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## A REFLECTION ON *THE SECRET DOCTRINE*, No. 1

The word *doctrine* may be defined as set of principles or as a body of teachings related to a particular subject. One example from the field of religion would be the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. In the realm of jurisprudence, the doctrine of self-defense is well established. Economists often refer to Marxist or Keynesian doctrines. The military has its doctrines relating to warfare which are studied at West Point and other military academies.

A doctrine is something more than a mere idea, or even a concept. For these to be elevated to the status of doctrines, they need to be subjected to a period of intense critical analysis by scholars and experts in that particular field. The principles articulated by Mme. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* qualify as doctrines because they are part of a wisdom tradition extending back centuries in time.

In his historical introduction to the 1979 edition, Editor Boris de Zirkoff dispenses with the notion that *The Secret Doctrine* is nothing more than a “syncretistic work wherein a multitude of seemingly unrelated teachings and ideas are cleverly woven together to form a more or less coherent whole” (1:74). It is not difficult to see how a novice reader might arrive at this superficial but erroneous conclusion, given the non-linear style of writing employed by Blavatsky in her magnum opus.

To the student possessing a measure of intuitive capacity, deep and sustained consideration will reveal *The Secret Doctrine* to be “a wholly coherent outline of an ageless doctrine, a system of thought based upon occult facts and universal truths inherent in nature and which are as specific and definite as any mathematical proposition” (1:74).

Just as the Christian theologian is conversant with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, or the economist with the doctrine of mercantilism, the serious student of Theosophy is acquainted with the doctrines of reincarnation, emanation, periodicity, and other esoteric principles put forth by H. P. Blavatsky in her great contribution to world thought.

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