



modern theosophy

*moon
laramie
blavatsky
unveiled*

*The writings of H.P. Blavatsky
in modern English. Volume I.*

Extract

Blavatsky Unveiled

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Chapter One

Ego sum qui sum.

I am who I am.

A TRUTH OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY

We began research where modern science failed to go.
And in our research we concentrated on elements of science
which the wise men of today dismiss as illusions
or unsolvable mysteries.

ZANONI, EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

Somewhere in the world there is an ancient book. This book is so old that experts could examine it forever and still not agree on the materials used to make it. It is the only copy left in existence. It was used to compile the *Hebrew Book of Concealed Mystery* (*Siphra Dzeniouta*), which is itself understood to be immensely old. One of its illustrations shows the divine cycle of God-consciousness emanating from Adam. It appears like an arc of light. It forms a circle and, at the highest point of the circumference, it arcs back to earth bringing a higher form of humanity in its wake. As it approaches closer and closer, the God-consciousness becomes darker and darker until it turns black as it touches the earth's surface.

All Hermetic⁽¹⁾ philosophers share a belief founded on 70,000 years of experience. They believe that sin has made matter denser since man first appeared on earth. In the beginning, the human body was semi-physical in nature. Before the fall, mankind was able to interact with other invisible universes. But since then, matter has become a barrier between man and the spiritual plane. Esoteric tradition teaches that there were also many races of men before Adam. Each race died out to give birth to another. Were these earlier races superior? Did any of them belong to the winged race described by the Greek philosopher Plato in his dialogue *Phaedrus*?⁽²⁾ Science should be able to answer these questions. Cave paintings in France and Stone Age artifacts provide a good starting point. As the cycle of God-consciousness progressed, men came to know the difference between good and evil just as surely as the gods themselves. The cycle reached its apex and then began to descend. When its arc became parallel with the terrestrial plane, man was clothed in skin.

The earliest traditions of most cultures suggest that a more spiritually developed race preceded modern humanity. The French

ethnographer Charles-Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg published a French translation of the Popol Vuh⁽³⁾ or Mayan Book of the People in 1861. According to the Popol Vuh, the first men could reason and speak, had unlimited sight and simultaneous knowledge of all things. The Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus describes the air as filled with invisible spirits. Some are pure and eternal. Others are wicked and mortal. Humanity is descended from godlike beings and will become godlike again. This belief is echoed in the Gospel of St. John. An esoteric reading of this text suggests that those who follow Jesus will become godlike themselves. ‘Don’t you know that you are gods?’ said Jesus. Plato makes the same point in *Phaedrus* suggesting man lived among the gods as a god himself before losing his wings and becoming mortal. The oldest religious philosophies teach that the universe was filled with spiritual beings and it is from one of these that Adam evolved.

The Kalmucks⁽⁴⁾ and other Siberian tribes also have myths describing beings that preceded the human race. These earlier beings had almost limitless knowledge and they threatened to rebel against their god, the great chief spirit. To prevent the rebellion, he incarcerated them in physical bodies, imprisoning their senses. They could only escape the limitations of their bodies through a long journey of spiritual evolution. The Kalmucks believe that the shamans of their tribes can access the divine powers of those earlier beings.

The Astor Library in New York has recently acquired a copy of an Egyptian medical treatise written in 1552 BC. This date is generally regarded as the year of Moses’ 21st birthday. The treatise is written on papyrus and has been verified as genuine by the German botanist August Schenk. It consists of a single sheet, 30 centimeters wide and more than 20 meters long, forming one scroll divided into 110 numbered pages. It was acquired in Egypt in

1872-3 by the German Egyptologist Georg Ebers. *The New York Tribune* claims the papyrus is one of the six Hermetic books on medicine described by the Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria.

According to the *Tribune's* editor, Egyptian priests in 363 AD attributed 42 books to the Greco-Egyptian mystic Hermes Trismegistus. 36 of these contained the history of all human knowledge. The remaining six dealt with anatomy, pathology, eye conditions, surgical instruments and medicines. The *Tribune's* editor claims that the Ebers Papyrus is indisputably one of these Hermetic books.

