

SELECTIONS FROM

THE HUSIA

ALSO BY MAULANA KARENGA

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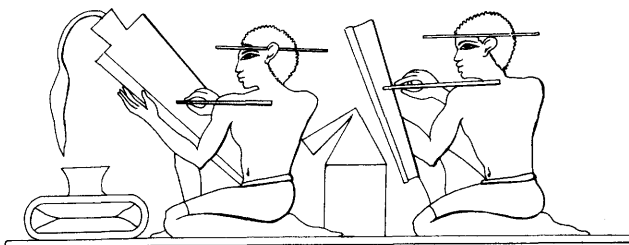
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SELECTIONS FROM

THE HUSIA



SACRED WISDOM OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Selected and Retranslated by

MAULANA KARENGA

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SELECTIONS FROM THE HUSIA: SACRED WISDOM OF ANCIENT EGYPT.
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To Cheikh Anta Diop who posed the project of rescuing and reconstructing the legacy of ancient Egypt and using it to revivify African culture and to produce a truly African paradigm of what humans ought to be and become.

And to African people here in the U.S. and everywhere whose rich and ancient moral and spiritual heritage represents a fundamental legacy not only for themselves but for all humanity.

CONTENTS

Foreword	ix
Introduction	xiii
The Book of Knowing the Creations	1
The Book of Knowing the Creations	5
The Book of Prayers and Sacred Praises	11
The Book of Prayers and Sacred Praises	15
The Book of the Moral Narrative	27
The Book of Khun-Anup	31
The Books of Wise Instruction	37
The Book of Ptah-Hotep	41
The Book of Kagemni	49
The Book of Kheti	50
The Book of Ani	53
The Book of Amenomope	58
The Book of Ankhsheshonqi	64
The Book of Phebhor	67
The Books of Contemplation	73
The Book of Khakheper-Ra-Soneb	77
The Book of Ipuwer	78
The Book of Dialog with the Soul	80
The Book of Songs	82
The Book of Neferti	85
The Book of Declarations of Virtues	89
The Book of Declarations of Virtues	93
The Books of Rising Like Ra	99
The Book of Coming Forth By Day	105
The Book of Vindication	112
The Book of Rising and Transformation	118

FOREWORD

For at least two centuries conscious and committed Black thinkers have taught Black people about our ancient Ethiopian and Egyptian heritage. Interestingly, consciousness about this cultural heritage during that period seems to have originated among Blacks in the Diaspora and returned from the Western Hemisphere to the African continent. Certainly, such consciousness has been an integral force in the Black nationalist movements in the Western Hemisphere, as well as Africa for well over a hundred years. Throughout the period there has been a strong appreciation for the highly developed spirituality of the Black people of the Nile Valley whom we call the ancient Egyptians. So dominant was this aspect of the greatest civilization of antiquity that Martin Delaney, writing in the nineteenth century, proclaimed that the governmental system of ancient Egypt was a "religious polity".

Dr. Maulana Karenga following the teachings of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, George G.M. James and Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop, has made a distinct contribution to an honorable tradition. The *Husia* is an outstanding compilation and rendition of selections from the most important sacred literature of all time. The need for such works is long past due, and Dr. Karenga should be commended for his pioneering effort in this direction.

The quest for spiritual enrichment among Black people in the physical and cultural Diaspora has led to the adoption of the Holy Books of other peoples; the Torah, the Bible and the Quran. Ironically, the sacred literature of ancient Egypt which predates those texts by thousands of years is the source of much of the wisdom in those Holy Books, as Dr. Karenga points out. The fact that Black people could find spiritual comfort in those alien scriptures speaks both to the African contributions to those religions and the intensity of the African spiritual quest. With all due regard

to the Black tradition within the so-called great religions, it is now time to "return to the source".

The Husia is thus a vital step toward the re-creation and restoration of our spiritual foundation. The texts selected by Dr. Karenga are from the truly great books of ancient Egypt. These selections as well as the creative arrangement into seven sections provide a suggested framework for the development of a larger and more definitive Holy Book for African people.

The retranslations done by Dr. Karenga are greatly enhanced by his wide familiarity with many languages, especially the African languages, as well as his talent as a poet. He has not only rescued the texts from the "literal" and stilted translations of the egyptologists, but in my opinion, he has also rendered them in spirit much more akin to the true meaning of the ancient scribes. In a typically Egyptian sense, he has breathed life into them. The result is a thoroughly readable, enjoyable and inspiring volume of spiritual literature.

The commentaries at the beginning of each of the seven sections are very insightful in helping the reader put the text in the proper context. Dr. Karenga demonstrates a profound grasp of the inner meaning of the various concepts as well as the overall ontology. His modest and subtle critique of the arrogance of the egyptologists in these commentaries as well as in his introduction is a good argument for the task he has undertaken.

The artwork done by Kweli is superb. The illustrations are clear and authentic and very appropriately selected in accordance with the theme of the work.

Thus, all of these elements: the appropriate selections; the creative arrangement; the poetic and contextual retranslations; the insightful commentaries; and the superb artwork result in a book that will be immensely useful to millions of Black people seeking

spiritual enrichment and cultural renewal. The is especially true of those who have recently founded temples based upon ancient Egyptian spirituality. The work will also be useful to Black scholars in their efforts to chart new directions in our intellectual development.

To the ancient Black people of the Nile Valley, Maat was the highest ethical commitment. The social formula for Maat is reciprocity: the creator "Di.fAnkh" (He gives life). Human beings in turn must give that which sustains life — both mental and physical. In that regard, *The Husia* is an outstanding model of Maat.

Jacob H. Carruthers
The Kemetic Institute, Chicago



INTRODUCTION

For years African scholars on the Continent and in the Diaspora have taught on the rich moral and spiritual legacy of ancient Africa, especially that of Egypt. But no one has written more on or given more substantive proof - textually, logically and historically - of the achievement of Egypt and the debt owed Africa by the world than Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop. He has constantly urged us to study the ancient texts and extract from them their rich and varied cultural legacy and use it as a basis for a renewed and reinvigorated African culture. Moreover, Dr. Jacob Carruthers, Director of the Kemetic Institute in Chicago and his colleagues are doing important work focused on the need to rescue and retranslate the sacred and secular literature of ancient Egypt as a means to grasp more effectively our history and our role in the forward thrust of human history. This volume is a self-conscious contribution to this historical and current project.

A primary aim of this volume is to provide a brief representative selection of ancient Egyptian sacred literature which can serve as a readable and enjoyable reference for those interested specifically in ancient Egyptian and African sacred literature and those who are interested in ancient Egyptian and African literature in general whether sacred or secular. Moreover, as a part of a larger work, it represents a contribution to developing a definitive African sacred text which will serve as a moral and spiritual guide and reinforcement in the same way other sacred texts do for their adherents and believers. The larger volume when it is completed will be published by Third World Press.

I have organized *The Husia* into seven sections

which represents the various kinds of texts I found in my research, i.e., books of creation, prayers and sacred praises, moral narrative, wise instruction, contemplation, declarations of virtues and "rising like Ra". As there is no single ancient Egyptian sacred text, it was necessary not only to collect writings from various sources and attempt to impose some order on them, but to give the writings a name also.

The title of this text, *The Husia*, is taken from two ancient Egyptian words which signify the two divine powers by which Ra (Ptah) created the world, i.e., *Hu*, authoritative utterance and *Sia*, exceptional insight. Thus, I have put the two together to express the concept "authoritative utterance of exceptional insight". Given the importance of *authoritative utterance* and *exceptional insight* to the moral and spiritual realm and their divine character in ancient Egyptian theology, *Husia* appears as both compelling and proper as a title for a text of ancient Egyptian sacred writings.

In preparing this volume, I have made necessary use of the existing translations and studies in English and French and am thus indebted to them. However, I often disagreed with their conceptual conclusions on many passages and the words they used to express them. It was and is my conclusion that they have provided essentially dull and reductive translations of a very beautiful and moving literature. In their epigraphic fascination for literal translations, the epigraphers and traditional egyptologists have given us translations of literature not only devoid of much of its original beauty but much of its meaning also. One can appreciate the need for exact translations but literal translations are not always exact or correct. For example, one can translate the Swahili sentence "Wanasema Kizulu kama maji" literally and get "They speak Zulu like water". But it figuratively and correctly means "They speak Zulu fluently." Thus, I have taken the liberty of being figurative where a literal translation would deprive the

passage of either beauty or meaning or both. And where there are questions of correctness in translation or where I have added a word or phrase for clarity, I have used italics. Also, for the most part, I have used modern English rather than the stilted Elizabethan, biblical language so often used by translators. However, when archaic words like "behold" seemed more poetic and appropriate, I took poetic license and used them. And with the same license, I attempted to reduce and remove the male and class bias of the writings.

Moreover, I have used one name for God, Ra, except in the Men-noferte (Memphite) description of creation. Even then, I used Ra after the name Ptah. In other cases, I simply translated the word as an attribute or praise name of Ra, i.e., Atum, the Complete or Perfecter; Kheper, the Bringer-into-Being, etc. I also translated the names of "gods" and "goddesses" by their attributes and translated the words "god" and "goddess" as powers of heaven, divine powers or exalted ones. This was done for simplification as well as the fact that there is support for the argument that all of these are simply attributes and manifestations of Ra. Also, "netcher" or "neter" is not only the word for god or goddess as in English, but perhaps is best translated as power or principle.

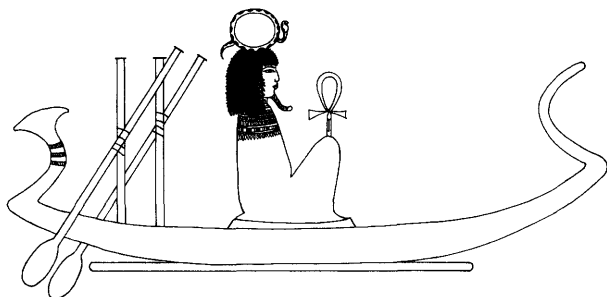
Finally, it is important to state here that this retranslation, as I have termed it, is neither set in cement nor resistant to revision. It is, in truth, a working version only, a tentative presentation, inviting response, correction and assistance. It is for this reason that I have prepared this volume to be released during the First Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference, which is to be held 24-26 February 1984 in Los Angeles and which is sponsored by the Institute of Pan-African Studies and co-chaired by Dr. Jacob Carruthers and me.

It is at this point I acknowledge most gratefully the fraternal and important collaboration and help I have had from Dr. Carruthers in preparing this volume. His translations, advice and encouragement are important material out of which this volume is made. Also, I give thanks to my friend and wife, Tiamoyo, who prepared the manuscript for the publisher, and to the Institute of Pan-African Studies and the advocates of Us for support, suggestions and inspiration. As always, I am grateful to my people whose struggle and aspirations for liberation and a higher level of human life encourages me constantly to seek effective models and means for both.

Maulana Karenga

Institute of Pan-African Studies
Los Angeles, California
January, 1984

**The
Book of Knowing the Creations**



THE BOOK OF KNOWING THE CREATIONS. This book takes its title from "The Book of Knowing the Creations of Ra and of Striking Down Apophis" (the serpent of evil and chaos), but it contains writings from other sources as well. Since there is no single text which presents a composite of the ancient Egyptian concept of creation, an effective grasp of it is possible only through gathering and synthesizing passages from several sources.

As the title suggests, the ancient Egyptians viewed creation as a continuous process. Thus, we have "The Creations" rather than "The Creation". The first creation was the first event at the first time. But creation is repeated each day in nature and in human history. In nature, sunrise and the new beginning it brings each day is a reflection of this. In human history, it is reflected in humanity's constant establishment and reestablishment of order and righteousness in the midst of chaos and evil in a role similar to Ra.

In just these few passages we read the earliest written record of the dawning of humanity's structured consciousness concerning ontology and ethics. These sacred writings predate Hebrew, Christian and Muslim ontologies and ethics by thousands of years and apparently contributed to them. Thus, we find for the first time in human history the concept of Logos, i.e., creation through conceptual thought and authoritative utterance; the concept of free will and human equality in Ra's statement on His Four Good Deeds; and a reflective morality which indicates definite social judgments on that which is loved and that which is hated, and the

belief that God would grant life for the righteous and punishment and death for the wicked.

It is interesting and important to note that Ra creates the universe through *maat*, a term with multiple meanings, i.e., righteousness, truth, justice, order, harmony, rightness, evenness, levelness, etc. Its importance lies in the fact that it is a divine concept, power and practice which not only informed and aided Ra's action, but was established as the fundamental concept, power and practice for the organization, maintenance and development of human society also. Thus, in each book *maat* is a central concern and focus, whether as truth, justice, righteousness, order or harmony.

The Book of Knowing the Creations

I. RA'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS CREATION

Thus said Ra, the Lord of All, Lord of the Utmost Limits, after He had come into being: I am the one who came into being as Kheper, *He who comes into being and brings into being*. When I came into being, being itself came into being. All beings came into being after I came into being. Many were the beings that came forth from *the commands* of my mouth. Heaven had not yet come into being. Nor had earth come into being. Nor had the ground been created or the things which creep and crawl upon it. I raised up beings in the primordial waters as inert things. I found no place on which to stand. I formed it from the desire in my heart; I laid the foundation through Maat. I created forms of every kind. Many were the forms which issued forth from the commands of my mouth. Not yet had I established Shu, the *power and principle of light and air*. Nor sent forth Tefnut, the *power and principle of moisture*. There existed no one who acted together with me. I conceived it in my own heart. And there came into being a vast number of forms of divine beings as forms of offspring and forms of their offspring *from them* . . .

I came forth from among the plants *which I created* and I created all things which creep and crawl and all that exists among them. Then by the power and principles of light and air and the power and principle of moisture, heaven and earth were brought into being, and by earth and heaven Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis and Nephthys were brought into being from the womb, one after another, and they gave birth to the multitudes in this land.

II. THE CREATION OF RA AS PTAH

It is Ptah (*a form of Ra*), the Most Great, who has given existence to all the divine powers and to their essences through his heart, mind and tongue. Thus it came to pass that the heart, mind and tongue ruled all the other members through teaching that Ptah (*Ra*) is within every body, *as heart and mind*, and within every mouth, *as tongue*, of all the divine powers, of all humankind, of cattle, of all creeping things and of all living things. And He thinks *as heart and mind* and commands *as tongue* whatever He wishes.

Ptah's (*Ra's*) company of divine powers are before Him as teeth and lips . . . and . . . are the teeth and lips which established the names of all things and from which came forth Shu, the powers of light and air and Tefnut, the power of moisture and brought into being the company of divine powers *themselves*.

The seeing of the eyes, the hearing of the ears and the breathing of the nose are communicated to the heart and mind, and the heart and mind cause all perceptions to come forth. And what the heart and mind think *and wish* is declared by the tongue. So were all divine powers created and the company of divine powers completed.

Indeed every word of God came into being through that which the heart and mind thought and the tongue commanded.

Thus, by means of the Word, all faculties and qualities were fashioned and created which furnish all food and yield all nourishment.

And thus, Justice is given to one who does what is loved and punishment is given to one who does what is hated.

Thus, also, is life given to the peaceful and death given to one who violates the Law.

And thus were made every work and all crafts, the action of the arms and hands, the motion of the legs, the movement of every member of the body, according to the command which is conceived by the heart and mind and brought forth by the tongue, and which creates the usefulness and action of everything.

It is said of Ptah (Ra) then, He is He who made all and created the divine powers. He is Ta-tenen (the Risen Land) who produced the divine powers and from whom everything came forth — food and provisions, divine offerings and every good thing.

Thus, it was recognized and understood that He is the mightiest of all divine powers. And after He had created all things and all the divine utterances, Ptah (Ra) was pleased and rested.

III. THE FOUR GOOD DEEDS OF THE CREATOR

These are words spoken by Him-Whose-Names-Are-Hidden, the Lord of All, as He speaks before those who silence the storm during the sailing of the company of Ra: Hail and Peace! I repeat to you the Four Good Deeds which my own heart and mind did for me in the midst of the serpent coil *of evil*, in order to silence the turmoil. I did Four Good Deeds on the threshold of the horizon.

I created the four winds so that every person might breathe in his or her time and place. This is one of the deeds.

I created the great flood for irrigation so that the humble might benefit from it like the great. This too, is one of the deeds.

I made every person like his and her fellow; and I did not command them to do evil. It was in their own

hearts and minds which caused them to disobey that which I commanded. This too is one of the deeds.

I made the hearts of men and women so that they would not forget the day of death, so that sacred offerings might be made to the divine powers of the districts. And this too is one of the deeds.

Thus, I have created the divine powers from my sweat and humankind from the tears of my eye.

IV. SELF DEFINITION BY RA

And His Majesty Ra, Lord of All, spoke to Isis the Great, saying:

I am He who made heaven and earth and knitted together the mountains and created all that exist upon them.

I am He who made the primeval water and caused heaven to come into being.

I am He who made the male and the female so that the joys of love might come into the world.

I am He who made the heavens and the hidden places of the two horizons so that the souls may dwell in them.

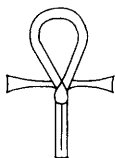
I am He who when He opens His eyes, it becomes light and when He closes His eyes, it becomes dark; He at whose command the waters of the Nile rise and whose name the Exalted Ones do not know.

I am He who creates the hours so that the days come into being.

I am He who initiates the new year festivals and creates the flood waters.

I am He who made living fire so that the works of the houses might be performed.

I am *Kheper, the Bringer into Being*, in the morning, *Ra, the Most High and Glorious* at noon and *Atum, the Complete One* in the evening.



**The
Book of Prayers and Sacred
Praises**



BOOK OF PRAYERS AND SACRED PRAISES. Praise poetry is a mode of verbal celebration of both the secular and sacred which is a distinct and undeniable African institution and achievement. Although other peoples in other times engaged in poetic praising, it was and is not as pervasive or vital to the secular and sacred as in Africa. And the fact that praise poetry of both kinds — or "songs of praising and glorifying" as they are called in the Book of Coming Forth by Day — was so pervasive and vital to ancient Egypt reinforces the truth of its African rootedness. The praise poem is both aesthetic and spiritual. In fact, its beauty is a part of its spirituality, for it enhances the sense of wonder, grandeur and oneness with the God or person praised.

The effective word in Africa is divine and creative. It calls to mind Ra, at the first event, who conceived and commanded and the universe and all in it came into being. It not only announces, it evokes attitude and behavior and reinforces both. Moreover, the praise poem is an act of participation and sharing in the qualities and action of the praised. Thus, the praise poems to Ra are not only acts of worship and offering, but a sharing in His strength and glory, His beneficence and beauty and in His creation and active care of it.

I had originally intended to call this book the Book of Psalms, for psalms are sacred songs or hymns. However, I changed for two basic reasons. First, I did not want to give

the impression I or ancient Egypt was borrowing from the Bible. For in truth it was the other way around as both chronological and textual evidence prove. And secondly, the term psalms is not as aesthetic or definitive of the contents of the book as the chosen title, "Prayers and Sacred Praises."

In this book we find descriptions and praises of God that would later appear in Hebrew, Christian and Muslim sacred texts. Ra is the Good Shepard fond of His flock which is in His own image. He rescues the humble and needy, hears and answers the prayers of the prisoner and the oppressed. He is "the helmsman that knows the water well" and the rescuer and "prime minister of the poor". He is the physician who cures without medicine and the judge that takes no bribes. It is this imagery of God and humankind's relationship and the use of human society and nature as realms of revealing the Creator's benevolence that served as a source of not only the Hebrew Psalms but, as we shall see of their theology in general also.

The Book of Prayers and Sacred Praises

I.

And Amenomope and his wife Hathor said:

Blessed is one who sits in the hands of Amen Ra, for it is He who directs the timid, who rescues the humble and the needy, who gives the breath of life to the one whom He loves and grants him or her a long life in the West of Thebes.

Oh my God, Lord of Lords, Amen Ra, Lord of Karnak. Give me your hand and save me. Shine upon me and sustain me. You are the only God and there is none like you. You are Ra who rises in the heavens, the God who created men and women.

It is you who hears the prayers of one who calls on Him, who saves a man and woman from the hands of the violent and who makes the Nile rise and flow for those who are in Him. Ra is the perfect guide for everyone.

When He rises men and women live and their hearts are lifted up when they see the one who gives the breath of life to those who are in the egg, who make people and birds to live, who supplies even food for mice in their holes as well as for worms and fleas. May He grant us an honorable burial after an old age, so that we may be safe in His hands.

II.

Neb-Ra gives praise to Amen Ra saying:

Amen, Ra, Lord of Karnak, the great God, who pre-

sides over Thebes, the Holy God who hears prayers, who comes at the call of the humble and needy and to those in distress, who gives strength to the one who is weak.

I give praise to Amen Ra, Lord of the Thrones of Egypt who presides over Thebes. I kiss the ground before Amen Ra of Thebes, the great God, the Lord of the sanctuary, great and beautiful, that He may let my eyes see His beauty.

Praise be to Amen Ra. I make hymns in His name, I give Him praise to the heights of heaven and to the ends of the earth. I tell of His majesty and might to those who sail downstream and those who sail upstream.

Stand in awe of Him. Declare Him to your son and daughter, to the great and the small. Declare Him to generation after generation who are not yet born. Declare Him to the fish in the deep and to the birds in the sky. Declare Him to the ignorant and to the wise. Stand in awe of Him.

You, O' Amen Ra, are Lord of those who have no voice. You come at the call of the humble and needy. When I cry out to you in my distress, you come quickly to my rescue, you come to give strength to one who is weak and to save me from my enslavement.

You, Amen Ra, Lord of Thebes, are One who rescues those who are shut in and cut off. For you are He who is merciful. And when people cry out to you, you come from afar.

The painter of Amen Ra in the Place-of-Truth, Neb-Ra, who stands vindicated, son of another painter in the Place-of-Truth, Pai who stands vindicated also, made this stela in the name of His Lord Amen Ra, Lord of Thebes who comes at the call of the humble and needy.

I made for Him praises to His name. For His might and majesty are great. And I prayed to Him before Him and in the presence of the whole land, on behalf of my son, the painter, Nakht-Amen, when he lay sick and near unto death, being in the power of Amen because of his deeds.

I found the Lord of Lords coming as a northwind and that sweet breezes went before Him. And He rescued *my son*, Nakht-Amen, the vindicated, the son of God's painter in the Place-of-Truth, Neb-Ra, and of the lady Peshed, both of whom stand vindicated.

Neb-Ra says:

Though the servant be inclined to make mistakes, the Lord is inclined to be merciful. The Lord of Thebes does not spend a whole day in anger. He is angry for but a moment and none of it remains behind. The wind turns for us in His mercy and Amen Ra comes back upon the breeze. May your spirit be *always* kind, may you *always* forgive. And may what has once been turned away not come back to us.

This stela, then, I will make in your name and I shall record this hymn of praise on it in writing. For you saved for me my son, Nakht-Amen. I spoke to you and you heard me. Now, behold I do what I promised. For you are the Lord to the one who calls on you and He who is satisfied with righteousness.

III.

Amen Ra is the helmsman who knows the water well. He is the rudder for the weak. He gives bread to those who have none, and sustains those who serve Him in His temple.

I take not the powerful as a protector. I depend not on those with wealth. And I place not my life under the strong arm of another. For my wealth and strength are in the house of my Lord. My Lord is my protector; I know His might. Indeed, He is a helper strong of arm and none is truly strong but He.

Amen Ra is He who knows compassion who hearkens to those who call Him. Amen Ra, Lord of Lords. The Bull of great strength who delights in mightiness.

IV.

My heart longs to behold you, O' Lord of the acacia trees. My heart desires to see you O' Amen Ra. You are the protector of the humble and needy, a father and mother to the orphan, a husband to the widow.

Sweet it is to speak your name, it is like the taste of life, yes, like the taste of bread to a child, like the breath of freedom to the captive.

Turn yourself to us, O' Eternal One, who was here before any other existed. Though you make for me darkness, yet cause light to shine on me that I may see you. As your soul endures for eternity and as your beautiful and beloved face lasts forever, may you come from afar and let me see you. To worship you O' Ra, is good. You are, O' Lord, great to seek, for if found you turn away all fear. Place joy, O' Ra, in the hearts of the people. For happy are those who see you, O' Ra, and they rejoice each day.

V.

O' Amen Ra, you shepherd who brings forth the

flock in the morning, leading the hungry to green pastures. As the shepherd leads his flock to green meadows, so do you, O' Ra, lead the needy to food. For Ra is indeed a good shepherd, never idle, attending those who lean on Him.

O' Ra, I love you and I have filled my heart with you. You will rescue me from the mouth of the multitude on the day when they speak lies *against me*. For the Lord of Righteousness lives in righteousness. Thus I will not dwell on the anxiety in my heart, for surely what Ra has said will come to pass.

VI.

And Pharaoh Ramesses II surrounded on the battlefield by enemies and greatly troubled prayed saying:

Now I call on you from the ends of the earth, O' Amen Ra. All that I have done was for love of you. O' Father, Amen Ra, I cry out to you, for I am in the midst of many enemies and the whole of this land is against me. I am alone and my only defense, for my many soldiers have deserted me; my chariots refused to remain with me. Though I called out to them, there was none who responded to my call.

Now, I cry to you O' Ra, and I find that you, Ra, are more helpful to me than millions of soldiers, more than hundreds of thousands of chariots, more than thousands of brothers and sons, all put together. For the effort of many is naught compared to the *majesty and might* of Amen Ra.

Then said Pharaoh Ramesses II: Now, though I prayed in a distant land, my voice resounded in southern On. I found Amen Ra came when I called to Him. He gave me His hand and . . . I found my heart strong and full of

joy. And all I did succeeded.

VII.

Praise to you, Amen Ra, who spoke with His mouth and there came into being men, powers and principles of the universe, cattle great and small, and everything that flies and alights, all of them.

You created even the banks of the Hanebu people who settle in their cities and also the fruitful meadows fertilized by the original waters and giving birth thereafter to good things without number to support all that lives.

You are mighty as a shepherd, tending all people for all eternity. Bodies are filled with your beauty, and eyes see because of you. You inspire awe in everyone and their hearts turn to you. For you are good at all times. And all the world lives from your presence.

Everyone says: "We are yours," the strong and the weak together, the rich and the poor with one mouth and all others likewise. You are lovely in their hearts. And no body lacks some of your beauty.

Do not the widows say: You are our husband, and the small children say you are our father and mother? The rich boast with your beauty and the poor revere your presence. The prisoner turns to you and the sick call out to you.

Your name will be a protection for the body of anyone who is alone. It is salvation and health for those on the water and deliverance from the crocodile. It is good to remember Ra in the time of turmoil, for He is a deliverance from the mouth of the aggressive.

O' Ra, all can turn to you and place their petitions before you. Your ears are open to hear them and you

grant what they desire. You are the Creator who loves those in His image, the shepherd who is fond of His flock.

VIII.

Praise be to you O' Ra, Lord of Truth, whose sanctuary is hidden, Lord of Lords. The Bringer-into-Being in His sacred boat, who commanded and the powers and principles of the universe came into being. The Creator who created humankind and distinguished their characters, who made their life, who made their colors different from each other.

Praise to Ra. He who hears the prisoner's prayer, beneficent of heart when one calls to Him. He who rescues the oppressed from the oppressor, who judges between the weak and the strong, Lord of Perception, in whose mouth is authority.

For love of Him, the Nile comes. The Beneficent One, the greatly beloved, and when He comes the people live

O' Almighty One, Lord of Lords, we revere your might because you created us; we shout joy to you because you molded us; we offer you praise because you wearied yourself with us.

Praise be unto you, who did make all of this; unique and only one with many hands who passes the night awake while men and women sleep, seeking the best for His creatures.

IX.

Pharoah Akhenaten sang praises saying:

You rise in beauty on the horizon of heaven, O' Living Aten, creator of life. When you rise on the eastern horizon, you fill every land with your beauty. You are Ra and you reach the limits *of the lands* and restrain them for your beloved son (*Akhenaten*). You make seed grow in women and create people from sperm. You feed the embryo in the mother's womb, soothing it to still its tears.

How manifold are your works though hidden from sight, O' Sole God besides whom there is none. You created earth according to your desire, you alone. All peoples, cattle and all kinds of animals, all on earth that walk on legs and all on high that fly with wings. You set every person in his (*her*) place and satisfy their needs. All have food and their time of life is determined. Their tongues differ in speech and so do their characters. The colors of their skins are different also. For you distinguished the people. How excellent are your ways O' Lord of eternity.

X.

Every city is under the shadow of Amen Ra, so that His heart can move in that which He has loved. People sing to Ra under every roof, and every foundation stands firm under His love. They celebrate for Him on festival days and pass the night still awake at midnight

Ra is He who frees one from evil and drives away suffering. He is a doctor who heals the eye without medicine, who opens the eye and cures squinting. He saves whomever He will even though they are already in the grave.

He hears the prayers of those who call on Him, and comes in a moment from afar to those who cry out to Him.

He lengthens the span of life and shortens it and gives beyond what is allotted by fate to those whom He cherishes.

Amen Ra is magic, words of power, over water when His name is said above the deep. And the crocodile has no power when a person calls His name.

The winds change and the headwind moves around. It grows calm when one remembers Ra. *His name* is a useful word in the time of trouble, a gentle breeze for one who calls on Him.

It is Ra who saves those who have come to grief, a gentle God with effective counsel. He belongs to those who rest their back on Him when they are in their hour of trouble.

He is more powerful than millions to those who set Him in their heart and one is mightier than the many through the power of His name. He is the compassionate protector, the Beneficent One, one who makes no mistakes, and one whom humans cannot hold off.

XI.

Amen Ra who was the first King, the God of the earliest time and He who *remains* the Prime Minister of the poor. Ra accepts no bribes from the guilty; He takes no testimony from the witness and pays no attention to one who promises. Amen Ra judges the land with a wave of His finger. He speaks to the heart and judges the guilty. And He assigns the guilty to the fire of the East and the righteous to the *peace* of the West.

Amen Ra, lend your ear to those who stand alone in court. They are poor and not rich. And the courts extort from them saying, "silver and gold for the clerks and clothes for the attendants." May you,

Amen, appear as prime minister and let the poor go free. May the poor be vindicated and their just need outweigh wealth."

XII.

Pharoah Piankhi instructed his men before battle praising the power of Amen Ra and saying:

When you arrive at Thebes, before Karnak, you shall enter the water and bathe yourself. You shall dress in fine clothing, unstring your bows and set aside your arrows. Let no overlord or ruler boast of being mighty. For there is no strength for the mighty without Amen Ra. He makes the weak-armed into the strong-armed, so that the multitudes flee from the feeble and one alone takes a thousand captive. Anoint yourselves, then, with the waters of His altars and bow down to the earth before Him and say "Make for us a way that we might fight in the shadow of your sword. For when the young men you have sent forth launch their attack, the multitudes flee from them."

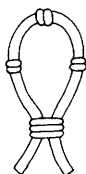
XIII.

Montemhet, the Prophet of Amen Ra, prayed saying:

Homage to you, O' Amen Ra, maker of humankind, God who created all beings. Beneficent King, First One of Egypt, The Two Lands, who conceived in His heart and mind the eternity which He created. One great in power, awesome in His might, whose forms are exalted above all other divine powers. The Most Strong who strikes down the violators of the Law, whose horn attacks the doers of evil. I rely on your name. May it be

my physician. May it eliminate my body's illness and drive away all pain from me.

May Ra put love of me in the hearts of the people so that all may be fond of me. May He grant me a good burial in the cemetery of my city. For the sacred land is in His grasp. May He make my name last like the stars of heaven and my monument last like those of His followers. May my divine essence be remembered in His temple day and night. May I renew my youth like the moon and may my name not be forgotten in the years that come forever after.



**The
Book Of The Moral Narrative**



THE BOOK OF THE MORAL NARRATIVE. Although there are other moral narratives in ancient Egyptian sacred wisdom, none is so clear, beautiful and definitive as the Book of Khun-Anup. This Book is called "The Eloquent Peasant" by traditional egyptologists. However, I have chosen to call it by the name of the man who is its central character and spokesman, a peasant or farmer who is unjustly treated and appeals for relief, justice and righteousness from the High Steward, Rensi, who handled such matters. Rensi is impressed with Khun-Anup's eloquence and reports it to the pharaoh. The pharaoh impressed by the report asks Rensi to delay ruling on the case in order to benefit from Khun-Anup's beautiful speech which in ancient Egypt as in other parts of Africa was/is highly appreciated. Rensi was also ordered to take care of Khun-Anup's family for the days he kept Khun-Anup waiting for a decision and to meticulously copy down all he said.

What follows is a series of nine petitions made by Khun-Anup for justice and righteousness or as the Egyptians called both, *maat*. As stated in the introduction to the Book of Knowing the Creations, *maat* was the foundation of both the natural and social order. Its core concept is rightness in nature and righteousness (which makes an order or system right) in human society. Although traditional egyptologists translate *maat* mostly as justice in this narrative, I translate it mostly as righteousness. For among the three most used meanings — truth, justice and righteousness — righteousness seems to me to be the most comprehensive and inclusive term and suggests and necessitates both truth and justice.

Khun-Anup appeals to Rensi's sense of righteousness, truth and justice, for maat was seen in ancient Egyptian society as the spirit and method of organizing and conducting the relations of human society. The pharaoh and his society were the symbol and embodiment of maat and judges, as the representatives of the pharaoh, wore on their chest an image of the divine power, Maat, (see above) pointing it toward the vindicated in a case. Khun-Anup begins by praising Rensi, pharaoh's representative, as one who destroys falsehood and brings righteousness, and challenges him to win eternal life by his righteousness. He subsequently criticizes him for not acting according to maat. But in the end a judgment is rendered in Khun-Anup's favor.

The language of the narrative is full of nautical and measurement terminology. This is because religion is reflective of a people's social life. Ancient Egyptian life was greatly shaped by activities on and around the Nile and by agricultural activities such as plowing, harvesting and measuring grain. Thus, the pharaoh and his representative are seen as the helmsman of the ship of state and are wished good sailing. Likewise, they are seen as the balance or scales which should not tilt, the plummet which should not stray or the tongue that should not swerve — lest the system itself become unbalanced and the social order be interrupted and upset. The appreciation for the balance or weighing comes also from reference to the Sacred Balance in which the heart of the departed and risen will be weighed on the Day of Judgment. (see below the Books of Rising Like Ra).

The Book of Khun-Anup

Then Khun-Anup said to the High Steward, Rensi:

I.

When you embark on the Lake of Maat (truth, justice and righteousness). May you sail on it with a good wind. May no storm tear away your sail nor your boat lag behind. May no misfortune fall on your mast and may your mainstays not snap. May you not run aground nor the current carry you away. May you not taste the evils of the river nor see a face of fear. And may the fish come quickly to you and plump birds gather around you. For you are the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, the brother of the divorced woman and a protective garment for the motherless.

Let me raise up your name in this land as the embodiment of every good law. *For you are*, a leader without greed, a great man free of baseness, one who destroys falsehood and brings righteousness into being, one who comes at the voice of the caller. When I speak may you hear me. Grant me justice, O' Praise-worthy One to whom those who are praised give praise. Put an end to my oppression, for I am greatly burdened. Count me and you will find me lacking.

II.

A mortal man dies along with his dependents but will you be a man of eternity *by your righteousness*? Is it not wrong when a balance tilts, a plummet strays, and the straight becomes crooked? Lo, justice has fled from you, driven from its place. The judges do wrong and right-speech has become one-sided. The judges take what has been stolen. He who should set mat-

ters right makes things go wrong. He who should give breath chokes one who is on the ground and he who should make breathing easier makes one gasp for air. The mediator is a robber and he who should destroy need, commands its creation. The town is its own floodwater and he who should combat evil, commits crimes himself.

Redress is short but misfortune is long and a good deed returns to those who do it. This is the precept: Do to the doer that he or she may also do. It is thanking one for what one may do, blocking a blow before it strikes and giving an assignment to one who is skillful. Be a shelter and make your shore safe. See how your wharf is covered with crocodiles. Let your tongue speak straight and not go astray.

III.

Punish the robber and save those who suffer. Do not be a flood against the petitioner. Be aware of the approach of eternity. Desire to live long, for as it is said: Doing right is breath for the nose. Punish those who deserve punishment and none will equal your righteousness. Answer not good with evil and put not one thing in the place of another.

The balancing of the land lies in Maat — truth, justice and righteousness. Do not speak falsely for you are great; do not act lightly for you have weight; be not untrue for you are the balance and do not swerve for you are the standard. You are on the level with the balance. If it tilts, then, you will lean too. Do not drift, rather steer. Do not rob, rather act against the robber. For one is not really great, if he is great with greed. If you turn your face from violence, who will punish wrongdoing?

IV.

There is none quick of speech who is free of hasty words and none light of heart and mind whose thoughts have weight. Be patient that you may learn righteousness and restrain your anger for the good of one who enters humbly. No one hasty achieves excellence and one who is impatient is not leaned on. Let your eyes see and your heart take notice. Do not act harshly with your power lest a misfortune fall on you.

Helmsman, do not let your ship go astray. Life-giver, do not let the people die. Provider, do not let the people perish *from need*. Shade, do not let the people become dry *in the sun*. Protector, do not let the crocodiles seize the people and drag them away.

V.

Rob not the poor of their goods, the humble whom you know. For the poor's belongings are breath to them and to take them away is to stop up their nose.

VI.

One who lessens falsehood encourages truth. One who supports good diminishes evil — even as satisfaction comes and ends hunger and clothing removes nakedness; even as the sky becomes calm after a storm and warms all who are cold; even as fire cooks that which is raw and water quenches thirst. He who cheats diminishes justice. *But* justice rightly given neither falls short nor brims over. Do not delay; deal with the matter at hand. If you separate who will join? The sounding pole is in your hand, take the measurements.

Surely the water is shallow. And if the boat runs aground, its cargo will rot on shore.

VII.

Be patient so that one may call on you concerning his or her just cause. Do not be angry for it does not become you. The brooding face becomes easily upset. Brood not on what has not yet happened, nor rejoice over what has not yet come to pass. Patience prolongs friendship and disposes of a past concern, for one does not know what is in the heart. If the law is undermined and order destroyed, the poor cannot survive. For when they are robbed justice does not apply to them.

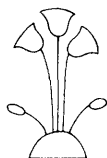
VIII.

People fall low through greed. Those who prey on others achieve no real success. Their success is, *in truth*, a loss. Though you are greedy, it yields you nothing; though you steal you do not benefit by it. Act righteously for the Lord of Righteousness whose righteousness is righteousness indeed. When goodness is good, it is truly good. Surely, righteousness is for eternity. It goes to the grave with those who do it. When they are buried and the earth envelops them, their name is not erased from the face of the earth. They are remembered because of their goodness. For this is a principle established by the word of God. **Speak right and do right.** For righteousness is mighty. It is great; it endures; its worth is real and it leads one to blessedness. Wrongdoing does not achieve its goal, but one who is righteous reaches dry land.

IX.

The tongue is a person's balance and it is the balance which discovers defects. Punish those who should be punished and none shall equal your righteousness. When falsehood walks around it goes astray. It does not cross over in the ferry nor does it go forward. One who becomes rich by it has no children or heirs on earth. Those who sail with it do not reach dry land and their boat does not drop anchor at the intended town.

Be not *too* heavy nor yet too light. Do not delay or be *too* hasty. Be not partial nor listen to pure emotion. Do not turn your face from one whom you know. Be not blind to one whom you have seen and do not reject one who petitions you. Abandon this sluggishness and let your speech be heard. Act for one who acts for you. Do not listen to everyone, but call those who have a just cause. The slow and idle have no heritage; one deaf to truth has no friends and those who are greedy have no holiday.



**The
Books Of Wise Instruction**



THE BOOKS OF WISE INSTRUCTION. Certainly one of the most important and well-written kinds of sacred literature of ancient Egypt are the Books of Wise Instruction. Although some traditional egyptologists would argue that the Instructions are more secular than sacred, evidence does not support such a contention. One assumes they came to this conclusion because the Instructions offer explicit life-lessons of how to conduct oneself, alone and with others. However, if that is their main argument — and it seems to be from all readings — then they would have to rule the Book of Proverbs secular. For not only does it contain similar instructions, but also it was based on the ancient Egyptian model and borrowed whole passages from the Book of Amenomope (see below).

The Books of Wise Instruction are as sacred as any of the other books of *The Husia*, for the main focus is on maat and the moral and spiritual obligation each person has in preserving and practicing it in and for the community. Thus, each person, not just the pharaoh, was urged to preserve and practice maat. For he or she was judged by it and granted long life on earth as well as eternal life in Amenta (paradise) or death and non-existence based on this.

Therefore, Ptah-hotep says, "Maat is great, its value is lasting and it has remained unchanged and unequaled since the time of its Creator." It is, he continues, "a plain path even for the ignorant and those who violate its laws are punished." Thus, he urges moral excellence in all one does "so no fault can be found in your character". Likewise, Kheti, tells his son Merikare that "righteousness is fitting for a ruler" and that he should "do that which is right that

you may live long on earth". For "more acceptable is the bread of the righteous than the ox of those who do evil".

Clearly then, maat, the quintessential moral and spiritual concept of ancient Egyptian sacred literature, forms the core focus of the Instructions even though some rather secular situations and solutions are posed. Moreover, given the inseparable link in ancient Egypt and other parts of Africa between the sacred and secular, the attempt to separate them makes little sense and meets with even less success. Thus, the sages teach their children and the people to think maat, speak maat and do maat in secular and sacred situations. For this will not only insure a mutually beneficial community based on maat, but also everlasting life.

In terms of the names of the Books, I have made two changes in names which should be noted. First, the book called the "Instructions for Merikare" by traditional egyptologists is re-titled "The Book of Kheti". This was done because it is relatively certain the pharaoh who wrote it was named Kheti and the "Book for Merikare" would be inconsistent with the other "Books of". Secondly, the book called the Papyrus Insinger by traditional egyptologists is re-titled the Book of Phebhor after its author. The traditional egyptologists and collectors had the rather unsettling and even arrogant habit of naming ancient Egyptian papyri by the name of someone who bought them "or came into possession of them" by various means. Thus, Insinger, Harris, Beatty, etc., are affixed to papyri which often have their own names. Naturally, I saw no need or reason to follow this practice.

The Book of Ptah-Hotep

I.

Be not arrogant because of your knowledge. Take counsel with the ignorant as well as with the wise. For the limits of knowledge in any field have never been set and no one has ever reached them. Wisdom is rarer than emeralds, and yet it is found among the women who gather at the grindstones.

II.

If you are a leader and command many, strive for excellence in all you do so that no fault can be found in your character. For Maat — the way of Truth, Justice and Righteousness — is great; its value is lasting and it has remained unequalled and unchanged since the time of its Creator. It lies as a plain path before even the ignorant and those who violate its laws are punished. Although wickedness may gain wealth, wrong-doing has never brought its wares to a safe port. In the end, it is Maat, the way of Truth, Justice and Righteousness — that endures and enables the upright to say "It is the legacy of my father and mother."

III.

Do not terrorize people for if you do, God will punish you accordingly. If anyone lives by such means, God will take bread from his or her mouth. If one says I shall be rich by such means, she will eventually have

to say my means have entrapped me. If one says I will rob another, he will end up being robbed himself. The plans of men and women do not always come to pass, for in the end it is the will of God which prevails. Therefore, one should live in peace with others and they will come and willingly give gifts *which another would take from them through fear*.

IV.

Be diligent as long as you live, always doing more than is commanded of you. Do not misuse your time while following your heart, for it is offensive to the soul to waste one's time. Do not lose the daily opportunity to increase that which you have. Diligence produces gains and gains do not endure when diligence is abandoned.

V.

If you are parents of worth and wisdom, train your children so that they will be pleasing to God. And if they do what is right, following your example, and handle your affairs as they should, do for them all that is good. For they are begotten of your own heart and soul. Therefore, separate not your heart from them. But if they fail to follow your course, oppose your will, reject all counsel, and set their mouth in motion with vile words, then drive them away. For they are not your children and were not born for you. Those who are guided do not go wrong, but those who wilfully lose their way will not find a straight course.

VI.

If you move among people, gain respect and trust through speaking openly and truthfully. Those who are trusted and speak truthfully, will become leaders and masters of themselves. Those who master themselves enjoy a good name and are not maligned. They are in good health and their face is turned toward their people. And they are praised without their knowing it. But those whose heart obeys base desires causes contempt rather than love. Their heart diminishes and their body dwindles. Those of great heart are the chosen of God, but those who obey base desires, become the possession of the enemy.

VII.

If you are a leader, see that the plans you make are carried out. Do great things which will be remembered long after you. Where there is praise, detraction cannot survive. But where those of ill-will enter, like crocodiles, strife also comes.

VIII.

