



THE STRANGE LIFE OF MADAME BLAVATSKY

If anyone could be said to be at the hub of western occultism of the last one hundred years it would have to be Helena Blavatsky. Her voluminous works, especially *The Secret Doctrine*, are the most widely read and quoted occult documents in the western world. The Theosophical Society, of which she was cofounder and which truly rests on her works, has members and lodges in nearly every republic of the world. This woman, who has planted the seeds of so much occult interest and endeavor, is even today inscrutable.

Blavatsky's writings were profound and scholarly, but she was anything but a typical scholar. She was a woman of experience, and not of book learning, yet she still poked holes in the experts' theories and through clairvoyance quoted books she had never seen. She wrote of holy and sacred things, but in her everyday life was anything but composed and saintly. Her intense personality was eccentric, impulsive, sometimes delightful and so powerful that she often produced a hypnotizing effect on those around her. Perhaps she was a freak of nature and her psychic talents were a gift, but she added what is necessary to gift and lived a life of constant endeavor. Her endeavor bred a full life and created heights of triumph and tragedy which few people dream of. Madame Blavatsky is still a psychological enigma to be solved today, and I will attempt to elucidate a bit of her life, not to "solve" and close the case once and for all, but to possibly provoke in the reader my own feelings of amazement concerning this wonderful woman.

Even Blavatsky's birth took place among confusing and calamitous occurrences. She was born to a Russian aristocratic family, the Hahns, on August 12, 1831. There was a cholera epidemic in the area at the time and since it was feared the child would not live long, a priest was summoned immediately to baptize her. A clumsy servant boy at the ritual overturned a lamp that set the priest's copious robes ablaze, Beverly burning him and several others. This was an entirely fitting omen for the child's fiery life to come.

Her mother died when Blavatsky was still a child so she spent much of her childhood under the masculine influence of her military father's troops or at the massive estate of her maternal grandfather. She was an unusual child in unusual surroundings. Her sister writes of her early childhood, "...It was a fatal mistake to regard and treat her as they would any other child. Her restless and very nervous temperament, one that led her into the most unheard an, ungirlish mischief, her unaccountable (especially in those days) attraction to, and at the same time fear of, the dead, her passionate love and curiosity for everything unknown and mysterious, weird and fantastical, and most of all, her craving for independence and freedom of action-a craving that nothing and nobody could control, all this, combined with an exuberance of imagination and wonderful sensitiveness, ought to have warned her friends, that she was an exceptional creature, to be dealt with and controlled by means as exceptional."¹

Most of her childhood was spent at her grandfather's large estate. Russia was still under a sort of liberal feudal system at the time and her grandfather's was a place directly from medieval times. The mansion had a labyrinth of abandoned passages and cellars beneath it, while in back of it was a dark virgin forest with "moss to your knees." Young Helena would spend hours alone in the mansion's cellars, claiming she was talking to her "hunchbacks." All this was very conducive to a child's imagination. With Helena it was like mixing phosphorous and water.

The child was an incessant sleepwalker and during the night would be found in the strangest of places. Many times there would be a search of several hours by her grandfather's servants only to find her in the attic mesmerizing pigeons, in some dark corner of the cellar, or even in the dark forest. Once she was found pacing the passageways of the cellar carrying on a conversation with someone seen by no one but her. On occasion she was found inexplicably behind several previously locked doors. Another frequent nocturnal hideaway was grandfather's zoological collection, where she would be found talking to the stuffed crocodiles and seals.

If anyone constrained the child's freedom in any manner they risked an explosive tantrum. (Indeed, nowadays she would probably receive some such label as "autistic.") Sister Vera relates, "The lightest contradiction brought an outburst of passion, often a fit of convulsions. Left alone with no one near her to impede her liberty of action, no hand to chain her down or stop her natural impulses, and thus arouse to fury her inherent combativeness, she would spend hours and days quietly whispering, as people thought, to herself, and narrating, with no one near her, in some dark corner, marvelous tales of travels in bright stars and other worlds."²

When she was a bit older and nearing Russian marrying age, her family put much pressure on her to attend parties and acquiesce to the normal social amenities for her age. She would have nothing of it, however, claiming contempt for society and the so-called "world." Even though she was attractive, she still refused to have anything to do with men. She even refused to wear dresses, but preferred pants and mannish clothes. At sixteen her family demanded that she attend a dance and threatened to forcibly dress and take her if she refused. She revolted of course, and to insure that she would not have to attend the party, she actually lamed herself by holding her leg in a boiling kettle of water!

She involved herself in an aborted attempt at marriage when she was seventeen. Blavatsky was very liberal with facts concerning her own life but later almost absurdly claimed that this marriage was the result of a dare made by her governess. (The governess told Blavatsky that she could never get anyone to marry her!) The groom was Russian General Blavatsky who, according to different sources, was anywhere from forty to seventy-three years old. (Madame claimed he was seventy-three.) Regardless, the marriage only lasted three weeks when the poor General (who hadn't known what he'd gotten into!) was persuaded to ship her back to her father. Madame Blavatsky insisted that the marriage remained unconsummated, which is very possibly true, considering the Madame's abnormal temperament and that the General never claimed otherwise concerning this matter of honor.

While being sent back to her father, she "escaped," made friends with a steamship captain and secured passage to Constantinople. For the next ten years her family seldom heard from her. When she arrived at Constantinople she secured a job as a bareback rider in a circus and soon after suffered a severe fall from her horse. This accident resulted in the misplacing of her womb and thereafter, according to a doctor's report, made coitus impossible. Her comments years later were, "I am lacking something and the place is filled with some crooked cucumber."

This is a peculiar aspect of Madame Blavatsky's character and life. She seemed to have a life-long abhorrence of anything sexual or of a baser nature. She described sexual attraction as

"a beastly desire which should be starved into submission." Once in India when a prestigious Indian native introduced his ten-year-old wife she exploded, "You old beast, you ought to be ashamed of yourself." Again, found in her sketchbook was, "Woman finds her happiness in the acquisition of supernatural powers. Love is but a vile dream, a nightmare." Her celibacy and, if we are to believe her, life-long virginity may have been greatly responsible for her immense vitality and psychic powers. Vivekananda, the Raj-yogi, claims that sexual abstinence increases vitality and catalyzes psychic abilities.³

For years she traveled the world over, making valuable contacts, searching out occult teachers and seeing many wonders. She struck quite an impressive figure, with her recently acquired huge weight, outlandish clothes and the large black dog she often led on a gold chain. Her tremendous personality enabled her to persuade her way into many places that were closed to others and gain unique experiences.

It is difficult to adequately trace her during these years due to her own contradicting stories and also because of lack of concrete evidence from elsewhere. In 1850 she was in Egypt where she met her first occult teacher, an Egyptian Copt whom she later spent some time with in the early 1870's. She was in London in 1851 where she said she met her "Master." She had several visions of this man, a Hindu named Morya, since she was a child, but never saw him physically until this time in London. She was astonished when she first saw him in the street – this was the same man that kept popping up in dreams and visions! The man was among a group of others and when Blavatsky tried to approach him, he waved her away. Later, however, she met him again in a park and they had a long discussion about their peculiar relationship and Blavatsky's even more peculiar future.⁴

In 1852 Blavatsky tried to get into Tibet via Nepal but was turned back at the border. During her travels she tried three times to enter Tibet but was successful only once. Very few Europeans were allowed into Tibet, especially women, because of the wild gangs of robbers that roamed the hills and as well because of the "isolation consciousness" of the country. In 1855 she met a Tartar shaman in Indian and with his help, and disguised as a man, was able to get into Tibet. Blavatsky hoped to get deep into Tibet and locate the lamasery of Morya, the "Master" she met in London. The country became politically turbulent though, and she had to exit, barely escaping the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857.

