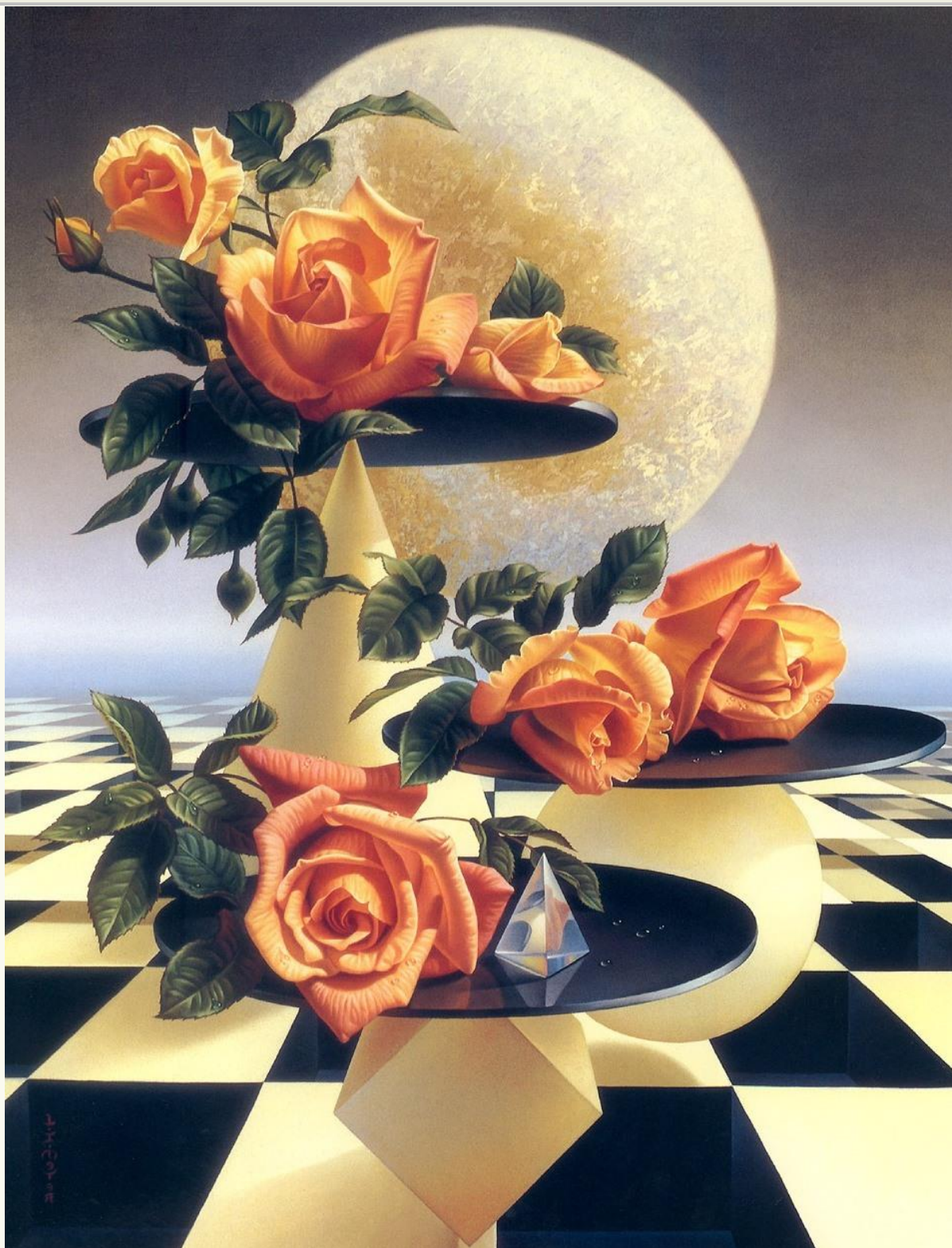


*Madame Blavatsky on the Secret
Doctrine, her magnum opus.*



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EVER SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF *THE SECRET DOCTRINE* students of Theosophy (outside the inner ring of Occult Sciences) have complained that the teachings contained in the work do not satisfy them. One, mentioning the lengthy and rabid abuse of it by an old, though really insignificant, if brutal, enemy, takes me to task for leaving a door open to such criticism by taking too little into account modern science and modern thought (!); another complains that my explanations are not complete; thus, he says:

For the last ten years, I have been a close reader of theosophical literature. I have read and re-read *The Secret Doctrine* and collated passages, and nothing is more disheartening than to find some of the best explanations on Occult points, just as they begin to grow a little lucid, marred by a reference to some exoteric philosophy or religion, which breaks up the train of reasoning and leaves the explanation unfinished. . . . We can understand parts, but we cannot get a succinct idea, particularly of the teachings as to Parabrahm (the Absolute), the 1st and 2nd Logos, Spirit, Matter, Fohat, etc., etc.¹

This is the direct and natural result of the very mistaken notion that the work I have called *The Secret Doctrine* had ever been intended by me to dovetail with modern Science, or to explain “occult points.” I was and still am more concerned with *facts* than with scientific hypotheses. My chief and only object was to bring into prominence that the basic and fundamental principles of every exoteric religion and philosophy, old or new, were from first to last but the echoes of the primeval “Wisdom Religion.” I sought to show that the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, like Truth itself, was *One*; and that, however differing in form and colour, the foliage of the twigs, the trunk and its main branches were still those of the same old Tree, in the shadow of which had developed and grown the (now) esoteric religious philosophy of the races that preceded our present mankind on earth.

This object, I believe I have carried out as far as it could be carried, in the first two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*. It was not the occult philosophy of the esoteric teachings that I undertook to explain to the world at large, for then the qualification of “Secret” would have become like the *secret* of “Polichinelle”² shouted in the manner of a stage *a parte*; but simply to give that which could be given out, and to parallel it with the beliefs and dogmas of the past and present nations, thus showing the original source of the latter and how disfigured they had become. If my work is, at this

¹ [Today’s students can find all they ever sought in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [an open secret]

day of materialistic assumptions and universal iconoclasm, too premature for the masses of the profane — so much the worse for those masses. But it was not too premature for the earnest students of theosophy — except those, perhaps, who had hoped that a treatise on such intricate correspondences as exist between the religions and philosophies of the almost forgotten Past, and those of the modern day, could be as simple as a shilling “shocker”¹ from a railway stall. Even one system of philosophy at a time, whether that of Kant or of Herbert Spencer, of Spinoza or of Hartmann, requires more than a study of several years. Does it not therefore, stand to reason that a work which compares several dozens of philosophies and over half-a-dozen of world-religions, a work which has to unveil the roots with the greatest precautions, as it can only *hint* at the secret blossoms here and there — cannot be comprehended at a first reading, nor even after several, unless the reader elaborates for himself a system for it? That this can be done and *is* done is shown by the “Two Students of the E.S.” They are now synthesizing the “Secret Doctrine,” and they do it in the most lucid and comprehensive way, in this magazine. No more than anyone else have they understood that work immediately after reading it. But they went to work in dead earnest. They indexed it for themselves, classifying the contents in two portions — the *exoteric* and the *esoteric*; and having achieved this preliminary labour, they now present the former portion to the readers at large, while storing the latter for their own practical instruction and benefit. Why should not every earnest theosophist do the same?

There are several ways of acquiring knowledge:

- (a) by accepting blindly the dicta of the church or modern science;
- (b) by rejecting both and starting to find the truth for oneself.

The first method is easy and leads to social respectability and the praise of men; the other is difficult and requires more than ordinary devotion to truth, a disregard for direct personal benefits and an unwavering perseverance. Thus it was in the days of old and so it is now, except perhaps, that such devotion to truth has been more rare in our own day than it was of yore. Indeed, the modern Eastern student’s unwillingness to think for himself is now as great as Western exactions and criticism of other people’s thoughts.

He demands and expects that his “Path” shall be engineered with all the selfish craft of modern comfort, macadamized, laid out with swift railways and telegraphs, and even telescopes, through which he may, while sitting at his ease, survey the works of other people; and while criticising them, look out for the easiest, in order to play at the Occultist and Amateur Student of Theosophy. The real “Path” to esoteric knowledge is very different. Its entrance is overgrown with the brambles of neglect, the travesties of truth during long ages block the way, and it is obscured by the proud contempt of self-sufficiency and with every verity distorted out of all focus. To push over the threshold alone, demands an incessant, often unrequited labour of years, and once on the other side of the entrance, the weary pilgrim has to toil up on

¹ [A cheap paperback produced for the mass market in 19th century Britain. A typical “shilling shocker” often consolidated twelve to fifteen episodes of a serial novel whose chapters had previously been published separately as “penny dreadful” pamphlets. — Cf. *Wikipedia*]

foot, for the narrow way leads to forbidding mountain heights, unmeasured and unknown, save to those who have reached the cloud-capped summit before. Thus must he mount, step by step, having to conquer every inch of ground before him by his own exertions; moving onward, guided by strange landmarks the nature of which he can ascertain only by deciphering the weather-beaten, half-defaced inscriptions as he treads along, for woe to him, if, instead of studying them, he sits by coolly pronouncing them “indecipherable.” The “Doctrine of the Eye” is *māyā*; that of the “Heart” alone, can make of him an elect.

Is it to be wondered that so few reach the goal, that so many are called, but so few are chosen? Is not the reason for this explained in three lines on page 27 of *The Voice of the Silence*? These say that while

The first repeat in pride: “Behold, *I know*,” the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, “thus have I heard”;

— and hence, become the only “chosen.”



