

*The Sacredness  
of the Good  
in Civil Society*

Principles on which societies can be organised

A talk at the ULT Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019

# **Society & how it operates**

If we seek to have a just Society, we need to make moral decisions, ones about what constitutes right and wrong, good and bad.

How we do that are questions for Philosophy, Religion and Science.

In this talk we will look at how other societies, civilisations & philosophies approached this.

# *The Early Greeks*

Ancient Greek society and its values

# **The Greek Influence**

## **Plato and Modern Thought**

### **The Good**

Plato writes that the Form (or Idea) of the Good is the ultimate object of knowledge, although is not knowledge itself. The Form of the Good is synonymous with the idea of the One. Plato claims that Good is the highest Form, and that all objects aspire to be good; all things that are just, gain their usefulness and value from it.

Truth can only be perceived through Goodness.

# The Greek Influence

## Justice

In Plato's theory Justice is, individually, a 'human virtue' that makes a person self-consistent and good.

Socially, Justice is a group consciousness that makes a society internally harmonious and good.

Plato described a perfect society as one where everyone lived harmoniously and without the fear of violence or material dispossession.

# The Ideal State

## According to Plato's *Republic*

Plato's analysis searches for wisdom, courage, and temperance in the ideal city state.

He finds **wisdom** among the guardian rulers,  
**courage** among the guardian warriors (or auxiliaries),  
**temperance** among all classes of the city in agreeing about who should rule and who should be ruled.

Thus he defines justice in the state, in which each class performs only its own work, not meddling in the work of the other classes.

# The City-Soul Analogy

The virtues discovered in the city are then sought in the individual soul. Plato creates an analogy between the parts of the city and the soul.

He argues that psychological conflict points to a divided soul, since a completely unified soul could not behave in opposite ways towards the same object at the same time.

Having established the tripartite soul, he defines the virtues of the individual. A person is **wise** if he is ruled by the part of the soul that knows “what is beneficial for each part and for the whole,”

**courageous** if his spirited part “preserves in the midst of pleasures and pains” the decisions reached by the rational part, and

**temperate** if the three parts agree that the rational part lead.

They exhibit **justice** if each part of the soul attends to its function and not the function of another. Thus one cannot be just if one doesn't have the other cardinal virtues.

# Law or Education?

## according to Plato's *Republic*

Socrates says that it is pointless to worry over specific laws, like those pertaining to contracts, since proper education ensures lawful behavior, and poor education causes lawlessness.

This is a key to understanding how we can help improve society: do we need more laws... or well educated and therefore better people?

# *Egyptian Society & the Ancient Wisdom*

Tracing the historical influences that created the great ancient Egyptian society and its values.

# Traces of the Ancient Wisdom

... even in the days of Aristotle few were the true Adepts left in Europe and even in Egypt.

The heirs of those who had been dispersed by the conquering swords of various invaders of old Egypt had been dispersed in their turn.

... 8,000 or 9,000 years earlier the stream of knowledge had been slowly running down from the tablelands of Central Asia into India and towards Europe and Northern Africa.

from *The Mystery "Sun Of Initiation"* (Collected Works of H.P.Blavatsky 14:269)

That which is known of the *Priests of Egypt and of the ancient Brâhmans*, corroborated as it is by all the ancient classics and historical writers, *gives us the right to believe in that which is only traditional* in the opinion of sceptics.

From where else comes the wonderful knowledge of the Egyptian Priests in every department of Science, unless they had it from a still more ancient source?

from *The Origin of the Mysteries* (Collected Works of H.P.Blavatsky 14:253)