Ebers' purchase of the papyrus brought the world's attention to ancient Egyptian science. Who knows what other lucky and important discoveries might be made in the future.

Modern science confirms the claims made by the oldest traditions that humanity is immensely ancient. In the last few years geology has found proof that humans existed over 250,000 years ago before the last glaciation of Europe. Christian theologians find this difficult to reconcile with the Bible but it was a fact readily accepted by the ancient philosophers.

The fossil record shows that man hunted and built fires in the distant past but the origin of humanity still remains a mystery. Science has come to an impasse and waits for further evidence. No anthropologist or psychologist has been as visionary as the French paleontologist Georges Cuvier, who refuted the idea of evolution, believing that creation occurred in cycles and species became extinct through global catastrophes. Geologists and archeologists have been unable to piece together from the fossil record the perfect threefold model of man - physical, intellectual and spiritual. When archeologists discover crude implements they assume that the further back in time human beings lived, the more primitive they

were. This is flawed logic. Suppose humanity became extinct and an archeologist from some future race uncovered simple tools from a tribe on a remote island. He would be mistaken in thinking that everyone in the 19th Century lived in a similarly primitive way.

It is fashionable to think that all ideas from the primitive past are themselves primitive. This devalues the past and yet it is only by looking to the past that so many modern thinkers have made their reputations.

The Irish physicist John Tyndall is always ready to ridicule the ancient philosophers even though many leading scientists have gained acclaim by rehashing their ideas. Increasingly, geologists seem to take for granted that all ancient races were equally barbaric. But not all contemporary scientists agree. Some take the opposite view. For instance the German-born language scholar Max Müller says, ‘When we investigate the past, hieroglyphic records only show part of the picture of what man was. The more closely we study him, even as we explore the distant past, we perceive an intellect that belonged to him from the very beginning and it seems impossible that humanity could have emerged merely from brute animals.’

The study of first causes is considered unscientific. Consequently, scientists concentrate on the study of the physical effects of those first causes. The scientific method is inextricably linked to the physical world. When the limits of the physical world are reached, the limits of scientific inquiry are also reached. Scientists are like hamsters on a wheel. They are destined to turn the same problems of physical matter over and over again. Science is immensely powerful and it is not for the mere man in the street to question it. But to question an individual scientist is another thing entirely. No scientist would take a layman’s word for the geographical layout of the dark side of the moon. But suppose a

lunar accident sent an inhabitant of the moon to earth. Suppose he arrived at the door of the British astronomer James Carpenter. If Carpenter failed to investigate, that would be a dereliction of duty.

It is inexcusable for any scientist to refuse to investigate a new phenomenon. It doesn't matter whether it is a man from the moon or a ghost manifested by the American mediums William and Horatio Eddy.

It is claimed that ancient scholars understood the inner and outer natures of man. They may have followed Plato's philosophical method of inquiry or the scientific approach of Aristotle. How they came to their understanding doesn't really matter. Geologists have been quick to conclude from the fossil record that early man was primitive. But evidence emerges almost daily that the ancient scholars were as sophisticated as is often claimed.

They divided periods of human existence into cycles. They believed that mankind reached a pinnacle of civilization in each cycle and then declined into barbarism again. Ancient monuments reveal the peaks of civilization reached by mankind. Those impressive monuments now lost can be read about in the works of the Greek historian Herodotus. Even in his time many pyramids and world famous temples were already in ruins. He described them as important witnesses to the achievements of earlier civilizations. He stops short of claiming the existence of the Minotaur but has left a basic description of the labyrinth in the city of Knossos⁽⁵⁾ where the remains of king-initiates are hidden.

Histories of Egypt's Ptolemaic era⁽⁶⁾ convey a sense of how refined past civilizations became. That said, the arts and sciences were acknowledged even then to be in decline and many skills in the arts had already been lost. The French archeologist Auguste

Mariette excavated exquisite wooden statues from the foot of the pyramids. These proved that the Egyptians created art as refined as the Greeks long before the first Egyptian dynasties. The American author Bayard Taylor describes the statues as being unsurpassed with beautiful heads, eyes of precious stones and copper eyelids. These statues are much older and yet finer than the artifacts collected by the Prussian Egyptologist Karl Lepsius, the English collector Henry Abbot and the British Museum.⁽⁷⁾ This provides tangible proof of the Hermetic idea that civilization develops and declines in cycles.