If you are a leader, be courteous and listen carefully to the presentations of petitioners. Stop not their speech until they have poured out their heart and spoken that which they came to say. Those with grievances like to speak out and have their petitions heard. But whosoever stops a presentation raises the question of why does one having this power act in this manner. Not all that is asked for can be granted, but a fair hearing satisfies the heart.

IX.

If you want friendship to last in the house you enter as master, friend or brother, or in any other place you enter, avoid approaching the women in an improper manner. No place is peaceful where this is done and he who intrudes on them is unwelcome. Thousands of men have been ruined for the pleasure of a short moment, which passes like a dream and then brings death to those who have indulged in it. Men and women leave home because of it and the heart should refrain from it. As for those who go wrong because of lust, none of their plans will prosper.

X.

If you wish your conduct to be perfect, to be free from all that is evil, guard against the vice of greed for material things. It is a grievous sickness and there is no cure for it. There can be no confidence among those infected with it. It turns a kind friend into a bitter enemy. It causes conflict with fathers, mothers and the brothers of mothers and it separates the wife from her husband. It is a bundle of all kinds of evil and a bag containing vices of every kind. Established are those whose standard is righteousness, who walk according to its ways. They shall surely prosper thereby, but the greedy will not have even a grave.

XI.

If you are wise and seek to make your house stable, **love your wife fully** and righteously. Give her food, clothes and oil for her body and make her happy as

long as you live. For she is of great value to you her husband. Be not brutal to her. Kindness and consideration will influence her better than force. Pay attention to what she wishes, aims at and regards highly. Thus, she will remain with you. Open your arms to her; call her and show her your love.

XII.

Share with your friends that which you have, for that which is yours is a gift of God. Those who fail to share with their friends are shunned for having a selfish soul. Although people might plan for tomorrow, they do not know what will come to pass. But it is righteousness by which people are sustained. Therefore, if misfortune comes and you have been righteous with your friends, your friends will welcome you. Peace will not be found in a city where friends are forgotten and their needs not answered.

XIII.

If you are one of worth and wisdom who sits on a council of governance, apply your heart and mind toward that which is wise. Speak only when you know you can assist in the solution of a difficulty. For silence is better than useless chatter. There is an art to giving sound advice in council. Surely it is more difficult than all other duties. Those who grasp this can make it serve them well.

XIV.

If you are a powerful person, gain respect through knowledge and gentleness of speech and conduct. Give commands only where necessary and fitting. Those who abuse their authority provoke resistance. And those who place themselves above others are brought low. Be not silent when it is your duty to speak, but be cautious in your speech lest you offend. When you answer the angry, show self-control. For the angry heart speaks fiery words, but those who walk gently, their path is already paved. Moreover, those who worry all day will have no happy moment. But those who pursue pleasure all day will not be able to sustain themselves.

XV.

If you are a judge chosen to maintain order among the people, handle matters with a strict sense of justice. Do not lean to one side or the other. Take care that no one complains that you are unfair and your actions result in a judgment against you.

XVI.

If you are angered by a wrong done you by another, lean not toward remembering it, but toward righteousness. Pass over it quickly and do not hold it in your heart after the first day it happens.

XVII.

If you have grown great after having lived in a lowly condition, and have gained wealth after having been poor in your town in the past, forget not how it was with you in former times. Trust not in your wealth, which came to you as a gift of God. And put not behind you another who is your equal and to whom the same has happened.

XVIII.

Be generous as long as you live. What goes into the storehouse should come out. For bread is made to be shared. Those whose bellies are empty turn into accusers and those who are deprived become opponents. See that none such as these are your neighbors. Generosity is a memorial for those who show it, long after they have departed.

XIX.

Know those who are faithful to you and do not mistreat those who are your friends. They are a well-watered field to you and more valuable than great riches. For what belongs to one friend belongs to another. The character of a righteous person is an honor to him or her and a thing of value which is long remembered.

XX.

If respect for right exists in the heart of those who have been set in authority, they will be beneficent always and their wisdom shall endure forever. The heart of the wise rejoices when wisdom is established and is happy when it prospers on earth. The wise are known by their wisdom and the great by their good actions. Their heart is in harmony with their tongue, their lips are true when they speak, their eyes see rightly and their ears hear that which is profitable for their children, so that they may do what is right and are free from unrighteousness.

XXI.

If a son and daughter accept the *righteous* teachings of their parents, none of their plans will go wrong. Teach your children, then, to be those who hear well; they will be valued by those of weight and substance and their speech will be informed by what they have heard. Respected are those who listen well, they will excel and their deeds will distinguish them. But failure will follow those who hear not. The wise wake early in order to establish themselves, but fools *always* fail to rise at the opportune time.

The Book of Kagemni

I.

The modest person is strong and one who is true in word and just in deed is praised. Houses are opened to the humble and a wide seat is given to one who is gentle in speech and conduct. But sharp knives stand ready for the unrighteous intruder. For there is no entrance except for the righteous.

II.

Those who are blameless in matters of conduct, no words can prevail against them. *And those who are self-mastered*, the harsh are kinder to them than their own mothers, and all people become their servants. Let your name go forth, then, while you yourself, are silent and you will be recognized and respected.

III.

Be not arrogant among your peers because of your strength. And beware of acting in such a way to encourage opposition. For one knows not what will come to pass or the things God will do to punish *the evil*.

The Book of Kheti

I.

Be skilled in speech so that you will succeed. The tongue of a man is his sword and effective speech is stronger than all fighting. None can overcome the skillful. A wise person is a school for the nobles and those who are aware of his knowledge do not attack him. No evil takes place when he is near. Truth comes to him in its essential form, shaped in the sayings of the ancestors.

II.

Follow in the footsteps of your ancestors, for the mind is trained through knowledge. Behold, their words endure in books. Open and read them and follow their wise counsel. For one who is taught becomes skilled. Do not be evil for kindness is good. Make the memory of you last through love of you. Multiply the people whom the city shelters, then God will be praised for your donations. *And* the people will . . . give thanks for your goodness and pray for your health.

III.

Advance your officials so that they will act by your laws. One who has abundance at home will not be biased. One has wealth when he or she has no wants. A poor person *may* not speak truly and one who says "I wish I had" is not straightforward. He leans toward

him who will pay him. Truly great is a great person when his men and women of stature are great. Strong is the king who has councillors and wealthy is one who is rich in persons of stature.

IV.

Speak truth in your house that the princes of the earth may respect you. Righteousness is fitting for a ruler. *For* it is the front of the house that inspires respect in the back. Do that which is right that you may live long upon the earth. Comfort the weeper and oppress not the widow. Drive no one away from the property of his or her father. Defraud not the nobles of their property. Beware of punishing unjustly. Do not kill for it will not profit you.

V.

Make no distinction in your behavior between those of rank and the common people. Rather choose a person because of his or her skills so that every craft may be carried on.

VI.

One generation succeeds another and God who knows human nature is hidden. One cannot avoid or oppose the hand of God. He reaches all that the eyes see. Thus, one should revere God on his path, . . . As a dry watercourse is replaced by a stream, so no river allows itself to be concealed. It breaks the barrier behind which it was hidden. So too the soul comes to

the place that it knows and strays not from its former path.

VII.

Make worthy your house in the West and make firm your place in the city of the departed by being upright and just. It is on this that the hearts of men and women rely. For more acceptable is the virtue of the righteous than the ox of those that do evil. Serve God that he may also work for you.

VIII.

Well cared for is humankind who are the flocks of God. He made the sky and earth for their sake. He destroyed the dangers of the water. He gave the breath of life for their noses. They are in His image and came from His body. He shines in the sky for their sake. He made plants for them and cattle, fish and fowl to nourish them. He has killed His enemies and reduced His children when they conspired to rebel against Him. He makes daylight for their sakes and He sails around in His sacred boat so that He can see them. He has built His shrine around them and when they weep He hears. He made for them rulers even from the egg, leaders to lift the load from the back of the weak. He made for them words of power as weapons to ward off the blow of evil events, guarding them by day and by night. He has slain the traitors among them as a man strikes his son for the sake of his brother. For God knows every name.

The Book of Ani

I.

Do not go in and out of the court of justice so that your name may not be soiled. Do not contend in a quarrel. Keep silent and it will serve you well. Go not in the presence of a drunkard even if it promises to bring you honor.

II.

Pour libation for your father and mother who rest in the valley of the dead. God will witness your action and accept it. Do not forget to do this even when you are away from home. For as you do for your parents, your children will do for you also.

III.

Do not frequent taverns lest evil words fall from your mouth and you know not what you are saying. If you fall, your limbs may be broken and there will be no one to help you. *Even* your drinking companions *may* stand up and say "Put the drunkard out." If one comes to seek and talk with you, one will find you lying on the ground as if you were a little child.

IV.

When the messenger of death comes to take you, let him find you ready to go to your resting place, saying "Here comes one prepared before you." Do not say then "I am too young to be taken." For death comes and seizes the baby at his or her mother's breast as well as the man and woman who have reached an old age.

V.

Guard against words and deeds of deception and against words that are untrue. Destroy the desire to do and speak evil within you, for the evil man have no rest.

VI.

Stay away from the aggressive man and take him not for a companion. Take then for a friend one who is true and just, one whose actions you have observed. And if your righteousness equals his or hers, your friendship will be balanced.

VII.

Small gifts return greater and what is replaced brings abundance. The wise live off the house of the fool. Protect what is yours and you will always find it. Be watchful of what you own lest you end up as a beggar. One who is always idle amounts to nothing but one who is diligent is honored.

VIII.

If God grants you children, may the heart of their father and mother know them. Whoever hungers, let them be satisfied in the house of their mother and father. Let them find there a wall which protects them. Be not without a generous heart for it is God who gives you wealth.

IX.

Do not sit when one who is older than you is standing, even if you have achieved a higher status in your profession. No fault is found with good character but an evil character is always blamed.

X.

Walk each day in the way of righteousness and you will reach the place to which you are going. Never speak evil words to any visitors; a word spoken carelessly some day when you are gossiping may overturn your house. If you are found generous in times of prosperity, when adversity comes you will be able to bear it. If you are righteous you will be *recognized and* respected. And, whether you are among many or few, you will find your family and friends, and all you wish will be granted.

XI.

Let not your heart be revealed to strangers lest they use your words against you. Offensive words that come from your mouth, if repeated, can make bitter enemies. A person can be ruined by his or her tongue. Take care and you will fare well. The heart of humans is wide as a storehouse and full of answers of all kinds. Choose then those that are good and speak them and keep those that are bad enclosed in your belly. A harsh answer provokes strife, but one who speaks with gentleness is loved.

XII.

Double the gifts your mother gave you and care for her as she cared of you. She bore a heavy burden in you and did not abandon you. When she brought you forth after your months, she was still bound closely to you. For her breasts were still in your mouth for three years. While you grew, she cleaned your filth without disgust in her heart and without saying "O, what can I do?" She placed you in school to be educated and came there daily on your behalf with bread and beer for your teacher. Thus, when you become a young man and marry a wife and establish your house, lose not sight of your own childhood. Raise your children as your mother did you. Do not let her find fault with you, lest she raise her hands to God against you and God hear her complaints and punish you.

XIII.

Eat not bread while another stands by without extending your hand to him or her. As for food, it is always here, it is man and woman who do not remain. A person may be rich or poor but bread remains with *those who share it*. One who was rich last year may be a vagrant this year. Therefore, be not anxious to fill your belly *without regard for others*. For you know not where your course will lead. If you become needy, another may do good by you. The water course of last year has disappeared and this year another stream has appeared *in its place*. Great waters have become tracts of dry land and seashores have disappeared into the ocean depths. No man or woman, then, walks a single way. This is a lesson from the Lord of Life.

XIV.

Do not order your wife around in her house when you know she keeps it in excellent order. Do not ask her "where is it" or say to her "bring it to us" when she has put it in the proper place. Watch her carefully and keep silent and you will see how well she manages. How happy is your house when you support her. There are many men who do not know this. But if a man refrains from provoking strife at home, he will not see its inception. Thus, every man who wishes to master his house, must first master his emotions.

XV.

Answer not elders who are angry. Let them have their way. Speak sweetly when they speak bitterly. For it is a remedy that soothes the heart. Contentious answers provoke strife and *eventually* your will will be broken. Let not your heart be troubled, for they will soon return to praise you when their hour of rage has passed. When your words please the heart, the heart is inclined to accept them. Seek self-mastery then and your self-mastery will subdue them.

The Book of Amenomope

I.

Beware of robbing the poor and of oppressing the weak and helpless. Raise not your hand against the aged nor address an elder with improper speech. Let not yourself be sent on an evil mission nor stand in the company of those who have performed it. Rage not against those who injure you, nor on your account answer them. The wharf falls from under the wicked and a flood of water washes them away. The north wind comes down to end their hour on earth and turns into a tempest; the thunder roars and the crocodiles come without mercy.

II.

Let us steer a righteous course so that we may carry the wicked across without becoming like them. Raise them up, give them your hand and then, leave them in the hands of God. Fill them with the food *of your kindness* that they might be satisfied and repent. Another thing good in the heart of God is that you pause and think before speaking.

III.

Do not argue with the contentious, nor provoke them with words. Pause before those who interrupt and give way to those who verbally attack you. Sleep a night before speaking. For the unrestrained person is like a storm which bursts forth like a flame in a pile of straw.

IV.

Now, the unrestrained man or woman in the temple is like a tree grown in unfertile ground. Its leaves wither quickly and its unripe fruit falls to the earth. It reaches its end in the lumber yard or it is floated far from its place. And its burial cloth becomes a flame of fire. But the self-mastered man or woman sets himself or herself apart. He or she is like a tree grown in fertile ground. It grows green and doubles its yield of fruit. It has its place in the eyes of its owner. Its fruit is sweet, its shade is pleasant and its end is reached in the garden.

V.

Better is a bushel which God gives you than five thousand wrongfully gotten. Such gains stay not a day in the storehouse or barn and they are of no use in making beer. Their stay in the storehouse is no more than a moment. When morning comes they have sunk from sight. Better to be poor in the hands of God than riches in the storehouse. Better is bread with a happy heart than riches with much worry.

VI.

Rejoice not over riches gained by robbery nor mourn because of poverty. If archers in front advance too far, then their company abandons them. The boat of the covetous is abandoned in the mud, but the ship of the self-mastered man and woman sails with the wind. Pray then to God each day as the sun rises, saying, "Grant me prosperity and health." And God will give you all you need in life and you will be safe from fear.

VII.

Keep your tongue away from words of detraction, and you will be one loved by the people. You will find your seat in the Temple of God and your gifts shall be among the offerings to your Lord. You will be greatly honored in old age, duly concealed in your coffin, and safe from the wrath of God.

VIII.

For the unrestrained woman and man are like a wolf-cub in the farm yard. They turn one eye against the other. They cause brothers and sisters to argue. They go before every wind like clouds. They dim the brightness of the Sun. They bend their tail like a baby crocodile, curling up to inflict harm. Their lips are sweet but their tongue is bitter and a consuming fire burns in their belly. Do not jump to join such a one, lest you bring misfortune upon yourself.

IX.

Do not speak falsely to anyone, for it is an abomination to God. Do not separate your heart from your tongue, and all your plans will be successful. You will have weight in the presence of others and be secure in the hands of God. God hates one who falsifies words. And the great abomination of God is deception and double-dealing.

X.

Do not mislead a man or woman with pen and papyrus. It is an abomination to God. Do not bear witness with false words nor injure another with your tongue. Do not tax one who has nothing, nor make your pen write falsely. If you find a large debt against a poor person, divide it into three parts, forgive two and let one stand. You will find this a path of life. You will pass the night in sound sleep and in the morning, you will find it again like good news. Better is praise with the love of others than wealth in the storehouse. Better is bread when the mind is at peace than riches with a troubled heart.

XI.

Do not confuse a person in the court of law nor mistreat the righteous. Do not give consideration to those in clean clothes and reject those who appear in rags. Accept not the gift of the strong man nor oppress the weak for him. Justice is a great gift of God and God gives it to whom God wills. Surely, the strength of one who is like God saves the wretched from their oppressor.

XII.

Do not say: "Find me a strong protector, for one in my city has injured me." And say not "Find me a redeemer, for one who hates me has done me harm." Surely, you know not the plans of God and cannot see tomorrow. Settle down, then, in the hands of God. And your self-mastery in silence will overthrow them. For ancient and deep is the fear of the crocodile who makes no sound.

XIII.

Bare not your soul to everybody nor damage thereby respect for you. Spread not your words among others nor associate yourself with those who bare their heart. Better are those whose knowledge remains inside them, than those who talk to their disadvantage. One does not run to reach perfection. And one does not create it in order to destroy it.

XIV.

Laugh not at the blind, nor make fun of a dwarf, nor interfere with the plans of the lame. Do not harass those who are in the hands of God, nor be fierce of face against them if they err. Surely, humans are clay and straw, and God is the builder. God tears down and builds up daily. God makes a thousand humble as He wills. It is God who makes thousands into overseers when they are in their hour of their life. Blessed are those who reach the West while they are safe in the hands of God.

XV.

If you see a person your senior outside, walk behind him or her respectfully. Give also a hand to elders filled with beer. And respect them as their children would. The strong arm is not weakened by being uncovered. And the back is not broken by bending it in respect. Better is a poor person who speaks pleasant words than a rich person whose words are as harsh and dry as straw. A pilot who sees far ahead will not wreck the ship on rocks.

XVI.

Do not expose a widow if you catch her in the field. Nor fail to be understanding of her reply. Do not refuse your oil jar to a stranger to double it for your friends and family. God loves those who respect the poor more than those who revere the rich.

The Book of Ankhsheshonqi

I.

Serve God that He may protect you. Serve your brothers and sisters that you may enjoy a good reputation. Serve a wise person that he or she may serve you. Serve one who serves you. Serve any person so you may benefit from it. And serve your mother and father that you may go forward and prosper.

Examine every matter that you may understand it. Do not say I am learned but rather set yourself to become wise. Be gentle and patient, then your character will be beautiful. It is in the development of character that instruction succeeds. Learn the structure and functioning of the sky. Learn the structure and functioning of the earth.

The good fortune of a town is a leader who acts righteously. The good fortune of a temple is its priest. The good fortune of a field is the time it is worked. The good fortune of a storehouse is the stocking of it. And the good fortune of the wise is their excellent advice.

II.

May the "elder brother" of the town be the one to whom it is entrusted. May the kindest brother of the family be the one who acts as "elder brother" for it. May I have something and my relatives have something so that I may eat my own without holding back. May the floodwater never fail to come. May the field never fail to flourish. May children do honor to their father

and mother. May the moon follow the sun and not fail to rise. May I recognize my friends that I may share my goods with them. May I recognize my brother and sister that I may open my heart to them. And may life always follow death.

Do not send a wise man in a small matter when an important matter is waiting. Happy is the heart of him who has made a judgment before a wise man. A wise master who asks advice, his house stands forever. A wise man seeks a friend, a fool seeks an enemy. The children of a fool wander in the street, but those of the wise are always with them. A wise man is one who knows what goes on around him.

III.

May the heart of a wife be the heart of her husband so that they may be free of contention. If a woman is at peace with her man, they will never fare badly. If a woman whispers about her man, they will never fare well. A good woman of noble character is food that comes in times of hunger. A woman who remains a woman at night is praised during the day. He who violates a married woman on the bed will have his wife violated on the ground. A woman lets herself be loved according to the character of her man.

Do not send a fool in an important matter when you can send one who is wise. Do not instruct a fool lest he hate you for it. When one instructs a fool, he or she says "What they are doing insults me." The friend of a fool is a fool. The friend of a wise person is another wise person. If you are given bread for being stupid, you may learn to despise instruction. Although the way of God is before all people, the fool cannot find it.

IV.

Do not belittle the elderly in your heart. Honor the elderly in your heart, and you will be honored in the hearts of all. Do not laugh at your son in front of his mother lest you learn the measure of his father. Do not prefer one of your children to the other, for you know not which one of them will be kind to you.

There is no tooth that decays that stays in its place. There is no friend who walks alone. There is no wise one who comes to grief. There is no fool who finds profit. There is no one who deserts his travelling companion whom God does not hold accountable for it. There is no one who deceives who is not deceived and no one who does wrong that goes on and truly prospers.

V.

Do not hurl a lance if you cannot aim correctly. Do not do evil to a person and thus cause another to do it to you. Let your generosity reach one who needs it. Do not be stingy, for wealth is no real security. Speak truth to everyone; let it cling to your speech. Do not do to a person what you dislike and thus cause another to do it to you also. There is no good deed except the good deed that is done for one who needs it. Those who struggle together with the people of their town will rejoice in the victory with them.

The Book of Phebhor

I.

If a beam is longer than its right measure, the excess is cut off. If the wind blows beyond its right measure, it wrecks the ships. Those who apply the right measure in all good things are not blamed. The God of just measure has created a balance in order to establish right measure on earth. He placed the heart deep in the body for the right measure of its owner. Thus, if those who are learned are not balanced, their learning is of little use and a fool who knows not balance does not escape misfortune. Pride and arrogance are the destruction of their owner. But those who are gentle in character create their own fate.

II.

The foolish child whom a father or mother has not instructed is like a statue of stone. It is a son's and daughter's advantage and good fortune to receive instruction and to ask for it. But no instruction can succeed, if there is resentment for it. Youth who are not corrupted by base desires are not blamed and those who control their sexual appetite, their name does not send forth an unpleasant odor. Those who are steadfast and thoughtful are chosen among the people and those who listen to a correction protect themselves from receiving another. Surely, the fault in every kind of character lies in not listening. The God of wisdom has placed the stick on earth in order to teach the fool by means of it. But He gave the wise a

sense of shame in order to avoid all punishment. Thus, a youth who has respect through shame is not rejected with punishment.

III.

It is better for a serpent to be in the house than a fool who comes often. Those who associate with a fool are drawn into wrongdoing. Those who live with a fool die in captivity. The friends of fools sleep tied to them. And the wrongdoing of fools harm even their own relatives. When a fool lights a fire he goes too close to it and gets burnt. And when a fool starts a fight, she goes too close to it and gets knocked down. Those who walk with the wise share their praise, but those who walk by in the company of a fool create an evil odor in the street.

IV.

Do not be greedy lest your name send forth an offensive odor. Greed brings conflict and fighting in a house. It takes all sense of shame, mercy and trust from one's heart and it causes turmoil in a family. Those who are greedy do not like to give to those who gave to them. They do not consider tomorrow, for they are only concerned with the moment. There is no end to the wrong done when money and greed are together. Money is the trap God placed on earth for the ungodly so that they would worry each day. But He gives it to those whom He favors in order to take away worry from their hearts.

V.

Those who give food generously when they have money are the ones to whom fate gives fortune. For wealth goes to those who give food to others by means of it. The heart of God is satisfied when the poor stand provided for before Him. Thus, if you acquire property, give a portion to God by giving a portion to the poor. If you acquire property, spend it on your town so that there will be no turmoil in it. If it is in your power, invite those far away as well as those near you. For those who invite those from afar, their name will be great when they go afar. Those who love their neighbors will find a family around them. God allows one to acquire wealth in return for doing good. And those who give food to the poor, God takes them to Himself in mercy without measure.

VI.

Gentleness in conduct of every kind causes the wise to be praised. Do not make your mouth harsh or speak loudly with your tongue. For a loud voice does damage to members of the body just like an illness. Do not be so impatient when you ask that you get angry while you are listening. The praise of the wise is great before the people because they listen. Do not yield often to your tongue in order to advise when you have not been asked. Those who hurry with their mouth, give an incorrect answer when they speak. One does not take seriously the words of the talkative when considering an accusation. And one does not judge the complaint of a fool based on how loud it is presented.

VII.

If the wise are not calm, their manner is not perfect. If no calm comes in battle, the army gets no rest. If there is no calm between feasts, the master and mistress of the house cannot enjoy themselves. And if there is no calm in a temple, God abandons it. Thus, praise is given to the wise because of their calm and old age is a good time in life because of the calm that comes with it.

VIII.

Do not take lightly a small thing lest you suffer from it. Deadly harm comes to the fool for taking greatness lightly in his heart. Likewise, harm comes to a great person for taking smallness lightly. It is God who gives the wise the *discerning* heart in order that they may have appropriate respect. One who fears all harm avoids all harm. Do not take lightly a small illness for which there is a remedy, take the remedy.

A small snake has poison. A small river has its dangers. A small fire should be feared. A small document has great benefit. A small cord binds. A small truth *defends* its owner. A small lie causes trouble for one who tells it. A little food gives health to one who has it. A little saving leads to wealth. The little heart sustains its owner. A little good news make the heart happy. A little dew gives life to the fields. A little wind carries the boat along. A little bee brings honey. A small locust lays waste the grapevine. A small wrong leads towards death. And a small good deed is not hidden from God. Thus, many are the small things that deserve respect but few are the great things that merit admiration.

IX.

The heart and tongue of the wise and the greatness of the place in which they rest, all come from God. When the people raise their hands God knows it. He knows the ungodly who imagines evil. He knows the godly and that they have the greatness of God in their heart. Before the tongue has been asked the question, God knows its answer. He directs the heart and tongue by His command. It is He who makes the way safe without a guard. It is He who gives a just ruling without having a hearing. He lets a person be great in his or her lifetime because of His mercy. And He makes the poor beggar a master because He knows his heart.



**The
Books of Contemplation**



THE BOOKS OF CONTEMPLATION. These books contain three forms of contemplation: lamentations, prophetic assertions and meditations on death and eternal life. These books reflect a skepticism, sadness and contemplative posture born of the collapse and transformation of the social order and the resultant chaos and loss of cultural center this brought. The Books of Khakheper-Ra-Soneb, and Ipuwer represent lamentations on the low state to which the society had fallen. As Khakheper-Ra-Soneb says, "Maat, righteousness and order, has been cast out and isfet, evil and chaos, is in the Council Hall. The way of God is violated and His Commandants are brushed aside. The land is in turmoil and there is mourning everywhere."

Ipuwer laments the reversal of the social order when outsiders have destroyed the internal harmony and stability of ancient Egyptian society. "Behold now," he says, "how greatly the people have changed." "The robber has become rich and the honorable person a thief." The foreigners have imposed new ways and created new relations and the righteous "Egyptian of yesterday cannot be found anywhere."

In the Book of Dialog with the Soul a man expresses despair at the changed social circumstances and contemplates death. This is the earliest known literary example of a soul in turmoil confronting unjust suffering and raising the question of why and what is to be done. It predates the Hebrew Book of Job approximately fifteen hundred years which represents a similar concern and question and to which it has been compared. The

Book of Songs focuses meditation on the inevitability of death and the need to enjoy life now for the most part and suggests a posture that is expressed later in the Hebrew Book of Ecclesiastes. The last song, however, focuses on praise of learning and the learned and argues it is learned achievement which causes one's name to last forever.

Finally, the Book of Neferti offers prophecy of the coming of a righteous savior-king, a messiah to reestablish maat and cast out isfet. This is the oldest and clearest messianic projection and antedates the Hebrew model of David by more than a thousand years. At least one traditional egyptologist has argued that such messianism was evident in Ipuwer, which is at least five hundred years earlier, but the passage he quotes to support it seems more an appeal to God than the pharaoh. However, there are other passages in Ipuwer that suggest such a messianic hope and projection. Also, a note of interest in this prophecy is the prediction of a messiah king born of a mother from Nubia, which was the source of repeated Egyptian renaissances after periods of degeneration and despair.

The Book of Khakheper-Ra-Soneb

I.

Would that I knew what others are ignorant of, something that had not already been said, that I might speak and have my heart answer me. That I might explain to it my distress and shift to it the burden on my back and speak of that which afflicts me. That I might tell it what I suffer and breathe a sigh of relief afterward.

I meditate on what has happened, on the things which have come to pass throughout the land. Changes are taking place and it is not like last year. One year is more troublesome than the next. The land is in turmoil, and being destroyed. Maat, righteousness and order, has been cast out and Isfet, evil and chaos, is in the Council Hall. The way of God is violated and His commandments are brushed aside. The land is in turmoil and there is mourning everywhere.

II.

Every day that dawns brings events from which the face is forced to turn. I speak out strongly against it. My limbs are heavy laden and my heart is heavy with grief. It is painful not to speak about it. Another heart might bend or break, but a strong heart in the midst of difficulties is an ally to its owner.

Then Khakheper-Ra-Soneb said to his heart: Come my heart, that I might speak to you and you might respond to what I have said. Interpret for me what is happening in the land, why those who were once so brilliant are now brought low. I meditate on what has

come to pass. Misery has come today and turmoil will not end tomorrow.

III.

Everyone is silent about it. The whole land is in great trouble. And none are wise enough to know it; none are angry enough to speak out and every day one wakes to suffering. Thus, my suffering is long and heavy. The weak and wretched lack the strength to save themselves from that which overwhelms them. It is painful to keep silent about what one hears and yet it is of no use to answer the ignorant.

People only love their own words. Everyone builds on crookedness and right-speaking is abandoned. I have spoken to you my heart; now answer me. A heart that is approached must not keep silent, for surely the servant and the master share the same fate. And thus, many are the things that must weigh heavy on you, also.

The Book of Ipuwer

I.

Lo, what the ancestors foretold has come to pass. The land is full of bands of evil-doers and the plowman goes to plow with his shield. Faces are pale; the bowmen stand ready; wrongdoing is everywhere and there is no man or woman of yesterday. Lo, the women are

barren and none conceive, for God does not make children anymore because of the state of the land. There is blood everywhere and no shortage of the dead. Indeed the burial cloth cries out before one approaches it.

Lo, the land turns like a potter's wheel. The robber has become rich and the honorable person a thief. The foreigners from without have come to Egypt and the Egyptian of yesterday cannot be found anywhere. Lo, the great and small say "I wish I were dead" and little children say "He should not have caused me to live." Lo, the unrestrained says: "If I knew where God is, I would serve Him."

II.