Suggested reading for students.



She being dead, yet speaketh.

- “Blavatsky about to unveil Isis”
- “Blavatsky against Ecclesiastical Christianity”
- “Blavatsky against Spiritualism”
- “Blavatsky cuts down to size a carping critic of heterodoxy”
- “Blavatsky defends Isis Unveiled”
- “Blavatsky enlightens the sceptics of her Motherland”
- “Blavatsky expels a friend of Communists”
- “Blavatsky hated balls”
- “Blavatsky on a Case of Obsession”
- “Blavatsky on a Heavy Curse”
- “Blavatsky on an Intro- and retrospective dream”
- “Blavatsky on Animal Souls”
- “Blavatsky on Bulgarian Sun Worship”
- “Blavatsky on Christmas and the Christmas Tree”
- “Blavatsky on Elementals and Elementaries”
- “Blavatsky on foeticide being a crime against nature”
- “Blavatsky on Hindu widow-burning”
- “Blavatsky on Jesuitry in Masonry”
- “Blavatsky on Marriage, Divorce, and Celibacy”
- “Blavatsky on Nebo of Birs-Nimrud”
- “Blavatsky on Occult Alphabets and Numerals”
- “Blavatsky on Occult Vibrations”
- “Blavatsky on Old Age”
- “Blavatsky on old doctrines vindicated by new prophets”
- “Blavatsky on Plato’s Timæus”
- “Blavatsky on Progress and Culture”

- “Blavatsky on Religious deformities”
- “Blavatsky on Ritualism in Church and Masonry”
- “Blavatsky on Shambhala, the Happy Land”
- “Blavatsky on Spinoza and Western Philosophers”
- “Blavatsky on Sunday devotion to pleasure”
- “Blavatsky on Teachings of Eliphas Levi”
- “Blavatsky on the Boogeymen of Science”
- “Blavatsky on the Book of Enoch”
- “Blavatsky on the doomed destiny of the Romanovs”
- “Blavatsky on the elucidation of long-standing enigmas”
- “Blavatsky on the Harmonics of Smell”
- “Blavatsky on the hidden Esotericism of the Bible”
- “Blavatsky on the history and tribulations of the Zohar”
- “Blavatsky on the introversion of mental vision”
- “Blavatsky on the Key to Spiritual Progress”
- “Blavatsky on the knighted Oxford Sanskritist who could speak no Sanskrit”
- “Blavatsky on the Letters of Lavater”
- “Blavatsky on the Luminous Circle”
- “Blavatsky on the modern negators of Ancient Science”
- “Blavatsky on the Monsoon”
- “Blavatsky on the New Year and false noses”
- “Blavatsky on the New Year’s Morrow”
- “Blavatsky on the Qabbalah by Isaac Myer”
- “Blavatsky on the quenchless Lamps of Alchemy”
- “Blavatsky on the Rationale of Fasts”
- “Blavatsky on the Roots of Zoroastrianism”
- “Blavatsky on the Teachings of Eliphas Levi”
- “Blavatsky on the Vishishtadvaita Philosophy”
- “Blavatsky on Theosophy and Asceticism”
- “Blavatsky on whether the Rishis exist today”
- “Blavatsky rebuts unspiritual conceptions about God”
- “Blavatsky's last words”
- “Blavatsky's open letter to her correspondents”

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- “Gems from the East”
- “Inductive reasoning leads to fake deductions”
- “Madame Blavatsky enlightens the sceptics of her Motherland”
- “Madame Blavatsky on the philosophical mind of the Chinese”
- “Obituary to Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov”
- “Obituary to Pundit Dayanand Saraswati”
- “Open Letter to the American Section of the Theosophical Society”
- “Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury”
- “Open Letters to the American Convention”
- “Pages from Isis Unveiled”
- “Pages from the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan”
- “Pages from The Secret Doctrine 1 - abridged”
- “Pages from The Secret Doctrine 2 - full text”
- “Panteistic Theosophy is irreconcilable with Roman Catholicism”
- “Rosicrucianism was an offshoot of Oriental Occultism”
- “Rosicrucians emerged as an antidote to the material side of alchemy”
- “The Hermetic Fire of the mind is the key to the Occult Sciences”
- “The real meaning of the first line of Genesis”
- “The Secret Doctrine (1888) Vol. 1 of 2 on Cosmogogenesis”
- “The Secret Doctrine (1888) Vol. 2 of 2 on Anthropogenesis”
- “Thoth is the equivalent of Hermes and Moses”
- “Unpopular Philosopher on Criticism and Authorities”
- “Unpopular Philosopher on the Eighth Wonder”
- “Unpopular Philosopher on the Morning Star”
- “We are more often victims of words rather than of facts”
- “Without the revival of Aryan philosophy, the West will fall to even grosser materialism”