The pioneering German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann conducted excavations on the Biga Peninsula in Turkey, formerly known as the Troad.⁽⁸⁾ Here he uncovered evidence of the same development from barbarism to civilization and from civilization back to barbarism. If the ancients were able to create superior works of art using skills that are now lost, might they have been equally advanced in other fields including human psychology? Until there is evidence to the contrary, this theory seems as reasonable as any.

It's generally accepted that human knowledge is still in its infancy. Perhaps the present cycle of humanity began comparatively recently. The Chaldeans⁽⁹⁾ migrated into Mesopotamia sometime between 940 and 860 BC. According to their philosophy, cycles of human development do not involve the whole of mankind at one and the same time. The American scientist John Draper supports this view when he observes that man's development doesn't occur uniformly around the world or involve the entire population. He cites the example of nomadic Native American tribes, describing them as only now emerging from the Stone Age. This is just another example of a modern scientist drawing the same conclusions as the ancients.

A Kabbalist is a student of Kabbalah,⁽¹⁰⁾ the esoteric school of Judaism. Any Kabbalist familiar with Pythagoras' mathematical theories can show that Plato's metaphysics was based on strict mathematical principles. In his book *The Magicon*,⁽¹¹⁾ published in New York in 1869, Dr Paulus says that true or higher mathematics is connected to all higher sciences whereas common or everyday mathematics is misleading and illusory. This everyday math seems foolproof precisely because it is limited to the everyday. Aristotle's approach to scientific inquiry was based on the study of things that exist or happen in the world. From these examples, he aimed to derive knowledge of universal principles. By contrast, Plato began by considering universal principles or forms. From these universal principles, he aimed to understand particular examples of these principles as they existed in the world. Scientists adopt Aristotle's approach and reject Plato's on the basis that it is not robust. John Draper complains that visionary mystics like the Greek philosophers Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus have overshadowed the strict mathematicians of the old Musaeum of Alexandria.⁽¹²⁾ But Draper forgets that geometry is the only science that proceeds from universals to particulars and it is precisely this method that was used by Plato. Science cannot fail as long as it confines itself to studying physical conditions using Aristotle's approach. But the universe is infinite whereas material science is limited and can only go round and round in circles. Egyptian priests taught Pythagoras the cosmological theory of numerals, the only theory that can reconcile the two units of matter and spirit and equate them mathematically.

Esoteric mathematics explains the origin of the universe, describing the radiation⁽¹³⁾ of spiritual material from God and the cyclical nature of these emanations.⁽¹⁴⁾ Physical beings have their origin in the higher spiritual plane which degrades to create the

material world. They undergo a journey of evolution until they reach a turning point and are reabsorbed once more into the infinite.

Like everything else in the world, human understanding of physiology evolves cyclically. Just as it seems in its infancy now, it may be proven one day to have been at its most advanced many years before Pythagoras.

The Phoenician proto-philosopher Mochus the Sidonian taught anatomy long before Pythagoras lived. Mochus' disciples and descendants conveyed his sacred wisdom to Pythagoras. Pythagoras was a pure philosopher, someone deeply familiar with nature's fundamental mysteries, and committed to freeing the human soul to realize its full potential. For these achievements, he must always be remembered.

Strict secrecy surrounded the ancient sciences as they were passed down. This is why the ancient philosophies are undervalued in modern times. The Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus and even Plato have been accused of inconsistencies but a clear pattern lies beneath the metaphysical contradictions of a work like Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*.⁽¹⁵⁾ Have classicists ever read Plato perceptively enough? This is the question begged by the work of authors including the German classicist Johann Gottfried Stallbaum, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, the Italian philosopher Marsilio Ficino, the English translator Thomas Taylor, the German philologists Ludwig Heindorf and Philipp Buttmann and the English classicists Floyer Sydenham and George Burges. Plato's hidden allusions to esoteric truths have clearly escaped these authors entirely. In response they suggest that difficult passages were really meant to be worded in a different way. They then have the audacity to change the text to suit their interpretation. There is a line in a poem about Orpheus which reads: 'Of the song, the

order of the sixth race close.’ This line can only be interpreted as a reference to the sixth root race (the theory of root races will be explained in a future volume).