Behold now, how greatly the people have changed. One who once did not sleep even on a box now owns a bed. Those who once owned robes now are in rags and those who once did not weave for themselves now own fine linen. Behold, those who once did not build boats, now own ships and the former owners just look at them, for they are no longer theirs. Those who once lacked shelter now have homes and those who had homes are in the blast of the storm. And those who knew nothing of God now make offerings to Him with the incense of others.

Lo, why does God seek to create men and women, when the gentle are not distinguished from the violent? But He brings coolness in the midst of heat. And all say: "He is the shepherd of all humankind and there is no evil in His heart. Though His flocks are few, He spends the whole day tending them. But there is fire in their hearts. Oh, that He had perceived their nature in the first generation. Then He would have destroyed the

wicked, stretched out His arm against them. Surely, He would have destroyed their seed and their legacy.

The Book of Dialog With the Soul

I.

I spoke to my soul that I might answer what it said: To whom shall I speak today? Brothers and sisters are evil and friends today are not worth loving. Hearts are great with greed and everyone seizes his or her neighbor's goods. Kindness has passed away and violence is imposed on everyone.

To whom shall I speak today? People willingly accept evil and goodness is cast to the ground everywhere. Those who should enrage people by their wrongdoing make them laugh at their evil deeds. People plunder and everyone seizes his or her neighbor's goods.

II.

To whom shall I speak today? The one doing wrong is an intimate friend and the brother with whom one used to deal is an enemy. No one remembers the past and none return the good deed that is done. Brothers and sisters are evil and people turn to strangers for *righteousness or affection*.

To whom shall I speak today? Faces are empty and all turn their faces from their brothers and sisters.

Hearts are great with greed and there is no heart of a man or woman upon which one might lean. None are just or righteous and the land is left to the doers of evil.

To whom shall I speak today? There are no intimate friends and the people turn to strangers to tell their troubles. None are content and those with whom one used to walk no longer exist. I am burdened with grief and have no one to comfort me. There is no end to the wrong which roams the earth.

III. *Thus,*

Death, to me, today is like health to the ill, like going outdoors after confinement. Death, to me, today is like the smell of myrrh, like sitting under the sail on a windy day. Death, to me, today, is like the fragrance of lotus, like sitting on the shore of *feasting*.

Death, to me, today is like a well-trodden way, like returning home from war. Death, to me, today, is like the clearing up of clouds from the sky, like a person discovering that which was unknown. Death, to me, today, is like longing to see home after spending many years in captivity.

IV.

Surely, one who reaches the beyond will be a living god, punishing the offenses of the wrongdoer. Surely, one who reaches the beyond will be one who stands in the Sun Bark of Ra, causing abundant gifts to be given to the temples. Surely, one who reaches the beyond will be considered wise and will not be prevented from appealing to Ra when he or she speaks.

And my soul said to me. Cast your complaints aside,
my comrade and brother. Make offerings on the sacrificial
fire and cling to life as I have said. Love me,
your soul, here. Set aside thoughts of death and
desire death only when your body joins the earth. Then
I will alight on you after you have become truly weary
and we shall dwell together forever.

The Book of Songs

I. Song of Pharoah Antef, the vindicated:

Prosperous is this good prince. For his kind destiny
has come to pass. One generation passes and another
remains since the time of the ancestors. The exalted
ones who lived in former times now rest in their pyra-
mids. And the blessed nobles are likewise buried in
their pyramids also. Yet those who built those pyra-
mids, their places are no more. Behold what has been
done to them.

I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hardedef,
two sages of old, whose teaching are repeated often.
Yet where are their places now. Their walls all have
wasted away and their places are gone as though they
had never existed. There is none who returns from
there that he or she may tell us how they fare, or
what they need so that our hearts may be at peace
until we too reach the place where they have gone.

Let your heart be happy then, and forget your day
of departure. Follow the desire of your heart for long

as you live. Put myrrh on your head and clad yourself in fine clothes. Enjoy the wondrous things fit for a god. Increase the number of the things you enjoy and let not your heart become lax or lose its vigor. Follow the desires of your heart and do that which is good for you. Fulfill your needs on earth according to the commands of your heart til the day of mourning comes for you. For the God of the departed hears not the mourning, and wailing saves no one from the grave. Celebrate, then, the days of rejoicing and do not tire of them. For lo, none may take their goods with them and none who depart ever come back again.

II. Song for the Priest of Ra, Neferhotep (I):

Generations pass away since *the first day of creation* and other generations come in their places. The splendor of Ra rises in the morning and goes to rest in the west. Men beget and women conceive and every nostril breathes air. Day dawns and the new born go to their appointed places. Celebrate the days of rejoicing, then, o' priest. Put the finest scents to your nose and garlands of lotus flowers around your neck and shoulders and on the body of your beloved sister who sits beside you. Set song and music before you and all evil things behind. Remember only joy until the day comes when you reach the port in the land that loves silence. And give bread to those who have no field, for so shall you gain a good name for the future forever.

III. Also, for the Priest Neferhotep (II):

I have heard those songs which are in tombs of ancient times. And of what they say when they praise

life on earth and belittle the city of the departed. Why is this done to the land of eternity, the just and right, where no fears are found? There quarreling is an abomination and no one places him or herself against a fellow. For this is a land which has no opponents. There is none who will fail to reach this place. The duration of what is done on earth passes like a dream. But to those who reach paradise in the West, is said, "Welcome, safe and sound."

IV. Song in Praise of the Learned

As for those learned scribes of the time that came after the powers of heaven and who foretold the future, their names have become everlasting even though they have departed having completed the days of their lives. And all their relatives are forgotten. They made not for themselves pyramids of metal with stelae of metal from heaven. They did not know to leave heirs, children that might repeat their names. Instead they made heirs out of the books of instruction which they composed.

They took for themselves the scroll as teacher-priest and the writing board as a loving son. Books of instructions are their pyramids, the reed pen their child and the stone surface on which they wrote, their wife. The great and small became their children. For the scribe became their leader. Man decays; his corpse becomes dust and all his relatives die. But a book causes him to be remembered through the mouth of those who quote it. Better is a book than a well-built house, than a tomb in the West. Indeed a book is better than a great house with a solid foundation or a stela in the temple.

Is there any one like the sage Hardedef, or another

like Imhotep? None stands among our relatives who is like Neferti or Kheti, the foremost of them. I submit to you the name of Ptah-em-Djehuti and of Khakheper-Ra Soneb. Is there another like Ptah-hotep or one who is equal to Ka-iris? That which came from the mouths of these learned men who foretold the future came to pass. And it is found as a *clear* statement written in their books. Though they may have concealed their words of power from everyone else, they can be found in their books of instruction. Death might have caused their names to be forgotten, but it is their writings that causes them to be remembered.

The Book of Neferti

I.

And His Majesty Pharoah Snefru said: "Come Neferti, my friend and speak to me some beautiful words and well-chosen phrases which might please me upon hearing them. And the teacher-priest, Neferti, deplored what had come to pass in Egypt, speaking on the condition of the East where Asiatic peoples roam in strength, frightening those about to harvest their crops and seizing cattle even at the plough. He said:

Be moved my heart and mourn for this land in which you were born. For there is silence before evil; what should be condemned is feared and the great are overthrown in the land of your birth. Tire not then while this evil exists. Rise up against that which is before you. For lo, the great no longer rule the land and what

was established has now been undone. May Ra begin to re-establish this land for it is ruined and nothing *of value* remains. Not even the black of a nail has escaped this fate. Lo, the land is destroyed and there are none to care for it. There are none who speak and none who weep. How then fares this land?

II.

I shall speak of what is before me. I will never foretell that which will not come. A strange bird will breed in the Delta marsh and make its nest beside the people of Egypt. For the people will let it approach through lack of action. And afterwards, all good things will pass away.

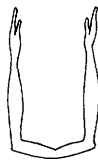
Beasts of the desert will drink at the river of Egypt and take their ease on the shores for they will have no one to fear. The land is in turmoil and no one knows what will come to pass, for what the future will bring is hidden. And as it is said: when sight and hearing fail *the many*, those who cannot speak will lead.

III.

I show you a land torn up by turmoil. That which should not be has come to pass. People will take up weapons of war and the land will live in confusion. People will spill blood for bread and laugh out loud at pain and misery. And none will weep over death. Everyone's heart shall care only for him or herself. A person will sit with his/her back turned while one murders another. I show you the son *and daughter* as enemy, the brother *and sister* as foe and the child slaying *mother and father*. I show you the undermost turned to the uppermost.

IV.

But a king shall come from the south named Ameni, the vindicated one, the son of a woman of Nubia. He will join together the Double Crown and the land will be enclosed in his grasp. The people of his reign will rejoice, for Ameni, the son of man, will make his name for all eternity. The evil-minded plotters of treason will hold back their speech through fear of him. The Asiatic *invaders* will fall before his fury and the Libyan *invaders* will be consumed by his flame. Rebels will yield before his wrath and traitors will be brought low by his might. Then, Maat, righteousness and order, will return to its place and Isfet, evil and chaos, will be driven away.



**The
Book of Declarations
of Virtues**



THE BOOK OF DECLARATIONS OF VIRTUES. As stated earlier, the heart of ancient Egyptian ethics and spiritual striving is maat. Ancient Egyptian ethics and spirituality, like all African ethics and spirituality, have and stress a practical dimension. Righteousness is real only in personal and social practice. Maat, then, is a social as well as spiritual task for which the reward is an enjoyable and beautiful life in the community on earth and a spiritual life in the heavens as a living god. (see below in the Books of Rising Like Ra). In a word, maat is both a personal and social task and the promise and reward for completing it.

The ancient Egyptians, thus, developed an ideal character type rooted in and reflective of maat which the Instructions urge and the Declarations of Virtues state as both an accomplished fact and a model to emulate. This ideal type was the *geru*, the self-mastered, i.e., calm, silent, controlled, modest, wise, gentle and socially active; and the *geru maat*, who was truly the self-mastered. The first was the self-mastered, the second a kind of master of the self-mastered. The opposite of the self-mastered is the unrestrained person — hot-mouthed, hot-tempered, aggressive, and generally infused with *isfet*, the opposite of maat.

What one sees, then, in the Declarations of Virtues is the practice of basic values on the personal and social level which pose an ideal type and serve as a model of maat for others to emulate. It is important to note that the personal is inseparable from the social, that righteousness and restraint are always, as in other African ethics and spirit-

uality, achieved, tested and tempered in relations with others. Maat begins with family relations that makes one praised by his (her) father, loved by his (her) mother, and cherished by his (her) brothers and sisters. Maat expresses itself in a classic statement of Egyptian morality which appears thousands of years later in Hebrew-Christian sacred texts: "I gave food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, water to the thirsty and a boat to those without one." The last part of this declaration of virtue, of course, reflects again the ancient Egyptian sea-faring environment and reveals the essentiality of having a means of transportation on water.

These Declarations which were usually found on stelae, a kind of memorial plaque, form a parallel and complement to the Declarations of Innocence which appear in the Book of Coming Forth by Day (see below) and thus, express a consistent ethic of right thought and practice whose reward is found in this life and the next.

The Book of Declarations of Virtues

I. Harwa, chief official of the High Priestess of Amen-Ra says:

I am a noble for whom one should act, one of firm heart to the end of life. I am one beloved of his city, praised by his district, kind-hearted to his towns. I have done what the people love and God praises. I was one truly venerated and had no fault, who gave bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked. I put an end to pain and erased wrongdoing. I buried the blessed, supported the aged and satisfied the needs of the have-nots. I was a shelter for the child and help to the widow; one who gave rank even to an infant. I did these things knowing their value and knowing their reward from the Lord of Maat, in a word, to endure in the mouth of the people without end, to be well-remembered for years and years to come.

II. Djedkhonsefankh, prophet of Amen-Ra, says:

Hail to you who will come after me, who shall live in times to come. I shall make you call me blessed, for my destiny was great. Ra, as Khnum the Great Potter, fashioned me into one most able, an advisor of excellent counsel. He made my character superior to others and guided my tongue to that which was excellent. I kept my mouth free from attacking those who attacked me. My patience turned my foes into friends and my enemies into allies. I controlled my mouth and was skilled in response, yet I did not submit to evil doing.

The people judged me as one generous, For I hated the hoarding of riches. I caused them all to greet me for my excellence, paying homage to my inner essence

and saying of me "he is a *righteous* offspring of his father and a divine descendent of his mother. No one spoke evil of my parents because of me. My parents were honored greatly because of my worthiness. Indeed, they found me helpful while they lived upon the earth. And I provide offerings for them now that they have departed. Moreover, I did not allow my servants to address me as "our master", but instead made myself in the image of their father.

III. Paheri, scribe of the royal treasury and mayor of two towns, says:

I am a noble who served his Lord, one skilled and free of negligence. I walked the road I had explored. I was guided by my own heart on the road of those praised by the pharoah. My good character raised me high. I was summoned as one in whom no fault was found. If I were placed on the scales, I would come out complete, blameless and without a blemish. I came and went with a firm heart, telling no lies to anyone. I know the God that dwells in man and woman. Knowing Him I knew this from that and performed the tasks as they were commanded. I never confused the message with the messenger. I did not speak vulgar words or talk with worthless people. Indeed, I was the model of kindness.

IV. Harkuf, governor of Upper Egypt and teacher-priest, says:

The pharoah praised me and my father made for me a will, for I was one worthy. One beloved of his father, praised by his mother and one whom all his sisters and brothers loved. I gave bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked and brought the boatless to dry land.

I was one who spoke justly, who repeated that which was pleasing to hear. I never spoke evilly against anyone to his or her superior. For I wished to stand well with the Most High God. Never did I judge between two *contenders* in such a way that it deprived a child of his or her parents' legacy.

V. Nefer-Seshem-Ra, says:

I have spoken truly and done right. I spoke justly and repeated that which was just. I seized the right moment so as to stand well with the people. I judged between two in such a way that would satisfy both of them. I rescued the weak from those who were stronger as much as was in my power. I gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and brought the boatless to dry land. I buried those who had no children and built a boat for those were without one. I respected my father, pleased my mother and raised my sisters and brothers.

VI. Wennofer, prophet of Osiris, says:

May God give me incense for the city of eternity and water for the graveyard of the West. For I am a man for whom one should act. I was true-hearted, just and trustworthy. One who walked on the water of God. I was one praised in his town, generous in his district and kind and compassionate to everyone. I was friendly and one welcomed by others, widely loved and cheerful. I was self-mastered in times of stress and misfortune, beautiful of speech and well-spoken. I was a strong shelter for the needy, one on whom all could lean. I welcomed the stranger and was a helpful adviser and an effective guide. I was one who protected

the weak from the strong and was a boat to cross water for everyone.

I was a worthy noble who did God's wish and one kind and compassionate to his friends. I was generous to the have-nots. My heart did not say "give me" to anyone. I was one who loved justice and hated wrongdoing. And I always did what was good.

VII. Nebneferu, prophet of Amen Ra, says:

I live on earth as . . . one who gave guidance in work to the unaware, who instructed the craftsman by the rule. Who knew what to say when speaking in the palace, who erased wrong in every situation, who pleased God with cleansing. I spoke to the people in a manner they liked and judged everyone according to their character, giving attention to what they wished.

VIII. Ankhtifi, great ruler of the districts of Edfu and Hieraconpolis, says:

I am the vanguard and rearguard of the people. One who finds the solution where it is lacking. A leader of the land through active assertion. I choose and use words well and am collected in thought on the day of the joining of three southern most districts. For I am a champion without peer who spoke out when the people were silent, on the day of fear when Upper Egypt was silent. Those on whom I placed my hand, never met misfortune, for my heart was committed and my counsel excellent.

IX. Beka, steward of the public granary, says:

I was just and true and one without malice. For I placed God in my heart and was quick in discerning

His will. I have reached the city of those who dwell in eternity. I have done good on earth. I have not injured others. I have neither been evil nor approved of anything evil or offensive. I have delighted in speaking truth. For I knew well the reward that comes from doing this on earth from the time of one's first act til the time one reaches the grave. Indeed my sure defense shall be in speaking truth on the day when I reach the divine judges, the skillful interpreters, discoverers of all actions and chastisers of all offenses.

I took pleasure in righteousness, staying in harmony with the laws of the Hall of Maat. I have not oppressed the lowly nor done harm to those who honor God. I have spent my life in the way of righteousness. The sincerity and goodness which were in the heart of my father and mother I returned through my love for them. And I never acted in any manner to dishonor them, even from the earliest days of my youth. Though of great status I have acted as one whose position was low. And I have not undermined anyone worthier than myself.

X. Antef, High Steward of the office of the Government, says:

I am silent before the angry, patient with the ignorant in order to quell conflict. I am cool, free from hasty acts, anticipating the outcome, expecting what occurs. I am one who counsels in situations of strife, a person who knows which words incite anger. I am friendly, when called upon, to those who would tell me their concern. I am controlled, kind, friendly, one who comforts the weeper with good words. I am generous to those who count on me and one who does good to his peers. I am one who is just in the house of his Lord, who recognizes flattery when it is spoken. I am pleasant, openhanded, a possessor of food who does not hide his face from those in need. I am a friend of

the poor and favorable to those who have not. I am one who feeds the hungry who are needy and one who is openhanded to those who are destitute.

I am one who is informed to those who lack knowledge and one who teaches a person what is useful to him or her. I am upright in the house of the pharaoh, one who knows that which should be said in every office. I am a listener, one who listens to Maat and who ponders it in the heart. I am a peacemaker in the house of his Lord, one who is remembered by reason of his excellent qualities. I am kind in the courts, one who is calm, and not offensive.

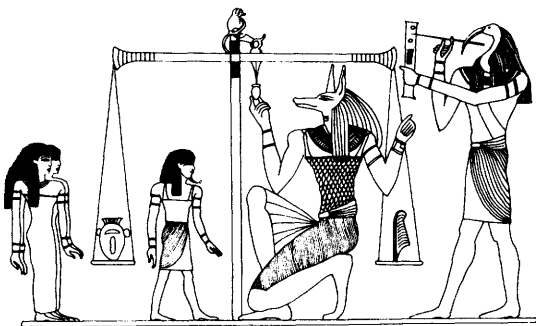
I am a good man, not acting hastily, one who does not attack a person for a *single* remark. I am accurate like the scale, impartial and true like the Lord of Just Measure. I am a man firm of foot whose plans are well thought out; who is loyal to those who have caused him to prosper. I am a knower who taught himself knowledge, an advisor whose advice is sought. I am one who speaks in the hall of justice, one who is skilled in speech in difficult situations.

Moreover, he says:

I set goodness under my house and love for me went throughout the land. I gave bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty and helped the shipwrecked on their way. I buried the aged, I clothed the naked. I committed no sin against man or woman *and none* that God hates. I applied the Law which the pharaoh loved. I have come to my city and entered my home. I have done that which both man and woman love and things that are approved of by God.



**The
Books of Rising Like Ra**



THE BOOKS OF RISING LIKE RA. These books are singularly and together the oldest written record of the dawn of structured moral consciousness. They represent Africans leading the human rupture with the animal world and establishing not only an ethical standard of social behavior but posing the possibility of resurrection, ascension and transformation into a living god. In this section, I have given these books titles different than those most traditional egyptologists have assigned them. The oldest texts which are from the Old Kingdom and are called by them the Pyramid Texts, I have titled the Book of Rising and Transformation. The rationale for this is the focus and activity expressed in the text where the royal vindicated one, i.e., the pharaoh in this case, rises from the dead, ascends in the heavens and transforms into a living god. Rising here refers both to resurrection and ascension in the heavens. And transformation is achieved through having lived righteously, becoming one with God and then becoming a living god oneself, i.e., a power in the heavens.

The texts from the Middle Kingdom are called the Coffin Texts by the traditional egyptologists. These I have titled "The Book of Vindication" which, as the first line in the book shows, is what at least one part of it, if not the total text, was called. Finally, I have rejected the title, Book of the Dead, and used also the title the ancient Egyptians assigned the book, i.e., The Book of Coming Forth By Day.

Although the Book of Rising and Transformation was

apparently first used mainly for pharaohs, it was, in my estimation, a model for human possibility represented by the person who more than anyone else symbolized the possibility of divinity. Moreover, this book and the others in this section were eventually appropriated by the masses and became the basic texts for "rising like Ra". Thus, I used "royal vindicated one", or "vindicated one" rather than the "N" or name of a particular pharaoh as is the practice of traditional egyptologists. For it is not just the pharaoh who rose and transformed, but any and all vindicated ones.

I have put the books in an order that is reversed chronologically, but which logically fit according to the activity each contains. First a person *comes forth* (resurrects), declares his (her) innocence in the Hall of Judgment, is *vindicated*, and then *rises and transforms* into a living god. Although there is some of each in all, each book tends to have more of the activity by which it is named.

In the Book of Coming Forth By Day, I have used the title, *Declarations of Innocence*, for the thirty-six and forty-two declarations made by a person in the Hall of Righteousness to establish his (her) blamelessness. Although some traditional egyptologists call this statement, "the Negative Confession", others have used "the Declarations of Innocence" also. The Declaration is obviously not a confession either in content or context. It is not an admission of faults, but rather a denial of them. And the Hall of Righteousness is not a place where one confesses faults, but rather where one declares oneself innocent so that he or she may be vindicated and rise like Ra.

One of the major significances of these "Books of Rising Like Ra" is their emphasis on the ancient Egyptian belief in the concept of the possibility of immortality and divinity for humans. In a word, they posit that through right thought and practice, one could become a god and live forever at the right hand of Ra. This could be achieved as these books and others of *The Husia* state and suggest, in three basic ways: 1) achieved internal development; 2) excellence in social relations; and 3) significant socio-historical service and achievement.

Finally, it is important to note that in the Declarations of Innocence, as has been pointed out often, we find a source of the Ten Commandments and in the Books of Rising Like Ra we find again the historical source of so many other concepts central to Hebrew and Christian theology, i.e., resurrection, the Risen Savior, the Beloved Son, the Day and Hall of Judgment, immortality of the soul, etc. It is this and the other contributions cited above as well as those unmentioned in this volume which form the rich and ancient moral and spiritual legacy Africa, through its daughter, ancient Egypt, has given the world.

The Book of Coming Forth By Day

Here begins the Book of Coming Forth by Day, of songs of praising and glorifying, of coming forth and entering God's Blessed Domain in the beautiful West. These are to be recited on the day of burial, of entering in after coming forth.

I.

O you who bring blameless souls in the House of Osiris *the Risen Savior*, bring this excellent soul with you. Let him (her) hear as you hear and see as you see. Let him (her) stand up even as you stand up and sit down as you sit down. O you who give bread and beer to blameless souls in the House of Osiris, give bread and beer day and night to this soul whose word is true before God, Lord of the sacred city of Abydos, and before you.

O you who open the way and clear the paths for blameless souls in the House of Osiris, open the way and clear the paths for the soul of this one whose voice is vindicated by you. May he (she) enter the House of Osiris in boldness and come forth in peace. May he (she) not be opposed or sent back. May he (she) enter praised and come forth loved and triumphant. May his (her) commands be carried out in the House of Osiris. May his (her) words travel with you. And may he (she) not be found deficient in the Balance and be free from all faults.

II.

May I not be judged according to the mouth of the multitude. May my soul lift itself up before my heart, and be found to have been righteous on earth. May

I come into your presence O' Lord of Lords, may I reach the Hall of Righteousness. May I rise like a living god and give forth light like the divine powers that are in heaven.

Let me proceed in peace to the West. May the lords of the Sacred Land receive me and give me three-fold praise in peace. May they make a seat for me besides the Elders of the Council. May I ascend in the presence of the Beneficent One. And may I assume whatever form I want in whatever place my spirit wishes to be.

III.

O My heart, my mother, my heart, my mother, my heart whereby I come into being. Stand not up against me as a witness nor oppose me in the Council of Judgment. Weigh not heavy against me before the Keeper of the Balance. You are my divine essence which dwells in my body, the divine power which makes strong my limbs. When you come forth in the place of happiness where we go, may you not cause my name to send forth an offensive odor before those who assign people to their rightful place.

May it be favorable for us and the Hearer be favorable to us and there be joy at the weighing of words. Let not falsehood be uttered against me before the Great God. For surely your righteousness will cause you to rise up in triumph.

IV.

Behold, I am in your presence 'O Lord of Heaven. There is no evil in my body, I have not knowingly spo-

ken that which is not true, nor have I done anything with a false heart. Grant that I may be like those favored ones who are in your following and that I may be an Osiris — *one vindicated and risen* - and greatly favored by the Beneficent God

V.

I come forth triumphantly against my enemies. I split the heavens and open up the horizon. I travel across the earth on the heels of my enemies. I cause the Glorious and Great Ones to come to me, for I am equipped with words of power. I eat with my own mouth and chew with my own jaw. For I worship God in heaven and I am given that which endures in the midst of things which are overthrown.

Stand back from my path, for I am one with Ra, coming forth across the horizon against His enemy, who shall not be rescued from me. I have stretched out my hand as Lord of the Crown of Upper Egypt. I lifted up my legs as one who hurries the dawn. My enemy shall not escape me. Indeed he shall fall before me. He has been given to me and shall not be rescued.

VI.

I stand up as Horus, *beloved son and avenger of his father*. I sit down as Ptah, *God who laid the foundations of the universe*, I have grown strong as Thoth, *wisdom exalted*. I have become as powerful as Atum — *Ra as the Perfecter*. I walk with my own feet, I speak with my own mouth. I pursue my enemy. He is given to me and he shall not be rescued from me. I have entered as a falcon and come forth as a phoenix.

Morning star make way for me, so that I may adore Ra in the beautiful *paradise of the West*.

VII.

My name does not pass away. I am the soul that created the deep, that makes its seat in God's domain. My nest, *my place of birth*, is hidden and my egg has not been broken. I am Lord of the heights and I have made my nest in the sky. But I come down to earth that I may do away with my uncleanness.

O Lord Osiris, come then and establish me and make me strong. Grant that I may enter the land of everlastingness as you have done along with your father Ra, whose body never passed away and who is one who indeed does not die. I have not done that which you hate, but have praised your name among those who love your Divine Essence. May your spirit love me and not reject me. And may you not let my body decay, but deliver me as you did deliver yourself. Let life rise out of death. Let not decay make an end of me or my enemies come against me in their many forms.

VIII.

I am the Great One, the son of a Great One. I am the Fiery One, the son of the Fiery One, whose head was restored to him after it had been cut off. The head of Osiris, the Risen Savior, is not taken from him and my head shall not be taken from me. I have risen up and knitted myself together. I have made myself whole. I renew myself and grow young again. I am one with Osiris, Lord of Eternity.

He who shall accompany me who am about to fall will lift me up when I have descended in the valley of Abydos and gone to rest. For surely I am one who worships Him. I have assumed divine authority in the city where I found Him. I conquered and carried away the darkness by my strength. I have taken possession of the crown of Upper Egypt. Truth is my body. I have come to lighten darkness and to overthrow the evil spirits therein. Those who dwelled in the darkness adore me. I have caused the weeping ones to stand up even though they are weary. Behold me, I am indeed the Deep one who has subdued darkness. I have driven away darkness so that light could be lifted up.

IX.

These are words which shall be said on arriving at the Great Hall of Maati, so that one may be separated from all offenses he or she may have committed and may behold the faces of the divine ones. (*The Declaration of Innocence*)

One says: Homage to you, Great God, Lord of Maati. I have come to you O' Lord that I may behold your beauty. I know you; I know your name; I know the names of the forty-two divine beings who live with you in this Hall of Maati, who live on the doers of evil and feed on their blood on the day of taking account of character in the presence of Osiris, The Good One. Surely, the Two Daughters, the Two Eyes, Lord of Righteousness is your name: Behold, I have come to you. I have brought you righteousness and have done away with unrighteousness for you.

PART I. have not done evil against people. I have not mistreated my family and associates. I have not told lies in the court of law, the seat of Truth. I have not

associated with evil or worthless persons. I have not done evil things. I have not begun a day by demanding more than I was due. I have not brought forth my name for praise. I have not cursed God. I have not defrauded the poor of their property. I have not done what is hateful to God. I have not slandered a servant to his superior. I have not inflicted pain. I have not caused anyone to be hungry. I have not made anyone weep.

I have not committed murder. I have not ordered a murder or turned over anyone to a killer. I have not caused anyone to suffer. I have not stolen the offerings of the temple. I have not defrauded the divine beings of their bread offerings. I have not stolen the offerings of the departed. I have not committed adultery. I have not been unchaste in the sanctuary. I have not increased or diminished the measure of grain. I have not reduced the length of the palm. I have not encroached upon fields of another. I have not added to the weight of the scales. I have not tampered with the tongue of the scales. I have not taken milk from the mouth of children. I have not driven cattle from their pasture.

I have not snared sacred birds. I have not caught fish with the bait of their own bodies. I have not stopped the flow of water in its season. I have not dammed up water when it should flow. I have not put out a fire when it should burn. I have not violated the times of making meat offerings. I have not driven away cattle from the property of God. And I have not turned back God at His appearances. I am pure.

PART II. I have not done wrong. I have not robbed. I have not been greedy. I have not stolen. I have not murdered people. I have not cheated at the measures. I have not committed fraud. I have not stolen the property of God. I have not told lies. I have not stolen food.

I have not spoken curses. I have not violated the law. I have not killed sacred animals. I have not dealt deceitfully.

I have not stolen land. I have not eavesdropped. I have not talked overmuch. I have not been angry without just cause. I have not committed adultery. I have not been unchaste. I have not terrorized anyone. I have not violated the law. I have not been hot-tempered. I have not been deaf to words of truth. I have not stirred up strife. I have not been blind to injustice. I have not engaged in unnatural sex. I have not been deceitful.

I have not indulged in quarrelling. I have not engaged in violence. I have not been quick tempered. I have not misrepresented my nature. I have not gossiped. I have not slandered the pharoah. I have not waded in *drinking* water. I have not been loud voiced. I have not blasphemed against God. I have not been arrogant. I have not discriminated against others. I have not coveted others' property. I have not offended the God of my city.

X.