# Egyptian Cities:

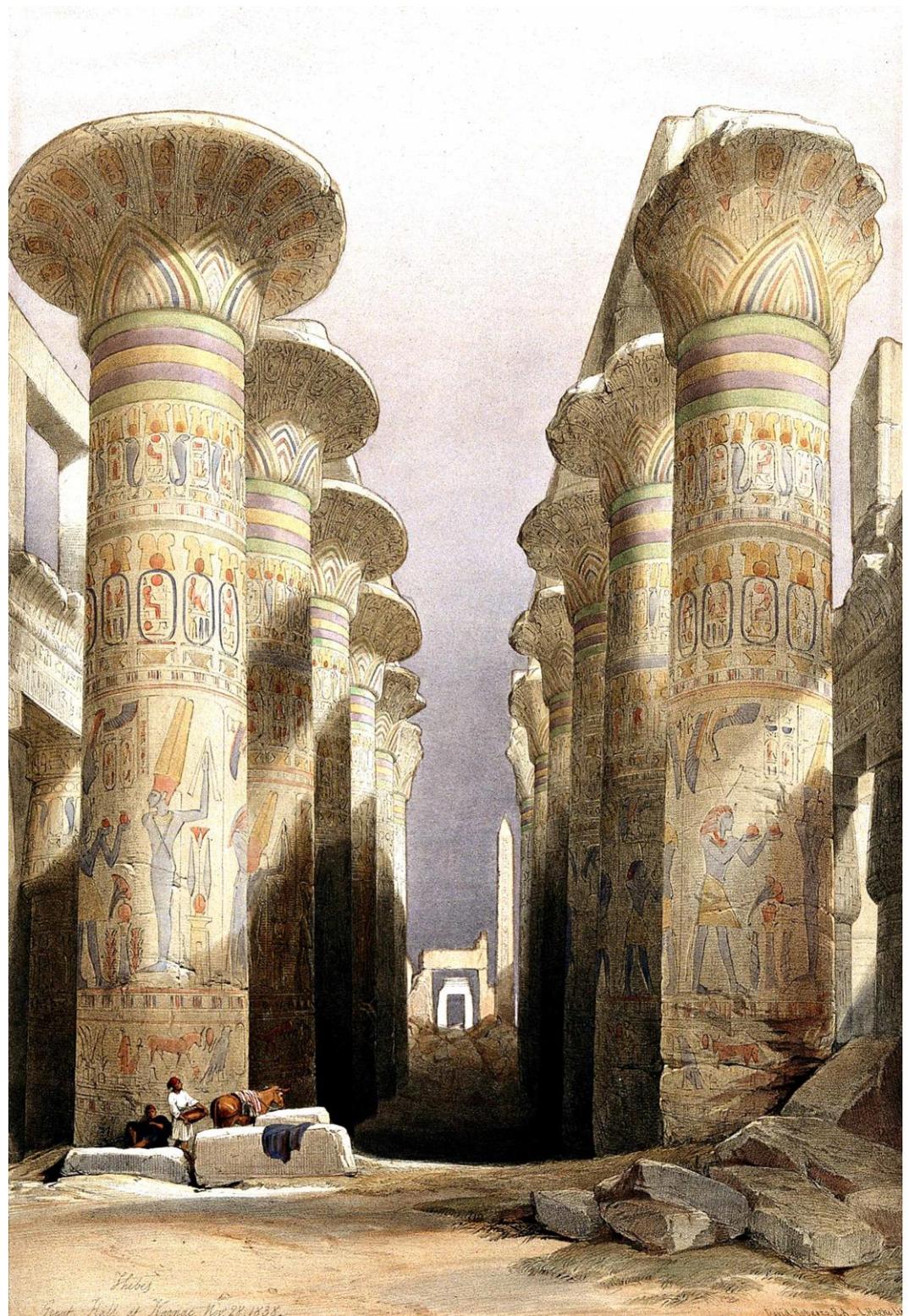
## THEBES (Luxor)

“It was in the great Theban sanctuary that Pythagoras upon his arrival from India studied the *Science of Occult numbers.*”

[ HPB's CW 14:246 ]

Decorated pillars of the temple at Karnac, Thebes

Credit: Wellcome V0049316



# THEBES, the Luxor Temple



credit <http://www.shunya.net/Pictures/Egypt/ThebesLuxor/Thebes.htm>

# India and the Orphic Mysteries

...in Egypt the Mysteries had been known since the days of Menes\* and that the Greeks received them ***only when Orpheus\*\* introduced them from India.*** In an article “Was writing known before Pāṇini?” it is stated that the Pāṇdus had acquired universal dominion and had taught the “sacrificial” Mysteries to other races as far back as 3,300 B.C.

\* accepted as c.3,000 BCE.

\*\* Arjuna and Orpheus are equated; Krishna died 3,102 BCE at the start of the Kali Yuga. His successful disciple ‘Arjuna-Orpheus’ taught Eastern Raja Yoga and founded a long dynasty in new Grecian world.

from *The Mystery “Sun of Initiation”* (Collected Works of H.P.Blavatsky 14:269)

# Egyptian cities SAÏS

“It is to Saïs that all the honor must be given of *the wonderful legislation and the art of ruling people*, imparted by its Priests to Lycurgus and **Solon**, who will both remain objects of admiration for generations to come.” [ HPB’s CW 14:246 ]

The modern view of archeologists recognises that the erstwhile capital “was once comparable, in importance and grandeur, to the famed cities of Memphis or Thebes.”

Credit: <https://www.world-archaeology.com/features/sais/>



## Egyptian cities: **HELIOPOLIS**

“And had Plato...  
never gone to worship  
at the shrine of  
Heliopolis, most  
probably (he) would  
have never astonished  
future generations with  
his *ethics*...”

[ HPB's CW 14:246 ]



Credit: Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund - Brooklyn Museum

# Coming out of two thousand years of Dark Ages

...the knowledge of the existence of great Adepts nearly died out in Europe. Nevertheless, in some secret places the Mysteries were still enacted in all their primitive purity... The true Mysteries were never made public. Eleusinia and Agrae were for the multitudes.

from *The Mystery "Sun Of Initiation"* (Collected Works of H.P.Blavatsky 14:269)

# An Egyptian Exodus

Her “sacred Scribes and Hierophants became wanderers upon the face of the earth.”

Those who had remained in Egypt found themselves obliged for fear of a profanation of the sacred Mysteries to seek refuge in deserts and mountains, to form and establish secret societies and brotherhoods—such as the Essenes;

those who had crossed the oceans to India and even to the New World. (America; c. 200 BCE - 200 CE?)

”The Last of the Mysteries in Europe,” HPB CW 14:294

# The American Indians

Indigenous Native American Elders from the Hopi tribe speak about how their leaders changed their values from those of power (violence) and authority (coercion) to one of responsibility to their fellow citizens and a reverence for nature.

In their tribal history a Messenger they called “The Peacemaker” came over 1,000 years ago to reform their corrupted and violent society.

He gathered the Chiefs together and taught the ‘message of peace’ and gave ‘instructions’ on how to live according to the Great Law, which they call “the Great Peace.” It taught respect for life and thanksgiving to living things, and showed how to live by agriculture; since then the Hopi people have been an agrarian society and they prospered for 1,000 years.

# Principles in Modern Life

## Nolan Report on *Standards in Public Life*

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership