Unwashed Philosophy: A User's Guide For Our Imperfect Union

by

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introduction

A philosopher, generically, is considered "a lover of wisdom. "Wisdom has been defined as “the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. I believe, personally, that a more concise definition would suggest that "Wisdom is Failure's Bastard." Further, I contend that there are actually two types of philosophers; the so-called “high-minded philosopher” who spends a lifetime studying the wisdom of others, and those I like to call the Unwashed “everybody else” philosopher who accumulates their hands-on, real-life experiences and, God willing, lives long enough to share what they think they learned along the way with anyone willing to listen and hopefully learn how to do it better for themselves.

My partner in the creation of this book, and I, consider ourselves to be proud, card-carrying members of the Unwashed "everybody else" Philosophers' Society.

Convinced, as I am, that “there are far more people in the world that consider themselves lovers of wisdom than there are those that actually possess it, I decided that it was time for me to write a book.

This treatise was inspired by the course of human events over the last few decades (1950’s to present), folded in with pieces of written essays that have been published in various forums around the internet by myself and my contributing author, under the sobriquet "Vassar Bushmills," without whom this project would never have been undertaken. Vassar and I share both socio-political opinions as well as deep ancestral ties to Appalachian America. We share a similar upbringing in church-based and God-centric homes; both of us come from Families with a deep appreciation for hard work, kindness and human decency, humility, grace, self-respect, and good manners.

Our respective observations and collective convictions are that America is the greatest nation in the history of humankind. To be sure, she is not without her flaws and imperfections, but no other nation, since the dawn of the human race, has ever been designed precisely because it was believed that the value of the sovereign individual should be considered greater than the value of the collective ruling authority. The ideas of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, freedom, and self-determination are anathema to everything every previous civilized society has ever been designed to represent.

While it is true that dynasties and civilizations have risen and fallen, and kingdoms and empires have come and gone, it also remains true that tyrants and saviors alike have come into power or notoriety only to be subsequently consumed by it and ultimately destroyed because of it. And, forasmuch as Humanity may have biologically evolved over the centuries, we haven’t changed very much, in the Darwinian context, at all.

At our core, the primal expectation of the human race, as it is with all living creatures, is pretty straightforward: we are born, and we die, and along the way, in the name of survival, we labor to hone and refine our skills and abilities, in harmony with our environment and available resources, such that we have adequate shelter, sufficient sustenance, and successful reproduction to continue the species in the name of avoiding our own extinction.

There is no prerequisite here that readers ascribe to, practice, or even disavow any particular faith, religion, or dogma. It is important, however, that you accept as at least possible the notion that the universe, of which we are each little more than a microscopic part, is comprised of far more than what we can see, or even possibly fully comprehend, and that some things can only be taken at face value and in our own personal context and perspective. Such was the case with our founding fathers as well as, and perhaps even more so, the life and times of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the generations hence upon which much of the foundation of the American Nation was built.

This point matters going forward because, after Abraham built up the foundations of a new nation, it was Moses and the Israelites that left Egypt and wandered in the desert a very long time before settling in and re-building the nation Abraham's descendants had squandered and lost generations before. That process included writing laws and organizing social structures in the name of their God and their faith and their hopes for better lives for themselves and the generations that would follow.

In the chapters ahead, we will draw parallels between the rise of the Abrahamic nation and its ultimate collapse under the weight of his descendants' vanities and self-indulgences, and the extent to which the modern-era generations, brushing aside the inconvenient truths of our Judeo-Christian origins with seemingly willful ignorance, stands the whole of the American Nation athwart its very own risk of collapse under the weight of its vanities and self-indulgences.

History may be flush with tales of nations that have risen and fallen in the past, but America doesn't have to suffer the same fate. We have the capacity to weather this storm if enough of us refuse to let it go without a fight.

PART I: THE HUMANITY CONTRACT

"We will now discuss in a little more detail the Struggle for Existence."

― Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species

# CHAPTER 1: IN THE BEGINNING…

It is estimated that the universe is 13.8 billion years old. It is further indicated that the first of our modern species, known as homo sapien or modern human, first appeared in the Universe timelines between 200,000 and 300,000 years ago. In the general scheme of things, it is pretty clear that we humans are little more than microscopic upstarts in a vast, incomprehensible eternity.

Experts suggest that we took upwards of 250,000 years to develop a capacity for language. If these numbers are to be believed, it is clear that our ancient ancestors spent those first 200 to 250 centuries communicating beyond words. We can only imagine what communication might have been like between them. Still, it is fair to assume that some form of whatever communication was taking place served, at least in part, the purposes of trying to prevent our extinction.

Indeed, even if there were no words, there must have been screaming and howling and maybe even jumping up and down to alert the group to incoming predators or hostile fellow humans. More than likely, as well, there were soothing sounds, maybe even cooing and purring of some sort, as our ancestors cuddled up for warmth and hunkered down after the sun fell. Remember, at our Darwinian core, we are just another species of living creatures whose priorities of existence, at least before we decided to "civilize" ourselves, must have necessarily included shelter, sustenance, and successful reproduction at the very top of the list.

To put this into a sobering and proper perspective, consider Carl Sagan’s development of the theoretical Cosmic calendar. He demonstrates that we modern humans have only been around in the universe for barely a few seconds compared to how long the universe, itself, has been in existence. And, for all that took place so very long ago, before we modern humans arrived, on the universal scene, our species is little more than a grain of sand in a vast desert.

It is a credible leap, we think, to suggest that the successful pursuit of our three primal elements of survival would have required not only the basic instinct inherent in our species but a dogged determination and forceful exercise of humankind’s free will. It can be further argued that, despite shrill protestations to the contrary from the self-proclaimed enlightened ranks among we modern humans, and in deference to the Darwinian maxims Vis a vie natural selection, our species is doomed to perpetually out-think itself until the last of the genuine thinkers have stepped off this mortal coil.

It is free will, after all, that is simultaneously both a feature and a bug within our species and is at the root of every victory and defeat we have confronted since the dawn of our existence.

Historians and archaeologists place our earliest ancestors in Africa, from which we started moving approximately 70 to 100,000 years ago. This allows us to assume there must have been some form of social coordination and structured communications involved. It seems unlikely otherwise that any sizable migration could have successfully occurred without such an ability, even if only on the most basic and primitive scales.

Although the scientific communities continue to debate the minutiae, it is believed that we began migrating in different directions as we left Africa, starting somewhere around 70,000 years ago. It is further suggested that climate fluctuations, population growth, and competition for resources were likely to have been the primary reasons we decided to spread out.

Some of us headed to Europe while others branched off and headed toward Asia. Meanwhile, those of us who would become the Aboriginal peoples headed south towards Australia, by canoe, some 35,000 to 65,000 years ago.

Unsurprisingly, the debate continues as to which of these branches of our ancestral family tree began to organize themselves into structured societies first, but it is fairly widely accepted that Mesopotamia, or modern-day Iraq, made the most significant advances toward civilizing itself into functioning social order more rapidly. These debates will surely outlive us, personally, but we will focus on our ancestors that landed in Mesopotamia. After all, Mesopotamia is where the young roots of monotheism were planted upon which, ultimately, the Great American Experiment would be conceived.

Historians and Archaeologists tell us that Mesopotamia first started to be established somewhere around 6,500 BCE. As with everything else, there is an ongoing debate about the accuracy of this number and the sorts of things taking place as it began to grow and evolve. However, what has widely been agreed is that Mesopotamians initially focused on agriculture, animal husbandry, and establishing sedentary communities. This ultimately gave rise to the Sumerian dynasties, credited with having built the first urban civilization globally and are accepted as the first to develop trade and establish industries such as weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery.

Over the two and a half millennia that followed, developing early elements of its civilized society, we must wrap some context around Mesopotamia and its significance in the genealogical record of human civilization. To accomplish this, we will need to juxtapose the biblical record with the archaeological and historical record. This is because history and archaeology tell us there was, in fact, a great flood somewhere in the middle of the Sumerian rise and fall. Still, it is the biblical record that suggests this was the flood associated with the story of Noah and the Ark and that Abraham was born many generations afterward.

Abraham is universally accepted as the "first patriarch" of monotheism. Acknowledging his presence at this juncture in the historical and archaeological narrative is significant for our purposes here because of the role he would ultimately play in setting the first cornerstone into the foundation of what would become The American Nation. The path he would follow that led him to God's "promised land," considered objectively, has many parallels to the path of America's founding fathers, 4 Millennia later, when they chose to follow Abraham's example and "assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God" entitle them.

Though somewhat difficult to pin down precisely, it is more than likely that Abraham was born, according to one source, in approximately 1996 BCE in Mesopotamia, in a region then called Ur. In those days, the pervasive social and cultural Dogma held to a polytheistic understanding of the world. This makes sense, on a fundamental level, because so much of early civilized life would have been spent confronting many problems, both inter-personally and collectively, as they contended with the effects of nature on their efforts to survive. Asking for help from the Sun or the Moon or a star, or even the soil or the clouds, or making sacrifices of whatever type, hoping that their situations might improve in exchange, is a logical leap to make when all other efforts have failed to make a difference. These sorts of polytheistic Faith systems continue around the world to this very day.

In ancient times, polytheism was a widely held dogma. It became the most powerful tool used by Kings to manipulate our fears, superstitions, and obeisance to them since the notion of ransoming our free will to Kings first took hold in the earliest days of humanity.

We can't help but point out, before we move on, that very little has changed concerning this aspect of the human race. It seems fairly obvious, to even the most casual of observers that, even after 5 millennia, more or less, we modern humans still seem to prefer having someone else think and act on our behalf, in the name of keeping us safe and secure and prosperous, rather than live the self-directed lives built-in to the free will inherent in our Primal nature.

For all the progress we have made, we haven't made very much progress at all. We contend that much of the reason for this can be blamed on those among us who always seem to choose the path of least resistance and refuse to do the hard work necessary to be free and independent. And the numbers of those among us that fit this description have grown exponentially since the days of Abraham. There will be more on this human conundrum as these pages unfold.

While historical records of his early life are scarce, we know that the social order into which Abraham was born was not unlike most of the other regions in Mesopotamia. His father, himself a polytheist, was a Craftsman who made idol statues and figurines. There are many stories, albeit sometimes conflicting, that can be found in religious texts, including the Talmud, the Tora, the Christian Bible, and the Quran, that support this. Piecing these together, it is believed that Abraham rejected the idea of multiple gods, and the practice of idolatry, at a very young age.

Some accounts, although historically unverifiable, suggest that the king at the time of his birth was told a child had been born that would someday take over his kingdom. The king called for this child to be brought to him to kill him with his own hands, thus guaranteeing he would reign forever. This narrative goes on to suggest that Abraham's mother, fearing for her son's life, took him from their home and went into hiding with him in a cave until he was 10 or 12 years old. A Koran narrative suggests this was the stage at which Abraham began destroying idols and statues in rejection of the practice of idolatry.

[Note: Abraham's life being in jeopardy at his birth is not unlike, in many ways, the Moses and Jesus narratives that come many generations after Abraham. As separate events by historians, the story of Abraham and the subsequent stories of Moses and Jesus are, we believe intentionally, never pieced together as a consistent and recurring theme in any serious analysis of the evolution of monotheistic Faith systems.

While it is acknowledged that the professional Sciences prefer to stay above the religious fray, their collective assertions of neutrality ring shallow and inauthentic; half of the population on planet Earth is rooted in monotheistic principles, and they are done a great disservice by not being exposed to at least some connection between fable and fact in light of the effect these three men have had on the entirety of the human race.

Millions upon millions of people over five millennia have died because of, or in the name of, these historical figures. Any lack of incontrovertible evidence, or accurately carbon-dated fossil, does not leave unproven the fact that so many generations have believed in these men or at least accepted their stories and their existence. Thank God for the Torah, the Talmud, the Christian Bible, and the Quran. ~ Authors]

Details of the middle years of Abraham's life are even more scarce and difficult to summarize. Combining many opposing views from the various religious texts, it is well documented that his wife was named Sarah. They did not have children of their own but lived together, and worked with, Abraham's nephew Lot.

The biblical narrative suggests that at the age of 75, just after his father had died, God spoke to Abraham for the first time. God told him to take his family and his possessions and leave Ur, promising to make a covenant with him that "his “seed” will inherit the land and become a numerous nation." Old and without a child, this seemed impossible to him, but Abraham did as God told him without question. While he couldn't possibly have known at the time, this story of Abraham being confronted by God with an offer to enter into an Eternal Covenant would forever transform the trajectory of both Abraham's life and the future of the entire human race.

The significance of this cannot be overstated. Thousands of years after Abraham, the endless war between Arabs, Muslims, and Hebrews continues unabated in our modern world. Not only does the killing continue over the lands of Abraham, but lives and livelihoods also continue to be lost, and economies are heavily damaged by other actors that have been made to take sides. And the case can be made that, even though there are billions of non-monotheistic believers and countless belief systems worldwide, our lives and our histories are interconnected, even if they are not shared, regardless of faith or a lack thereof. The presence of Abraham in human history and the legacy he would leave behind has touched, in some way, everyone in the world that has come after him.

The biblical narrative continues, telling us that Abraham left Ur and headed south. He settled, temporarily, first in Shechem and then Beth-el. It is widely held, from the multiple biblical and scholarly texts, that this is where God spoke again to Abraham, spelling out the details of His plans for Abraham and the Covenant they would enter into:

"God promised to make Abraham the father of a great people and said that Abraham and his descendants must obey God.

In return, God would guide them and protect them and give them the land of Israel.

But it wasn’t simply a matter of obeying rules - God didn't just want the Hebrews to follow a particular set of laws, but to live their lives in such a way as to show the world that God actually was the one and only all-powerful God, whom people should follow and worship."

The land of which God spoke, the Promised Land, was known in those days as Canaan (modern-day Israel) and is said to have been populated by warrior tribes. Before Abraham would continue to Canaan, he would first enter Egypt. The reasons for this are unclear; various religious texts conflict with each other, and official ancient Egyptian records make no mention of Abraham's time there. It is nonetheless significant, in the genealogical timeline, because multiple biblical narratives suggest that, when Abraham and Sarah left Egypt, they took with them a handmaiden, given to Sarah, whose name was Hagar.

Hagar is a prominent figure across the spectrum of religious texts. As written, not too long after Abraham's people arrived in Canaan, Hagar would give birth to Abraham's first son, Ishmael. Known as the forefather of Islam, Ishmael would go on to father 12 sons who would become the ancestors of Muhammad and the forefathers of the Muslim faith.

Thirteen years later, long after Abraham and Sarah had given up all hope, Sarah gave birth to Abraham's second son, who would be named Isaac. Known as the second patriarch of the Jewish people, after Abraham, Isaac would go on to father 2 sons - twins - and the youngest of the two, Jacob, would father 12 sons who would ultimately be the ancestors of both Moses and Jesus and the forefathers of both Judaism and Christianity.

These men, their progeny, and their collective legacies represent the full-throated embodiment of the Covenant between God and Abraham. Of far greater importance to us, in this treatise, than how much of the Abrahamic narrative might be fact and how much might be fable in the hearts and minds of both believers and non-believers alike is the effect their presence has had on the Homo Sapien genealogical timeline. This cannot be ignored, in any reasonably-minded context, notwithstanding faith and religion.

God's covenant with Abraham consisted of three elements. In the first of these, God gave Abraham all of the Promised Land, of which he was a faithful and loyal steward to the end of his days.

God’s second promise was that Abraham’s descendants would “inherit the land" and become a numerous nation.” Intentionally deferring the first half of this promise to the next chapter, let’s take a closer look at just how many descendants of Abraham there currently are in the world.

In the name of fairness, presenting a total number of Abrahamic descendants comes with 2 qualifying caveats. First, some of this is derived from a combination of Wikipedia and Google searches which are no longer reliable or reputable resources, most especially in matters of religious faith, given their very public and quite well-known disdain for the very existence of such things in the modern world. Second, it requires some level of extrapolation and assumption about the numbers and genetic origins of the monotheistic world population.

There are well over 4 billion followers of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. While it is true that not all of these people are directly descended from Abraham and his progeny, there are nearly 500 million people of Arab and Semitic descent and may well be directly, or nearly directly, descended from Abraham and his children. Whatever the precise numbers might be, it is quite clear that God very generously kept to this promise.

The final element of God's covenant with Abraham was God's promise of blessings, protection, and favor for Abraham's Nation, along with forgiveness and redemption for sin.

The human race, as is true with every other living species, is inherently imperfect. Fundamentally, the demands of nature require that all living things be in a constant state of adaptation and change. Thus is human frailty and sin an inevitability. This truth, as Darwin warned us, comes easier to some than to others, and, along the way, there will be some that embrace change and excel, and others that will wither and die in the face of it.

Regardless of whether readers, personally, believe that a "God" understood this and communicated it to Abraham, or believe Abraham was smart enough to figure this all out on his own, 5000 years in advance, the legacy we inherited from these early days of our civilization, and every effort that has been made to bypass, circumvents, undermine, or reinvent them, in the five Millenia hence, says everything about who we have collectively become in the modern era.

In the pages ahead, we will travel back and forth through history and look closely at some so-called "telling" moments in our past, leading up to the creation of The American Nation, and consider at some length the effects these events ultimately had on the choices our Founding Fathers made leading up to the Declaration of Independence. The authors understand, especially in light of the incredibly misleading half-truths and outright lies being so casually thrown around in today's National conversation, how difficult it has become to get a knowledgeable and educated word in edgewise or be able to speak over the volume of the screaming and yelling ignorant all around us. As it is with almost everyone we know, and probably each of the readers, the volume and ferocity of the attacks against the country and the people of which she is comprised feel a lot like trying to take a drink from a fire hose.

Trust us; we feel your pain. Consider our work here throughout the next 12 chapters your opportunity for some time to enjoy a little coffee and quiet contemplation.