

H.P. Blavatsky



**The Secret Doctrine
Commentaries**
The Unpublished 1889 Instructions

TRANSCRIBED AND ANNOTATED BY MICHAEL GOMES

Unique book to discover how HPB applied Raja Yoga Education principles:

a. the educator **invites** the reincarnating ego **outward**, teaching him to bring his personality under his own **inner discipline**.

b. the educator stimulates the own **sense of responsibility** of the pupil

c. the educator stimulates the pupil to actively strengthen and **ennoble his character**

(= transform all kama-manasic thinking (passions and egotistic tendencies) into buddhi-manasisch thinking (wisdom and idealism))

d. the educator stimulates **compassion: self-forgetfulness** and **living for others**

e. the educator stimulates a harmonious, **well-balanced** development: **inner equilibrium** in all situations

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1889 **Blavatsky Lodge** studies **Stanza's of Dzyan in SD 1**

1889 **The Key to Theosophy** published

1889 **The Voice of the Silence** published

1890-1 **Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge** published

Study SD I Stanzas Jan - Jun 1889: 22 meetings

Frederic L. Gardner (10x)

Thomas Harbottle (8x) 1857 (in 1887: **30** jr)

Archibald Keightley (10x) 1859 (in 1887: **28** jr)

Bertram Keightley (20x) 1860 (in 1887: **27** jr)

William Kingsland (21x) 1855 (in 1887: **32** jr)

George Mead (4x) 1863 (in 1887: **24** jr)

Walter R. Old (7x) 1864 (in 1888: **24** jr)

First activities of the Blavatsky Lodge

- * Rule 4. That the aim of the Lodge be **active work**
- * text of “**Pledge of the Lodge**”
- * start of magazine **Lucifer the Light-Bringer**

“Pledge of the Lodge”

1. I pledge myself to endeavour to make Theosophy a living power in my life.
2. I pledge myself to support, before the world, the Theosophical movement, its leaders and its members.
3. I pledge myself never to listen without protest to any evil thing spoken of a brother Theosophist and to abstain from condemning others.
4. I pledge myself to maintain a constant struggle against my lower nature, and to be charitable to the weaknesses of others.
5. I pledge myself to do all in my power, by study and otherwise, to fit myself to help and teach others.
6. I pledge myself to give what support I can to the movement in time, money and work.

“Pledge of the Lodge”

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Members immediately defend their teacher HPB

* Attack by “members of the Executive at Adyar”, denying that Madame Blavatsky is any longer a representative of the Masters or entitled to speak in their name.

* Major attack on HPB by Elliott Coues + Mabel Collins

* Attack on HPB in *The Theosophist* by editor Richard Harte

“Pledge of the Lodge”

4. I pledge myself to maintain a constant struggle against my lower nature, and to be **charitable to the weaknesses of others.**

They always defended; never attacked

“Pledge of the Lodge”

6. I pledge myself to give what support I can to the movement in time, **money** and **work**.

Start of magazine **Lucifer - the Light-Bringer**

Work: First issues filled with articles of HPB and members of Blavatsky Lodge

Archibald Keightley: ‘The Meaning of a Pledge’

Money: HPB in 1889: “For the first time in my life, I am opening a Subscription List for donations to Lucifer in that magazine, which has, otherwise, to be stopped, as every month brings in a large deficit. . . . **it is owing chiefly to Dr. Keightley’s and Mr. Bertam Keightley’s generosity** that it was not stopped a year ago.”

“Pledge of the Lodge”

5. I pledge myself to do all in my power, **by study** and otherwise, to fit myself to help and teach others.

Jan - Jun 1889: study the Stanzas of Secret Doctrine I

not for themselves but to offer more of HPB’s explanations **for future students**

During SD studies (Jan-Jun 1889) HPB acts as real Raja Yoga Educator:

1. She never treats them based on their **age** (age of the body is an illusion in occult training, you have to concentrate on the inner thinker, the **ageless** reincarnating real chela)
2. She teaches them by **stepping back**:
saying that she **cannot do** something, or cannot do it alone. In this way she stimulates her members to **step in** and assist her. (1 p.4-5: coin new English words) and (6 p.166 Pistis Sophia)

or saying that she **cannot express** a truth properly. In this way she awakens their own talent of finding and formulating the answer. (6 p.189-198: free discussion on what is thinking and what is a thought)
3. She teaches them by **hints**. Hints are challenges, starting points for them to explore the deeper meanings themselves. (13 p.396 ‘tell me a story’)
4. She teaches them by **asking them to answer** their own questions (21 p.591 Karma)
5. She teaches them not **WHAT** to think but **HOW** to think (22 p.625-6, 630 Intuition)
6. She shields them against ‘**spiritual overheating**’, when they loose their inner balance during the study. (22 p.638)

2. She teaches them by stepping back:

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MEETING 1 p.4-5:

Bertram Keightley : Then the same term identically is used in quite a different sense by different philosophies: for instance Buddhi has one meaning in the esoteric philosophy, and a different meaning in the Sāmkhya?

Mme. Blavatsky : And quite a different meaning again in the Vishnu-Purāṇa in which there are seven Prakritis that come from Mahat and the latter is called Mahat-Buddhi. (...)

William Kingsland : Yet we must call it something. Are we to have our own terms?

Mme. Blavatsky : **I think the best thing you could do would be to coin new English words.** If you want to ever become Western philosophers, you had better not take from the Hindus, who will be the first ones to say: “Behold, these Europeans! they take from us all they can, disfigure everything and do no good.” **Find equivalents for all these terms, coin new English words, and do not depart from them; and then there will be no confusion.**

William Kingsland : Does *protyle* come near the term *Laya*?

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MEETING 6 p.166

Mme. Blavatsky : I wish somebody could translate this thing. I have it entirely in Latin. It is the **Pistis of Sophia**. If only somebody could translate this!

Mr. B. Keightley : I think Roger Hall knows it.

Mme. Blavatsky : But it must be given entirely in the Kabbalistic language. You know nothing of the Kabbalah, and you won't be able to do it; it wants somebody who knows Kabbalah well. I can't ask ['McGregor'] Mathers to do it, because he will do it in his own Kabbalistic way. There will be eternity in the way and there will be St Joseph and everything. Therefore I can't give it to him.

I must get somebody who knows Latin and at the same time who knows Kabbalah well enough to translate.

1890-91 **George Mead** publishes in *Lucifer* his translation of the first two parts of this **Pistis Sophia**, enabling HPB to give her comments.

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MEETING 6 p.189-198 (free discussion on what is thinking and what is a thought)

p.194 **Dr. Williams** : What then would be your definition of a thought?

Mme. Blavatsky : **You must ask me something easier. I am not a speaker, I cannot give it to you in good language. I see it and understand it, but I cannot express it.**

Miss Kenealy : Thought is a faculty of the higher brain and speech is a faculty of the lower brain, to a great extent automatic and mechanical.

Mme. Blavatsky : **Yes, but there is something beyond that. It is the definition on the physical plane. But you must go beyond. (...)**

p.196 **Dr. Williams**: And so I think it is very often we mistake a thrill of feeling for a thought, or a series of thoughts. So I would make that distinction between feeling and thought and between ideas and thought.

The moment anything comes into thought, the mind having coordinated the material out of which that comes into thought, then it takes form; and then it {is} capable of speech. And therefore, when we think anything, we can express it in speech.

3. She teaches them by **hints**. Hints are challenges, starting points for them to explore the deeper meanings themselves.

MEETING 13 p.396 ‘**tell me a story**’

Archibald Keightley: Can you give us a short sketch of “The Life and Adventures of an Atom?”

[*Mme. Blavatsky answers ‘no’*]

(...) **Mme. Blavatsky:** How many years will it take me, do you think, to give you an accurate statement even about that one atom? For **occult science teaches** that from the moment of birth to that of death (and after death still more so) every atom, or let us say particle, rather, alters with every seventh fraction of something far less than a second; that it shifts its place, **and proteus-like travels incessantly in the same direction as the blood, externally and internally, night and day.**

...Now you are 28, 29, or how old are you? Thirty, let us say. Then let us say, if you please, that I will take an atom of your body, and from the moment of your birth I will begin giving you the life and adventures of that blessed atom **in all its transformations**, in all its gyrations, **in all its metempsychosis**. How long will it take me, gentlemen mathematicians? Tell me how much. Count and I will give it.

Archibald Keightley: Roughly, though; a short sketch.

Mme. Blavatsky: Go to bed!

4. She teaches them by **asking them to answer** their own questions

MEETING 21 p.591-2

Walter Old: Question 1: what is Karma

Mme. Blavatsky: **Am I really expected to answer this?**

Walter Old: You are.

Mme. Blavatsky: Karma is the Law of Retribution. **Now, Mr. Bertram Keightley, go on.**

...

Bertram Keightley : [*gives definition of Karma*] ... It is true to say it acts with intelligence.

Mme. Blavatsky : It does not act. It is our actions that act, and that awaken into all kinds of influences. Look here, if you say that Karma acts and you say it has intelligence, immediately you suggest the idea of a personal god. It is not so, because Karma does not see and Karma does not watch, and does not repent as the Lord God repented. Karma is a universal law, immutable and changeless. (...)

