

hieroglyphs little was revealed of the Egyptian famed wisdom so praised by the Greek writers; Western scholars, conditioned by extreme rationalism, or Christianity, were completely unprepared for a totally different vision expressed through symbols which had lost all meaning. Thus to take a very simple example, who could understand such phrases of ch. 42 of the *Book of the Dead* as translated by Wallis Budge in 1899: "I am he who hath no power to walk, the great knot who is within yesterday. The might of my strength is within my hand."

A more modern translation, from the French translation, at least gives a clue: "I am the motionless one, the great knot of destiny which lies in yesterday. In my hand lies the destiny of the present."

The third level of meaning of the hieroglyphs which gave their spiritual significance was completely missed. Fortunately since the second half of the 20th century more "enlightened" Egyptologists, some acquainted with the Upanishads, others with the Rosicrucian tenets, or the Kabbalah, have penetrated somewhat deeper into the labyrinthine sanctuary of the ancient Egyptian mind.

Helena P. BLAVATSKY was in this respect, as in many others, a pioneer. Her remarks and hints on Egyptian religion are scattered through *The Secret Doctrine*, some in *Isis Unveiled* and various journals, and gathered together in the *Collected Writings*.

For clarity sake, we should keep in mind the several main sources of religious documents as they spanned long periods of development of civilization and thereby of religious interpretation, unfoldment and thinking:

1. The Pyramid Texts, the earliest inscriptions superbly engraved on the walls of chambers inside the pyramid-tombs of 5 kings from the 5th to the beginning of the 6th dynasty at Sakkara, which scholars date back to the Old Kingdom (from about 2300 to 2175 BCE); these religious incantatory texts are thought to have been compiled from much older texts long before the unification of Egypt by Menes.

2. The Coffin Texts, or Books of the Justification for the Other World, which cover the sarcophagi of the Middle Kingdom (approx. 2200-2800 BCE), forming the link between the Pyramid Texts and the Book of the Dead, some of which have recently been recognized as initiation texts for the living in