But in his book *The Works of Plato* George Burges says the line was evidently taken from a cosmogony where mankind was thought to have been created last. If Burges is going to edit another author’s works, he should at least understand the author’s intention.

Contemporary scholars generally believe that the ancient philosophers had no knowledge of modern science. They even question whether they understood the basic scientific principle that nothing comes from nothing. If the ancients had grasped the concept that matter is indestructible, scholars suggest they did so through intuition rather than by reference to strict scientific principles.

The opposite is true. When these philosophers speculated on the nature of matter, their work was open to public criticism. But their teachings on spiritual questions were profoundly esoteric. They went to great lengths to conceal their views on the relationship between matter and spirit because they had sworn themselves to secrecy.

Notes

(Chapter One

(1) Hermetic, concerning Hermeticism, (also Hermetism). Hermeticism is a religious, philosophical, and esoteric tradition based primarily on writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. These writings have greatly influenced the western esoteric tradition and rose to prominence during both the Renaissance and the Reformation. The tradition claims descent from a *prisca theologia*, a single, true theology present in all religions given by God to mankind in antiquity.

(2) The *Phaedrus* by Plato is a dialogue which takes place between Plato's protagonist, Socrates, and Phaedrus, an Athenian aristocrat. It was written c. 370 BC. Although ostensibly about love, the dialogue covers the art of rhetoric, metempsychosis (the Greek tradition of reincarnation) and eroticism.

(3) The Popol Vuh is the sacred book of the K'iche' Indians, descendants of the Mayan people, who live in what is now Guatemala. It contains the K'iche's cosmology, mythology, traditions and history. Popol Vuh means the Book of the People. Blavatsky maintains that the Popol Vuh contains the esoteric history of mankind, including a description of the early 'root races.' Blavatsky states that it parallels the creation accounts of Genesis and the Kabbalah. The mythology of the Popol Vuh consists

of four periods, three of which have ended and the fourth of which is current. This may refer to the theosophical idea of 'rounds,' the fourth of which is said to be our current round or it could refer to four of theosophy's root races.

(4) The Kalmucks are a Buddhist people of Mongolian origin. They created the autonomous region known as the Kalmyk Khanate (1630-1724) in Russia's North Caucasus territory. Today they form a majority in the republic of Kalmykia on the western shore of the Caspian Sea.

(5) Knossos, the ancient city on the Greek island of Crete is the location of King Minos' palace. In Greek mythology, Minos had a labyrinth built beneath the palace to conceal his son, the Minotaur.

(6) The Ptolemaic era began in 305 BC when Ptolemy I Soter declared himself pharaoh of Egypt. His family ruled for 275 years, the last dynasty of Ancient Egypt.

(7) The British Museum's Egyptian collection expanded dramatically in 1801 when the British defeated the French at the battle of the Nile. The British were able to acquire many fine examples of Egyptian sculpture but it is alleged that none of these was superior to the wooden statues excavated by Mariette.

(8) The Troad, now called the Biga Peninsula, is situated in the northwestern part of Anatolia, Turkey. It is the location of the ruins of Troy, now a UNESCO world heritage site. It was first excavated by Heinrich Schliemann in 1870.

(9) The Chaldeans were an ethnic group that lived in Mesopotamia, modern day southern Iraq. The Bible contains many references to the Chaldean people. They are associated with the city of Ur and the Biblical patriarch Abraham. Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, may have been of partial Chaldean descent.

(10) Kabbalah or Kabbala which means ‘parallel / corresponding,’ or ‘received tradition,’ is a form of Jewish mysticism. Central to Kabbalah is an illustration of the Tree of Life, a mystical symbol used to describe the path to God. Its ten interconnected spheres represent the ten archetypal numbers of the Pythagorean system.

(11) *The Magicon* is a book of prophecy, full title: *Wonderful Prophecies Concerning Popery And Its Impending Overthrow And Fall, Together With Predictions Relative to America, the End of the World and the Formation of the New Earth; Also, Concerning the True Beginning and Future of the New Church, Called the New Jerusalem*. The book’s author, Dr. Paulus, is an obscure figure. Apart from his name nothing further is known. The quote

attributed to him by Blavatsky does not appear in the original text of *The Magicon*.

(12) The Musaeum of Alexandria (or Greek ‘Mouseion,’ meaning ‘Seat of the Muses’) was a center of classical learning including the famous Library of Alexandria. It was founded c. 280 BC by the Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy I Soter.

(13) The radiation of spiritual material from God. In theosophy the manifest universe is the product of seven rays that emanate from the ‘central spiritual sun’ or life source.

(14) Emanationism is a system of thought that maintains all things are derived from a first reality, or first principle.

(15) *Timaeus*, written c. 360 BC, is a Platonic text structured primarily in the form of a monologue by the title character, Timaeus of Locri. The work describes the creation of the world by the demiurge, the divine agent that turns chaos into form.

(16) The Hindu Vedas are a collection of religious texts from ancient India. Written in archaic Sanskrit, they are the oldest of all Hindu scriptures. They are regarded as divine revelations and form the foundation of Hinduism. The Vedas are based on seven major poetic meters, complex syllable patterns which could conceivably form the basis of a mathematical system.

Who's Who

on the design of the Julian calendar. He modified the 365-day Egyptian solar calendar, introducing the leap year.

Spencer, Herbert (27 April 1820 - 8 December 1903) was an English sociologist and philosopher. He advocated the primacy of the individual over society and of science over religion. He was an early supporter of the theory of evolution and is remembered for his development of social Darwinism in which he applied Darwin's theory of evolution to society and social classes. He coined the term 'survival of the fittest.'

Spinoza, Benedict de (24 November 1632 - 21 February 1677), was a Dutch Jewish philosopher. His work *Ethica* (Ethics) published in 1677 describes an ethical vision in which God is identified with nature. Rather than the transcendent creator of the universe, God is presented as nature itself, of which mankind is an integral part.

Sprengel, Kurt Polycarp Joachim (3 August 1766 - 15 March 1833) was a German botanist and physician. Between 1792 and 1799 he published the five volumes of *Versuch einer Pragmatischen Geschichte der Arzneikunde* (Toward a Pragmatic History of Medicine). It was the standard work for nearly a century.

Stallbaum, Johann Gottfried HPB: *Stalbaum* (25 September 1793 - 24 January 1861) was a German classical scholar. He is noted for his studies of Plato: *Platonis Meno* (Plato's Meno) published in 1827 and *Platonis Opera*

Omnia (The Works of Plato) published between 1827 and 1860.

Stewart, Balfour (1 November 1828 - 19 December 1887) was a Scottish meteorologist, geophysicist and member of the Society for Psychical Research. He became director of Kew Observatory in 1859 and professor of natural philosophy at Owens College, Manchester in 1870. He specialized in the study of the earth's magnetic field. He was co-author of *The Unseen Universe* (1875) with Peter Guthrie Tait. The book proposes the idea that 'the visible universe has been developed out of the invisible.' Blavatsky refers to Stewart and Tait obliquely using the phrase 'the authors of *The Unseen Universe*.'

Stowe, Harriet Elisabeth Beecher HPB: *Stow* (14 June 1811 - 1 July 1896) was an author and American abolitionist. Her best known work is her anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1852. The line cited by Blavatsky is frequently attributed to Stowe but appears as an uncited aphorism in *The Unjust Judge or the Evils of Intemperance on Judges, Lawyers and Politicians* by 'a member of the Ohio bar,' published in 1854.

Strabo (c. 64 BC - after 21 AD) was a Greek geographer and historian. His major work is *Geographica* (Geography), a 17-volume encyclopedia of geographical knowledge. It is the only surviving work from antiquity detailing the peoples and countries known to Greeks and Romans in the reign of Augustus (27 BC - 14 BC).

Swedenborg, Emanuel (29 January 1688 - 29 March 1772) was a Swedish philosopher, scientist and mystic. His theology reflected a long struggle to understand the world of spirit through investigation of the physical world.

Sydenham, Floyer (1710 - 1 April 1787) was an English scholar of ancient Greek. He produced many translations including *The Works of Plato: His Fifty-five Dialogues and Twelve Epistles* published in 1804.

Synesius (c. 373 - c. 414) was a bishop and philosopher from the ancient city of Cyrene (now Shahhat, Libya). Before he converted to Christianity, he wrote pagan hymns that closely follow the fire theology of the Chaldean Oracles. His later Christian writings reveal great similarities between these belief systems.

T.

Tachenius, Otto real name: Heinz-Herbert Take (1610 - 1680) was a German pharmacist, physician and alchemist. He is thought to have been the son of a miller and to have been apprenticed to an apothecary. He qualified as a doctor at Padua in 1652, settling in Venice where he sold a 'viperine salt' (sal viperinum) as a cure-all. He wrote a commentary on van Helmont's *alkahest* published as *Epistola de Famoso Liquore Alkahest* (Letter on the Famous Alkahest) in 1655.

Tait, Peter Guthrie (28 April 1831 - 4 July 1901) was Scottish

mathematician and physicist. He became professor of natural philosophy at Edinburgh in 1860 and held the chair until shortly before his death. He was co-author of *The Unseen Universe* (1875) with Balfour Stewart. The book proposes the idea that 'the visible universe has been developed out of the invisible.' Blavatsky refers to Tait and Stewart obliquely with the phrase 'the authors of *The Unseen Universe*.'

Tasso, Torquato (11 March 1544 - 25 April 1595) was an Italian poet, regarded as the greatest of the late Renaissance. His most famous work is *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Liberated) published in 1581. This epic poem portrays the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem.

Tatian (c. 120 - c. 180 AD) was a Syrian Christian writer and theologian. He compiled the *Diatessaron* which presented the four Gospels as a single narrative. This text was of central importance to the Syrian church for centuries. In *Oratio ad Graecos* (Address to the Greeks), published c. 177 AD, he argued that 'whatever immortality a man may obtain is thus by participation in the immortality and incorruptibility of God.'

Taylor, Bayard full name: James Bayard Taylor (11 January 1825 - 19 December 1878) was an American travel writer. He wrote accounts of his visits to Europe, India, China, Mexico, Russia, Egypt, Palestine, Iceland, Africa, Scandinavia, and Japan. Blavatsky appears to be paraphrasing his book

Isis Unveiled, published in 1877, was H.P. Blavatsky's original occult masterpiece and covered a wide range of topics from ancient Egyptian Mystery schools to the conflict between science and spiritualism. But Blavatsky's elaborate Victorian prose presents a major stumbling block for the 21st-century reader.

Blavatsky Unveiled addresses these linguistic challenges by rendering the original text into easily accessible modern English with detailed notes and a comprehensive 'Who's Who' section. All references have been meticulously researched and, where possible, verified from their primary source material.

Blavatsky Unveiled Vol. I is a psychedelic rollercoaster ride through a world of Gnostics, Kabbalists, Chaldean Oracles, cataclysms, seances, skeptical scientists, perpetual lamps, phantom dogs and Indian conjurers, to name a few. Along the way the reader encounters such figures as Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Darwin, Schopenhauer, Isaac Newton, Julius Caesar, Plato, Galileo, the spirit entity Katie King, Franz Mesmer, Aristotle, Eliphas Levi and many more.

Seekers of hidden knowledge and those interested in the supernatural will find *Blavatsky Unveiled* an indispensable treasure trove of information and rip-roaring entertainment.



Moon Laramie is an author and theosophist. His books include *Spirit of Garbo* and *Theosophy and the Search for Happiness* (with Annie Besant). *Blavatsky Unveiled Vol. I* is the beginning of an ambitious publishing project to present all of Madame Blavatsky's writing in modern English.



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