It is neither intelligence nor non-intelligence.

...

594 **William Kingsland :** Karma is, so to speak, the absolute equilibrium; and however we act we disturb that equilibrium one way or another, and Karma adjusts.

5. She teaches them **not WHAT to think but HOW to think**

MEETING 22 p.625-6, 630 (Intuition)

[625] **Mme. Blavatsky** : Now you have got to study for yourselves. The only thing I can give you is just to put the “Key” in your hands and say: “This opens this way, and this that way,” and so on. You understand that whereas one person will understand well, another will understand less. (...)

[626] **Mrs. Gordon** : I don’t think we can expect to understand it all.

Mme. Blavatsky : But these ladies and gentlemen who have been here Thursday after Thursday for, I suppose, a year, I don’t see that you don’t understand it. How is it possible? (...)

Mme. Blavatsky : You have to use your **high faculty**; intellect has nothing to do here. Materialistic science would step in. (...)

[630] **Mr. B. Keightley** : ...well, when we talk about the higher intellectual hierarchies, they are only represented to us by words, at the present moment.

Mme. Blavatsky: They cannot be represented by words. They must be represented.....
[continues on next slide]

5. She teaches them not **WHAT** to think but **HOW** to think

continued:

Mme. Blavatsky : They cannot be represented by words. They must be represented by the **feeling of intuition**. If they are represented by words, you have nothing, you have a flapdoodle.

You have to represent them to yourselves in your intellectual perception, in your spiritual perception. It is impossible. **It is with your higher self that you must understand**, and not with your brains and intellectual perceptions, which are all sensuous perceptions, and will not help you.

You have to reach to that point when **you feel yourself one with the whole**, and perfectly inseparable from it — from the one and the eternal, which has no end and no beginning. Otherwise, it is impossible.

6. She shields them against ‘**spiritual overheating**’, when they loose their inner balance during the study.

MEETING 22 p.638, 652-3

(p.638) **Walter Old**: Is not Buddhi the sixth principle, and is not intuition the sixth sense?

Mme. Blavatsky : You **argue** on the line of what? Do you bring the thing as it is given to you in the esoteric instructions, or the exoteric?

[Bertram Keightley and William Kingsland step in to assist her]

(p.652) **Bertram Keightley**: H.P.B., answer this, if you can, from the point of view of exotericism. Is the apprehension of highest abstract ideas the function of Manas, or of Buddhi?

Mme. Blavatsky : Buddhi can have the apprehension of nothing. ertram.

Bertram Keightley : There you are answered, Old.

Walter Old : Yes! Certainly.

[Walter Old explains that he is confused by all exoteric and esoteric teachings]

(p.653) **Mme. Blavatsky**: Most assuredly. Therefore, every time you put this question, I say, do go to bed, let us talk of something else. Let us talk about exoteric subjects, of which we can discuss as much as you like. But the others—well, **it is very difficult to speak of that which we had better keep silent about.**

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In our Point Loma Theosophical Society we still follow these Raja Yoga Education principles.

Basis of all our work is always **COMPASSION**

We only study to prepare ourselves to teach others: to alleviate suffering in the world

Basis of all our studies is always :

* starting from universal (Atmic thinking) to details (Manasic thinking),

but then upwards again:

* going back from details to universal (= Atmic insight in the higher moral consequences in your life, now you have more knowledge)

And . . . we always work in groups (that is how the universe works)

Simple sources:

1. **Katherine Beechey** on The Blavatsky Lodge
(2 articles in *The Theosophist* 1937)
Translated into Portuguese by Barend Voorham and available to all
2. Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* by **Michael Gomes**
3. *Blavatsky Collected Writings* 14 Volumes + Index
* all 14 *day-by-day Chronological Surveys* by **Boris de Zirkoff**
(mind-blowing insights)
* Vol. 12 p.478-511 *Introduction to E.S. texts* by **Boris de Zirkoff**
4. *H.P. Blavatsky – The Secret Doctrine Würzburg Manuscript*, p.261:
Daniel Caldwell: The Writing of The Secret Doctrine: a Chronology

Texts of

- * articles by Katherine Beechey (in English and in Portuguese)
- * Powerpoints of lectures (in English and in Portuguese) of
 - Johanna Vermeulen – *SD Commentaries*: how HPB taught her young students
 - Barend Voorham – Monads and Emanations in the Secret Doctrine
 - Herman Vermeulen – The Secret Doctrine as a Foundation for Collaboration
- * H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries* (original English version)

can be downloaded on www.blavatskyhouse.org