She fled from Tibet to India and continued her search for occult teachers and yogis. She nearly died in an abandoned cave-temple she discovered which became filled with carbonic-acid gas. She relates this and other incidents of her explorations in a book, *The Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*.

It is hard to discern between Blavatsky's imagination and actual occurrences but some of her encounters related in *Caves and Jungles* are absolutely astonishing. She traveled with a Raj-yogi who was able to give a grand tour of the local occult wonders. He could also read Blavatsky's mind. In one incident, a member of the party, an artist, was going to paint the landscape at their campsite. To the amazement of all, he painted a completely different scene than that which was before them. The Raj-yogi had projected a scene into the artist's mind, a former scoffer of occult "trickery."

In 1858 Madame received word that her grandfather had died, provoking her to decide it was time for a trip home. Helena had changed a great deal since she was last home in Russia; among other things she had gained 100 pounds in weight. Her return home was joyful but proved unsettling for the whole household. Her sister Vera relates that, "We embraced each other, overcome with joy, forgetting for the moment the strangeness of the event. I took her at once to my room, and that very evening I was convinced that my sister had acquired strange powers. She was constantly surrounded, awake or asleep, with mysterious movements, strange sounds, little taps which came from all sides...all the persons living on the premises, with the household members, saw constantly, often in full noon-day, vague human shadows walking about the rooms..."

Some researchers came to investigate Blavatsky's abilities and for some reason she completely "dried up" for three days. Hardly were they out the door "then at the first command and look of Mme. Blavatsky, there came rushing at her through the air her tobacco pouch, her box of matches, her pocket handkerchief, or anything she asked for or was made to ask for. Then, as we were taking our seats, all the lights in the room were suddenly extinguished, both lamps and wax candles, as though a mighty rush of wind had swept through the whole apartment; and when a match was instantly struck, there was all the furniture – sofas, armchairs, tables, cupboards, and large sideboard – standing upsides down, as though turned over noiselessly by some invisible hands, and not an ornament of the fragile carved work nor, even a plate broken."⁵

Unusual phenomena like this manifested around Madame Blavatsky for the rest of her life and later caused much accusation of deceit or trickery. While this may have been the case occasionally, I am convinced she possessed some remarkable and unique powers. She attributed her powers to two types of processes and always vehemently denied that they were spiritualistic powers, or that she was a medium. "Spirits" were not involved. She referred to herself as a "mediator" and not a "medium." Sister Vera relates, "...mediumship proceeding, they say, from such a source, to draw from which my sister thinks it degrading to her human dignity."

One explanation of her powers was that she was a mediator between the human plane and the "elementals" or nature spirits and imps. These elementals also played curious tricks on Madame Blavatsky. Once when she did not come down to breakfast on time, someone went to check on her and found her still in bed – with her nightgown sewn to the mattress in such a way that she could not move! She also claimed that some of her powers were mental powers, that is, the same type of powers Raj-yogis have and not mediums. A difficult but intriguing book on this subject is *H.P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulka* by Geoffrey Barboka. Tulka is a term for Raj-yoga powers.

Being at home for a number of years must have starved Blavatsky's appetite for adventure because what she did next was to disguise herself as a man and fight under Garibaldi in the Italian Revolution. At the battle of Mentana she had her arm broken by a sword and received musket balls in the shoulder and leg. This all sounds very fantastic and one would think that it was something just "made up" by the Madame – except that Henry Olcott, cofounder of the Theosophical Society with Blavatsky, actually felt the two remaining musket balls and where her arm had been broken.

After recovering from battle wounds she found herself in the midst of another adventure that nearly took her life. She was traveling the Mediterranean Sea from Greece to Italy in a passenger ship that was also unscrupulously carrying a large amount of fireworks. An accident occurred and there was a horrible explosion of the ship. Of the 400 passengers on board, only 16 survived the catastrophe, Blavatsky miraculously among them. She describes a macabre scene of arms, legs and decapitated heads falling in the sea about her.

