntary undertakers of all attacked reputations. Thence, though we do not personally agree with all his views, we do concur in the verdict of the world of letters that Éliphas Lévi was one of the cleverest, most learned, and interesting of writers upon all such abstruse subjects.¹



¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATION) III pp. 207-9