

*Madame Blavatsky on the  
fabricators of magic mirrors  
and their motives*



## Madame Blavatsky on the fabricators of Magic Mirrors and their motives

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[This Note is appended to a rather long excerpt from Col. Stephen Fraser's *Twelve Years in India*,<sup>1</sup> describing his experiences with the "Muntra Wallahs," a sect of Mohammedan magicians, and their Magic Mirrors. A vivid description is given of their incantations and rituals connected with the preparation of the magic substance which they use to smear certain pieces of glass. Col. Fraser describes various scenes he saw in these mirrors, and how they coincided with events taking place in far-off countries, or still to occur in the future.

— Boris de Zirkoff.

Compiler and Editor of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*]



### Editorial Note by H.P. Blavatsky.

This curious passage found in the *Memoirs* of Col. S. Fraser, and transcribed for our journal by our brother, Mr. P. Davidson (Banchory, Scotland) is republished for good reasons.

- First, to show that but about two dozens of years ago (namely, before the Mutiny),<sup>2</sup> no English gentleman was afraid of being laughed at for telling the truth — however wonderful and, as in this case, incredible and *unscientific* in the eyes of the profane.

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<sup>1</sup> [Consult narrative by Col. Stephen Fraser, under the title *Phallicism: "The Mirror Dance,"* pp. 153-67, appended to Thomas T. Welton, *Mental Magic: a rationale of thought reading, and its attendant phenomena and their application to the discovery of new medicines, obscure diseases, correct delineations of character, lost persons and property, mines and springs of water, and all hidden and secret things.* London: G. Redway, 1884; 178pp. Col. Fraser's Appendix refers to footnote on page 51, in Thos. Welton's *Mental Magic.* — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Referring to the Indian Rebellion of 1857, a major uprising in India in 1857–1858 against the rule of the British East India Company, which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. — ED. PHIL.]

- Secondly, with an eye to the considerable number of overwise (in their conceit, of course) European critics (many of them Spiritualists with a firm belief in their materializing grandes dames and relatives) of *Isis* and *The Theosophist*, we shall not miss this good opportunity of turning the tables upon them.

To do it we have but to oppose to some narratives of eye-witnesses given in *Isis*, and so vehemently cried down on the ground “of their inaccuracy” those of Col. Fraser, an author who

. . . clearly and distinctly *affirms*, on the hitherto unsullied honour of an English gentleman, and a Colonel [7] in Her Majesty’s service . . .

— that he was an *eye-witness* to all the wonders he relates above.

Indeed, the strange confusion in the above accounts between a “Sheik” (who can be but a Mohammedan) and a Brahman, is by itself highly instructive. It shows that even a comparatively long residence (*twelve* years) in India, and a Colonel’s commission in H.M.’s<sup>1</sup> Army does not procure immunity from blunders in connection with the mystic side of India. Nevertheless, Col. Fraser, whose veracity as to magicians and their psychological phenomena seen by himself is as unimpeachable as his blundering with regard to mystic names and things is self-evident — was never, to our knowledge, either doubted or publicly traduced as a *liar*? Even the undeniable inaccuracies of a Colonel in “Her Majesty’s Army” become “probable facts,” while plain and accurate statements of realities and truth when given out by a foreigner — have to be not only doubted but publicly set down without investigation as deliberate *falsehoods*. What can the author mean, when speaking of the “Sebeyeh” dance,<sup>2</sup> the Brahman “Sheikh,”<sup>3</sup> the fire of the *Garoonahs*<sup>4</sup> (?!) or the “*Ardor*”<sup>5</sup> who begat the Universe”? All of these words are unknown and *un-Brähmanical*. Yet from the substance of the narrative, however muddled up, we know who are the members of that “renowned Brotherhood of Mystics, Philosophers and Magicians.” They are a Fraternity of true magicians, now disbanded and so widely scattered about the country as to be virtually extinct. They are “left-hand” adepts, Mohammedans belonging nominally to the sect of the Wahabees,<sup>6</sup> who learned throughout centuries their magical art (or rather added to the knowledge brought by their ancestors from Arabia and Central Asia), from the Tāntrikas of Eastern Bengal and Assam. That part of the country has been famous for its magic and sorcery from a very remote period of antiquity. In the *Mahabharata*, we read of a fight between Sri Krishna and the king of the Magicians, Anusalva, to the utter discomfiture of the latter. The proximity of the

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<sup>1</sup> [Her Majesty’s]

<sup>2</sup> [The Mirror Bridal-fête of a renowned Brotherhood of Mystics, Philosophers, and Magicians. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 155.]

<sup>3</sup> [A man of at least 125 years of age, judging from the fact that his grandchildren were white with snowy locks and beards waist-long. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 155.]

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. “The circle had a pile of stones in the centre, upon which coals were brightly burning; and over this fire — which, by the way, is the Eternal sacred Fire of the Garoonahs, which is never allowed to go out from one year’s end to the other — was suspended from a tripod of betel rods a coarse earthen vessel, into which the four expectant marriages poured about one-fourth of the contents of the simla gourds already mentioned. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 156.]

<sup>5</sup> [Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 158.]

<sup>6</sup> [Cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism>]

Duggas of Bhootan and the [8] neighbouring hill-tribes, famous for their sorcery and magical practices, has had a good share in the growth of the black arts in those parts of the country. To this day their fame survives in Bengal; Kāmarūpa in Assam is still an enchanted city to the many. But the manufacturers of the “Bhattah Mirrors” are not regular practitioners of Black magic. The knowledge they have acquired by the “left-hand” path is used for good or bad purposes according to the inclination of the practitioner. It is a curious feature in the mystic sects of Indian Mussulmans that they always make a jumble of Mohammedanism and Hinduism in their rites and ceremonies. Their magical *formulæ* we know are partly in Arabic or rather its dialects in India and in Sanskrit, or one of its living representatives; the Hindu Gods and Goddesses are also freely invoked therein. The whole account of Col. Fraser, with the exception of inaccuracies above adverted to, is substantially correct. But at the same time it is but proper that attention should be called to his blunders, for otherwise the statements of any well-informed writer — especially a foreigner, if clashing with those of any of the numerous authors of the stamp of Col. Fraser, will render the former liable to be set down as “an impostor or charlatan” — the latter epithets having now become the most aromatic flowers of rhetoric of the leading representatives of the English Press.



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