The Greek Government offered free travel fare to anyone surviving the explosion and Madame used this to go to Egypt. She started a spiritualist circle there, with herself supposedly as the medium (a practice she came to deplore). She gave up this venture, however, when one of the sitters in her circle became possessed and accosted her at her breakfast table with a gun and the intention to shoot her. Madame pleaded with her insane accoster that she be able to finish her breakfast before she met her fate. This gave her the time to mesmerize the man and somehow send him screaming into the streets. Madame proved more than once that, to put it colloquially, she had a lot of "guts." As another example from this time she spent a night alone in Cheops' Pyramid, lying in the sarcophagus!

She traveled to New York in 1873 and arrived penniless, her father having died leaving the family finances in chaos. She soon found work and moved into a women's tenement on Madison Avenue. With her appearance and personality she quickly established a local reputation. She was really quite an eccentric creature. Her huge weight, piercing azure eyes and the strange sack-like dresses she wore would make one immediately take notice and regard her more carefully. She also wore the furry head of an animal around her neck, from which she took tobacco and ceaselessly rolled cigarettes. She would "hold court" in the sitting room of the tenement, telling stories of her travels and relating occult wonders. Her neighbor in the building claimed Blavatsky often used hashish and urged her to try it – "Hashish multiplies one's life a thousand fold!" – and Blavatsky also claimed it revealed to her past incarnations.

Madame B. was still examining spiritualism and at the home of the famous mediums, the Eddy Brothers, met Henry S. Olcott. Olcott probably would be her most loyal friend over the coming years and it was with him that she was to found the Theosophical Society in 1875. Olcott was awed by Blavatsky's character and powers. Her clairvoyant perceptions of the sittings are very startling and I will include them here for their informative value. She writes, "With horror and disgust I often observed how a reanimated show of this kind separated itself from the inside of the medium; how, separating itself from his astral body and clad in someone else's vesture, it pretended to be someone's relation, causing the person to go into ecstasies and making people open wide their hearts and their embraces to these shadows they sincerely believed to be their dear fathers and brothers ... If they saw, as I have often seen, a monstrous bodiless creature seizing hold of someone present at these spiritualistic séances. It wraps a man as if with a black shroud and slowly disappears in him as if drawn into his body by each of his living pores." Six years before she had been the assistant of probably the most powerful medium ever, D.D. Home. (In one instance, Home actually levitated out a third story window and back in another!⁷)

The initial impulse for the starting of the Theosophical Society came at a lecture Blavatsky and Olcott attended on the Caballa. They became engrossed in the talk and Olcott passed a note to Blavatsky asking whether she thought it a good idea to start a Society to study these ideas. Blavatsky heartily agreed and within the next few weeks a charter and name were given to the Theosophical Society. It was to be basically a non-dogmatic foundation for the study and promulgation of occult and esoteric knowledge.

The Society's aims, though, were so general that none of the new members or centers knew what to do. It was, as author John Symonds puts it, "...like the Communist International without the Communist Manifesto. "Blavatsky launched into the bulk of her literary career and began writing the massive, 1300 page *Isis Unveiled*. She worked from morning until night for two years to produce *Isis*. It had to be rewritten several times since Blavatsky barely knew English at the time. It was an outstanding success and the initial thousand copies sold out in ten days.

Her means of writing was unique to say the least. She was an amanuensis, that is, she did not write from her own material or knowledge. What she was to write would "come to her" and when she needed a reference she could "read it in the astral light." Olcott, who was her proofreader, writes, "To watch her at work was a rare and never to be forgotten experience. We sat at opposite ends of one big table usually, and I could see her every movement. Her pen would be flying over the page, when she would suddenly stop, look out into space with the vacant eye of a clairvoyant seer, shorten her vision as though to look at something held invisibly in the air before her, and begin copying on her paper what she saw. The quotation finished, her eyes would resume their natural expression, and she would go on writing until again stopped by a similar interruption."⁸

She herself was not always sure how or where she got her knowledge. "The only thing I know is, that now, when I am about to reach old age, I have become the storehouse for somebody else's knowledge."⁹ "Before me pass pictures, ancient manuscripts, dates – aall I have to do is to copy, and I write so easily that it is no labor at all, but the greatest pleasure."¹⁰

From her descriptions it seems that Blavatsky was able to read the "astral light" or "akashic records" that Eliphas Levi and other occultists talk about. This "astral light" is more or less the cosmic memory of nature and contains impressions of all that has ever happened, is happening, or will happen. Edgar Cayce is a more recent example of a person who could tap this cosmic memory in a trance state. This is an exceptional thing, but what is even, more exceptional is that Blavatsky was able to do this consciously.

Perhaps now a few words about Blavatsky's "Masters" or "Mahatmas." Supposedly these Masters were able to astrally "impress" or communicate to Blavatsky what she was to write in *Isis Unveiled* and later *The Secret Doctrine*. When I first became interested in Blavatsky's writings and the Theosophical Society, I thought of it as some sort of strange mess of esoteric philosophy and "bogus spooks." As I became more familiar with the literature I came to consider that there was possibly something more to the Mahatmas than met my previous expectations.

According to Blavatsky, the Mahatmas were physically bodied men who were residents of an ancient esoteric school in Tibet. These men, as a function of their school, had developed abilities which are commonly regarded as magical today. They were able to do such things as read minds, travel astrally, and astrally dictate to Blavatsky what she was to write in some of her books.

Through the years, many people have claimed to receive "inspired" messages from various "ascended masters" and the like. I do not wish to launch into a discussion of spiritualism here, but will express my opinion that virtually all of these "communications" prove to be shallow, pollyannic and of no true depth or philosophic importance. Most of these communications by automatic writing or trance states, I believe to be projections of the subconscious, or trickery by astral entities (the "angels of light" in the Bible). Blavatsky's writings and her "Masters" are of quite a different order. I was not convinced of this until I read the large published volume of letters from the "Mahatmas" to A.P. Sinnett, an early member of the Theosophical Society. These letters, *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, indelibly impress one that real people or Masters of superior knowledge were in communication with Sinnett, Blavatsky, Olcott and the other early members of the Theosophical Society. An attempt was made by several of these Masters to make themselves publicly known but failed due to a tremendous public attack on the Theosophical Society. The Masters then retreated from public view, downplayed their importance in the Theosophical Society and remained in contact with only a select few. Judging by the later fiascos revolving around Besant and Leadbeater, I doubt they remained in contact with the leaders of the Theosophical Society for very much longer. Madame was chosen by the Masters to promulgate their philosophies because her psychic make-up and abilities proved her to be "the best vehicle available for the last one hundred years." Although they often bemoaned her careless over-enthusiasm and unstable temperament, she became unreservedly affectionate and dedicated to them and their cause.

The newspapers were constantly accusing Blavatsky of some scandal or imposture. The press was secretly in awe of her, but since her character and psychic phenomena was almost too fantastic to be real, they were continually looking for something to "pin on her" and thus reveal her as a diabolical charlatan of some sort. The press was not all bad, some of it was just fanciful. The papers claimed, among other things, that she had traveled in a balloon, converted the Pope to spiritualism, dined with the King of the Sandwich Islands, foretold to the Pope Napoleon III's death and cured the Queen of Spain's facial warts. People were entirely unsure of what to make of her so she became the victim of all sorts of speculation and fancy.

Her proclivities were amazing. She still performed numerous psychic and "glamorous" tricks for her many callers. She ate irregularly, very much, and never took exercise – which of course caused her to grow huge. Her weight did not seem to perturb her much though, because she would constantly laugh at herself and even display to visitors the rolls of fat around her ankles and wrists! Always she was like an "exploding bomb" in her moments of anger. Olcott was often the butt of this anger and once during one of her profanity-filled tirades he helplessly supplicated, "What do you want me to do? Do you want me to commit suicide?" When she was once asked by someone she disliked to pass the butter at the table, she saltily quipped, "Here you are! Grease your soul to hell with it!" Her health was as eccentric as her character. She

vacillated from explosive vitality to occasional death-like trances which had occurred since she was thirty. A doctor once pronounced her dead three times before she resuscitated each time.¹¹

She left with Olcott in 1878 for India due to a decline in her popularity in the States – mostly from newspaper attacks and as well because of a scandalous account of her in a book by medium D.D. Home (her former employer). They were very successful in India for a time until Madame Blavatsky was again accused of some incidences of charlatanism. Most of the scandal centered around the "Mahatma letters" to Blavatsky and others. These letters would precipitate in unusual places, sometimes in the air or in a shrine at the Theosophical headquarters specially constructed for this purpose. Unfortunately it was also discovered that servants sometimes dropped them from cracks in the ceiling and that the shrine had a concealed door into Blavatsky's room.¹² If she did write many of these letters, they could still be validly from Masters - if she was an astral amanuensis. An investigation was made of the phenomenon by the British Society for Psychic Research and a 200 page report concluded, "For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting imposters of history."

Much has been written that proposes that Madame Blavatsky was involved in a lot of trickery and deceit in order to "con" people. I do believe that she was involved in her share of charlatanism, but attribute this more to her over enthusiasm and impulsiveness than any real attempt to deceive people. "Precipitating" Mahatma letters from cracks in the ceiling was probably one example of this. Her reasoning probably was that if the Mahatmas really could precipitate letters, why shouldn't she help them along a little bit! Blavatsky nearly possessed the abilities and knowledge of an adept but her extreme eccentricity and impulsive womanly nature caused her to be highly unpredictable, innocently causing blunder after blunder. It is unfortunate that enthusiasm, coupled with an eccentric character, forced her into the role of a martyr for the Theosophical Society. Her fine qualities should have deserved much better.

The negative report from the British Society for Psychic Research so affected Blavatsky that she became deathly sick once again. She was so mortified by it that she left India under an alias, and so ill that she had to be taken on board the ship in a wheelchair. She traveled to Europe and had a room secured for her in Wurzburg, Bavaria. At this time she claims that she had the choice of dying or summoning her strength to "try again." Luckily for us, she chose to "try again" and dove into the production of probably the West's most remarkable esoteric treatise, the 1,500-page *Secret Doctrine*.

Madame wrote the Doctrine in the same inscrutable manner in which she had *Isis Unveiled*. She explains, "I make what I can only describe as a sort of vacuum in the air before me and fix my sight and my will upon it, and soon scene after scene passes before me like the successive pictures of a diorama, or if I need a reference or information from some book, I fix my mind intently and the astral counterpart of the book appears and from it I take what I need." Blavatsky worked with incredible perseverance on the book, commonly working seven days a week, fourteen to sixteen hours a day. This is utterly amazing for a woman whose doctor claimed had three diseases which would kill a normal person in a week's time! Blavatsky steadily accumulated manuscript until she had a stack of copy three feet high, which was handed

to members of the Theosophical Society to make heads or tails of and piece together into *The Secret Doctrine*. (Incredibly, she had rewritten and discarded at least an equal amount of material which had not proved satisfactory to the Mahatmas.)

Blavatsky lived three years after the publication of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888 and in those years regained all her former popularity and more. Although she was always ailing in body, she kept busy from morning until night with visitors, writing and the newly formed Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

Madame Blavatsky packed more effort and production into her final 15 years than several people do in a lifetime. Her literary accomplishments alone are astounding. In this short time, before which she was illiterate in English, she wrote over 5,000 pages in book form, over one thousand articles for various publications, and an untold number of letters! It is hard to believe that this woman was possessed of so many diverse characteristics and abilities. She was an inveterate smoker and could spout a highly imaginative "blue-streak" when riled, but conversely she was also kind-hearted and affectionate. The profundity of her writing speaks for itself, but she was her generation's greatest clairvoyant as well. This clairvoyance was responsible for all her great works and for the Theosophical Society. Because of it she also became a martyr. This is unfortunate considering the thousands of truth-seekers she has helped over the past one hundred years. Seemingly the reaction of the average person to something not understood is often distrust or even anger and hate. It is important to study phenomenal persons such as H.P. Blavatsky because from them we learn of the extreme limits of the human psyche. Blavatsky was an extreme woman in many fashions and from her we still have much to learn.

NOTES

1. *Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky*, Mary K. Neff, E.P. Dutton and Co., New York, New York, 1937, p. 23.
2. Ibid p. 23.
3. *Raja-Yoga*, Vivekananda, Vedanta Press, Hollywood, California, 1976, p. 63.
4. *Personal Memoirs of H.P. Blavatsky*, pp. 54-5.
5. Ibid, p. 126.
6. Ibid, pp. 200-1.
7. *The History of Spiritualism, Volume I and II*, Arthur Conan Doyle, Arno Press, New York, New York, 1975, vol. 1, p. 196.
8. *Personal Memoirs of H.P. Blavatsky*, p. 263.
9. Ibid, p. 244.
10. Ibid, p. 247.
11. Ibid, p. 235.
12. *Madame Blavatsky, Medium and Magician*, John Symonds, Odhams Press Limited, London, 1959, pp. 185-7.

BOOKS BY HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

The Secret Doctrine
Isis Unveiled
The Key to Theosophy

Theosophical Glossary
The Voice of the Silence
Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge
Gems from the East
From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan
Nightmare Tales
The Collected Writings of H.P. Blavatsky, 12 Volumes (More volumes in progress)
Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett
Studies in Occultism
Dynamics of the Psychic World (compiled by Lina Psaltis)

The Secret Doctrine and The Theosophical Society

Although officially the Theosophical Society has no dogma or belief requirements of members, earnest Theosophists are adherents of the philosophy presented in *The Secret Doctrine*. *The Secret Doctrine* was published in 1888 by Madame Blavatsky and is proposed to be dictation from Masters of Tibetan esoteric school. The philosophy presented therein is supposedly the ancient and original Theosophy from which all religions and mystical schools have sprouted as branches from a tree. The word "Theosophy" translates literally from Greek as "Divine Wisdom."

As stated by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy* the chief objects of the Theosophical Society are: "(1) To form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, color, or creed; (2) To promote the study of Aryan (ancient Indian) and other Scriptures, of the World's religion and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies; and (3) To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature under every aspect possible, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man especially.

More specifically, as profoundly discussed in Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, Theosophy maintains the origin of all that is and all individualities in a common source or Absolute principle, that man has a "seven-fold constitution" with seven layers or bodies in his total being, and that man has a subtle individuality which is immortal but that his earthly personality does not survive death. Blavatsky goes to great lengths in her 1,500-page *Secret Doctrine* to prove that all the religions of ancient and modern times have stemmed from an archaic "Wisdom Religion" that is still possessed in its purity by her esoteric school in Tibet. The length and depth of her writing is quite scholarly and persuasive.

The Theosophical Society is still in existence today, over one hundred years after it was founded in 1875 by Blavatsky, Henry S. Olcott and William Q. Judge. A free lending library is available to members and the Society's Quest Books publishes many valuable esoteric and occult books.

For information about the Society, write: The Theosophical Society in America, P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois 60187.