

October 2012

## A REFLECTION ON *THE SECRET DOCTRINE*, No. 10

For long ages, the esoteric teachings of the Wisdom Tradition were transmitted in guarded secrecy by Initiates to their pupils. In the late nineteenth century, a few Guardians of the Wisdom felt the time was ripe to reach a broader audience. As their chosen agent, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was allowed to “raise but a small corner of the dark veil” through the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*. Prior to that time, no Initiate was allowed to “give out promiscuously, to a mocking, unbelieving world” the sacred teachings that had been concealed from the masses for so long.

We live in a democratic age where secrecy and confidentiality are often suspect, while transparency and openness are considered virtues. It’s also a time when having near-instant access to all sorts of data is taken for granted. Therefore, one who is unfamiliar with the Wisdom Tradition and the Mystery Schools of antiquity may be excused for asking, “Why the secrecy? Why only lift a portion of the veil instead of giving out all of it? Why not release all esoteric knowledge for the benefit of the world?”

The short answer is that the world is not yet ready. Ours is a world still steeped in ignorance, superstition, and selfishness, despite the brilliance of our technological advances. In a letter written in 1880, one of the aforementioned Guardians explained to his impatient pupil: “The world’s prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush.” It’s relatively easy for people to adapt to new technologies, but infinitely difficult to change established ways of thinking. The philosopher John Locke noted that “new opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common.” Voltaire quipped, “Prejudices are what fools use for reason.” Edmund Burke wrote, “Superstition is the religion of feeble minds.”

H. P. Blavatsky lifted a small portion of the veil for the benefit of mankind. What the world does with those teachings will determine whether and when the veil will be lifted higher.

**David P. Bruce** is the National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in America.