

Dante's Inferno



Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them.
There is no third.

— Thomas Stearns Eliot

H.P. Blavatsky closed her article on “Occultism versus the Occults Arts” with the first three lines of a terrifying message written on the gate of Hell that greeted Dante and Virgil at the start of their journey through the three reigns of the afterlife: *La Divina Commedia*, Canto III, 1-9 Inferno; Purgatorio; Paradiso. The same is also quoted in *The Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, p. 404.

Frontispiece: Dante (left) and Virgil entering Hell, by William Blake

*Per me si va nella città dolente
Per me si va nell'eterno dolore
Per me si va tra la perduta gente
Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore
Fecemi la Divina Potestate,
La somma sapienza e 'l primo amore.
Innanzi a me non fuor cose create
Se non etterne, et io eterna duro.
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'intrate.*

Through me the way into the suffering city,
Through me the way to the eternal pain,
Through me the way that runs among the lost.
Justice urged on my high artificer;
My maker was divine authority,
The highest wisdom, and the primal love.
Before me nothing but eternal things
Were made, and I eternally endure.
Abandon every hope, who enter here.

(Tr. Mandelbaum)