Behold, I have come to you, empty of evil and devoid of deceit, a blameless one, one without a witness against him (*her*). Therefore, let no case be brought against me.

I live on Maat, I satisfy myself with the righteousness of my heart. For I have done that which men and women request and that which pleases God. I have found favor with God by doing that which He loves. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and a boat to those without one. I have made due offerings to God and funeral offerings to

the departed. Deliver me then, and protect me. Make no report against me in the presence of the Great God. For I am one whose mouth is pure and whose hands are clean. Therefore, let it be said to me: "Welcome, come in peace" by those who shall see me.

The Book of Vindication

Here begins the Book of Vindicating a Person in the Realm of the Beautiful West.

I.

Seeker of vindication, you are the Lion, indeed the Double Lion. You are Horus, protector of his father. You are the fourth of these four powers of heaven who are strong and mighty who bring water and make the Nile *flow* through power of their divinity. O seeker of vindication, raise yourself on your left side and put yourself on your right side.

The God of earth has commanded and the Double Lion has repeated, that you be given your soul which is on earth and your shadow which is in secret places. Seeker of vindication, raise yourself that you may be vindicated against your enemies. Take your staff, your loin cloth and your sandals and go to the Council of Judgment. May you be vindicated against your enemies, male and female, against those who would harm you and those who would bring a case against you in the Council of Judgment on this day of joy.

II.

O' seeker of vindication, the earth opens its mouth for you; it opens up its jaws in your behalf. May you eat your bread and receive your abundance. May you reach the Great Stairway and arrive at the Sacred City. May you regain your warmth upon the earth and may you become one with Osiris, *the Risen Savior*. O' seeker of vindication, the great ones stand up for you and the scribes who sit upon their mats are in awe of you in your presence. You have assumed for yourself the attributes of the wise serpents in the Sacred City of On. Hail seeker of vindication, take possession of the sky and inherit the earth. Who shall take away the sky from you, you beautiful youthful god? For you are vindicated against your enemies, male and female.

III.

The seeker of vindication says: Hail to you, Judgment Council of God, who shall judge me on this day concerning what I have said and done being ignorant, remiss and unmindful. O' you who surround me and stand at my back, may I be vindicated in the presence of the Lord of earth. He shall judge me according to what I have knowingly done. I have stood up with my feather of *truth* on my head and my righteousness on my brow. My enemies are greatly grieved and in my vindication, I have gained possession of all I own.

IV.

O' vindicated one, go forth great and mighty even as Ra went forth great and mighty on the eastern side of the sky. The powers of heaven who spoke on behalf of Horus, *the protector of his father*, and who subdued

his enemies who hated him, they shall speak on behalf of this vindicated one and subdue those who would injure him (*her*), who hate him (*her*), and who would bring a case against him (*her*) on this day.

V.

Hail, vindicated one. You shall cross the sky and travel across the expanse of the heavens; those in the winding waterway shall revere you and see you when you rise on the eastern horizon. You shall come forth from the Night-bark of *Ra* and go aboard the Day-bark as Horus, Lord of nobles, himself, commands you. Hail, vindicated one. You shall go up on the great eastern side of the sky and go down on the great western side of the earth among those powers of heavens who are in the company of Osiris, *the Risen Savior*. And you shall go in peace, in peace with Ra, who is in the heavens.

VI.

Hail vindicated one. You are a god and you shall be a god. You shall have no enemies or opponents before Ra who is in the heavens or before Osiris the great and divine power who is in *the sacred city* of Abydos. The Lord of the earth will open your blind eyes and straighten out your bent knees for you. And you will be given your heart which came from your mother, your heart which belongs to your body, your soul which was on earth, and your corpse which was in the ground. There will be bread for your body, water for your throat, and sweet air for your nostrils.

VII.

Hail, vindicated one. Come that you may rise up in

the heavens. The ladder at the side of Ra has been assembled for you among the powers of heaven who purge the streams of their pestilence so that you may drink water from them. You shall walk upon your own feet and you shall not walk with your head downward. You are clean and pure. As Ra lives you are blameless and without blemish.

VIII.

The doors of the heavens are opened to you because of your righteousness. May you ascend and see Hathor, *Love and Beauty Exalted*. May any case against you be cancelled. May any offense of yours be erased by those who weigh *hearts* in the balance on the day of taking account of characters. May it be granted that you join those who are in the Sun-Bark by those who are in the company of Ra.

IX.

Go and open the mansion of the soul beyond . . . If you find the powers of heaven seated, you shall sit with them. Receive this sceptre of yours which is at the feet of Ra and your rod which is at the feet of the Morning Star. You should rise into the heavens among the stars which do not die and you shall strike with your sceptre and rule with your rod.

X.

May you cross the desert with Ra. May He cause you to see the places of those who follow their heart. May you find the valleys full of water for your washings. May you pick papyrus plants, rushes, and lotus blossoms and buds. Waterfowls shall come to you in thousands, lying on your path. You will cast your

throwing stick at them and a thousand will fall at the sound of its wind. For you, a ladder to the heavens shall be assembled and heaven shall extend her hand to you.

XI.

You have your legs. Lift up your body; gather together your members that you might take the steps to the Council of Judgment, to the place where the powers of heaven are, that they may give you the life fluid that comes forth from you. May you never be motionless when you *regain it*. May you travel and never tire. May you travel across heaven and earth and never tire, o' virtuous and vindicated one.

XII.

A cry went forth for me from the mouth of Ra, the Perfecter, and the air opened up upon my ways. It is I who make the sky light after darkness. My pleasing color comes from the air which goes forth after me from the mouth of Ra, the Perfecter. The storm clouds of heaven are that which flow from me; and hail storms and half-darkness are my sweat. The length of the sky belongs to my strides and the width of the earth belongs to my domain. I am one whom Ra, the Perfecter, created and I am bound for my place in eternity.

XIII.

I have come into being from the flesh of the self-created God. I am the soul of Shu, the Lord of Light, the God of invisible shape. I am he (*she*) who is one with God. I have become He. I am one who calmed the sky for himself (*herself*) and established order in the

Two Lands *of Egypt*. I am stronger and more fierce than the Exalted Nine.

XIV.

I will never obey any evil words of power and nothing harmful will happen to me. I have ascended and have set my enemies under my feet that I may exercise power over them in accordance with that which Ra commanded of me. I am the *wise* serpent, Bull of the Exalted Nine, who obeys no magic, who is not burned by fire and who is not wet by water. Indeed, I will never be burnt by fire or wet because of water. I will be like Ra everyday, one who will be shaped and produced everyday by the sun people who have seen yesterday.

XV.

I shine like Ra daily. I establish truth and expel falsehood. I open the doors which are in the abyss below. I am this friend of Ra, weary with wounds. And I am given strength through wisdom. I have found the ferry-boat which was lost in its flood waters and I have brought it to land. I have gone forth in it and have ferried across. I have directed my feet to the right place. I have extended my arms. I have established rule in the heavens and taken possession of the earth. And the Exalted Ones of heaven are pleased by it.

XVI.

I am the Lion, the Double Lion and the greatest of his (*her*) priesthood. I am Horus, the uniter. I am he (*she*) who brings stillness after the storm. I am Isis in Chemmis *taking refuge from Seth, the evil one*, and I will listen like one who is deaf and strains to see. I am

the Lord of earth, who entered into the earth. I am he (*she*) who evaluates whoever serves him (*her*). I am transformed into one whose spirits are mighty. I am one with Ra, Lord of His Two Lands, and am he (*she*) who is put behind Him. I am the waters and the earth. The Bitter Lakes and the Great Bull are my names. I will travel and enter the place which I know.

The Book of Rising and Transformation

I.

Raise yourself o' vindicated one. Run, for you are exceedingly strong. You shall sit at the heads of the powers of heaven. You shall do that which Osiris, the Risen Savior, did in the Mansion of the Prince which is in the sacred city of On. Receive your due honor; your foot will not be obstructed in heaven nor will you be opposed on earth. For you are the spirit whom Nut, the mother of heaven, bore and Nephthys, your sister spirit, suckled, and they have put you together. Arise in your strength and do what you did before. For you are a spirit. Arise o' spirit, exceedingly strong, adorned as a great wild bull. You will not encounter opposition anywhere you walk and your foot will not be obstructed anywhere you wish to be.

II.

Rise up o' vindicated one. Take hold of your head. Gather together your bones, collect your limbs and

shake the dust from your flesh. Take your bread which knows no mouldiness and your beer which never becomes sour. Stand at the gates that bar those with no name. Lo, the gatekeeper comes out to you. He takes hold of your hand and takes you to heaven to your Father. He rejoices at your coming, gives you His hands, kisses you, comforts you and sets you before the spirits, the imperishable stars.

III.

The Heavens declare: *This royal vindicated one* is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, . . . my first born upon the throne of earth, and Ra has given him his heritage in the presence of the Great Powers of heaven. All the powers of heaven rejoice saying how blessed is this vindicated one, for His Father is greatly pleased with him.

IV.

O' royal vindicated one, you have not departed dead. You have left alive. Sit then upon the throne of Osiris, *the Risen Savior*, with your sceptre in your hand, that you may command the living, with your lotus-bud sceptre in your hand that you may give orders to those whose seats are hidden. Your arms and shoulders are those of Ra, your back and belly are those of Ra, your back loins and legs are those of Ra. Your face is that of the God of the dead. And both the hills of Horus and Seth serve you.

V.

O' Ra, this royal vindicated one comes to you, an undying and indestructible spirit, one who lays claim to

the four pillars, the four cardinal points of the universe. Your son (*daughter*) comes to you, this royal vindicated one comes to you. May you and he (*she*) cross the sky together united in the dark and rise together over the horizon, in the place where it pleases you. Raise him (*her*) up, O' Ra, and enclose him (*her*) in your embrace for he (*she*) is the son (*daughter*) of your own body forever and ever.

VI.

The priest of the royal vindicated one says: Stand up upon this earth which originated from Ra, as the one who completes this spittle which came forth from Ra as the Bringer Into-Being. Come into being upon this earth, o' royal vindicated one. Be exalted upon it, so that your Father, Ra, may behold you. Says the royal vindicated one: I have come to you my Father; I have come to you O' Ra. Grant that I may seize the sky and take possession of the horizon. Grant that I might rule the powers of heaven and provide for them. Place the crook of leadership in my hand that the head of Lower and Upper Egypt may be humbled.

VII.

The royal vindicated one says: I am this *sacred* flower which sprang up from earth. My hand is purified by Him who prepared my throne and I am at the nose of Ra, the Great in Power. I have come to the Island of Fire *for testing*. I have established Right in the place of wrong here and I am on my way to *clothe and equip myself*. I appear as the lotus-blossom which is at the nose of Ra. He will come forth over the horizon each day *in the splendor of the sun* and the powers of heaven will be cleansed at the sight of Him.

VIII.

The royal vindicated one says: I have come to my throne which is over the spirits. I unite hearts, o' you who are great and in charge of wisdom. I become the embodiment of Sia, Wisdom Exalted, which bears God's book and which rests at the right hand of Ra. O you who are protected by my hand, it is I who speak what is in the heart of Ra the Great. I, even, I am Wisdom Exalted which rests at the right hand of Ra; the proud one who presides over the cavern of the depths.

IX.

The royal vindicated one says: o' you who are over the hours, who stand before Ra, prepare a way for me that I may pass among the patrol of those with warrior faces, for I am on my way to this throne of mine. *I am one who is* behind the Great God, one whose head is set in place, who has acquired a sharp strong horn . . . That which removes trouble from before Ra, the Great Bull, that which causes those in darkness to tremble is the strong horn which is behind the Great God. I have subdued those who should be punished. I have struck them hard on their foreheads and I stand unopposed on the horizon.

X.

The reedfloats of the sky are set in place for Ra that Ra may cross on them to the horizon. And the reedfloats of the sky are set in place for me that I may cross on them to the horizon to Ra. The canal is opened, the Field of Rushes is filled and the winding waterway is flooded so that I may be ferried over thereon to Ra. Bring to me the four brothers who pass by, wearers of the side-lock who stand by their

staffs in the eastern side of the sky. May they tell my good name to Ra. Rejoice for me, rejoice for my divine essence. For I am vindicated and my divine essence is vindicated before God.

Ra has received me to himself, to the sky, to the eastern side of the sky, as Horus the avenger of his father, as Osiris the One Risen, as this star which lights up the sky. My sister is Sothis and my offspring is the morning star. Never again will the sky be void of me or the earth be empty of my presence.

XI.

The sky is clear and Sothis lives. For I am a living one, the son (*daughter*) of Sothis and the Great Powers of heaven have cleansed themselves for me among the stars of Ursa Major, the everlasting. My house in the heavens will not pass away, and my throne on earth will not be destroyed. The Opener-of-the-Ways has caused me to fly up to the sky in the company of my brothers and sisters, the powers of heaven. And heaven has extended its arms in welcome for me.

XII.

My seat is with you, O' Ra, and I will not yield it to anyone. I will ascend to the sky to you, O' Ra. My face is the face of falcons; my wings are those of the duck and my talons are those of Him who dwells on Cerastes Mountain. There is no evidence against me on earth among men and women and no accusation against me in the sky among the powers of heaven. For I have proved false all evidence against me; indeed, I disposed of it so that I might fly up to the sky among my brothers and sisters, the powers of heaven. I use my arms as a goose and flap my wings like a

hawk. Lo, the flier flies. O' men and women *of earth*. I *rise and fly* away from you.

XIII.

"How beautiful to behold, and how wonderful to witness," so say the powers of heaven when this royal vindicated one rises in the sky, when you, o' vindicated one, ascend in the sky with your power upon you, your awe around you, and your words of power at your feet. The powers of heaven and of earth come to you. They make supports for you upon their arms. May you ascend unto the sky and rise up in it on the *Divine Ladder*. For Ra says "The heavens and earth are given to you." Behold you have become the enduring bull among the wild bulls set against the evil one. Endure and last, o' enduring bull, that you may prevail at the head of them and at the head of the spirits forever and ever.

XIV.

I am a holy one who stands in the forefront, who lifts the forehead, a star before whom the powers of heaven are humble, and the Exalted Ones stand in awe. And it is my own hand which will raise me up. I am the one who escaped from the coiled serpent *of evil*. I have risen in a blast of fire, having turned myself around. I have travelled the roads of Heaven. I have cleansed myself on the hill where Ra raised Himself. I place the stairway. I set up the ladder and those in paradise take hold of my hand *and lift me up into the heavens*.

XV.

Homage to you, O' Ra, you who travels across the

sky and heavens, who cross the winding waterway. I have grabbed hold of you for myself, for I am a god and the son of a God. Indeed, I am a flower which came forth from the Nile, a golden flower which originates from Iseion.

XVI.

Heaven has commended this vindicated one to Ra, the Perfecter, and the Open-armed has commended this vindicated one to the Lord of Light, that He may cause yonder doors of heaven to be opened for the vindicated and bar others who have no name. Take hold of the hand of this vindicated one and carry him up to the sky that he may not die on earth among men and women.

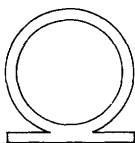
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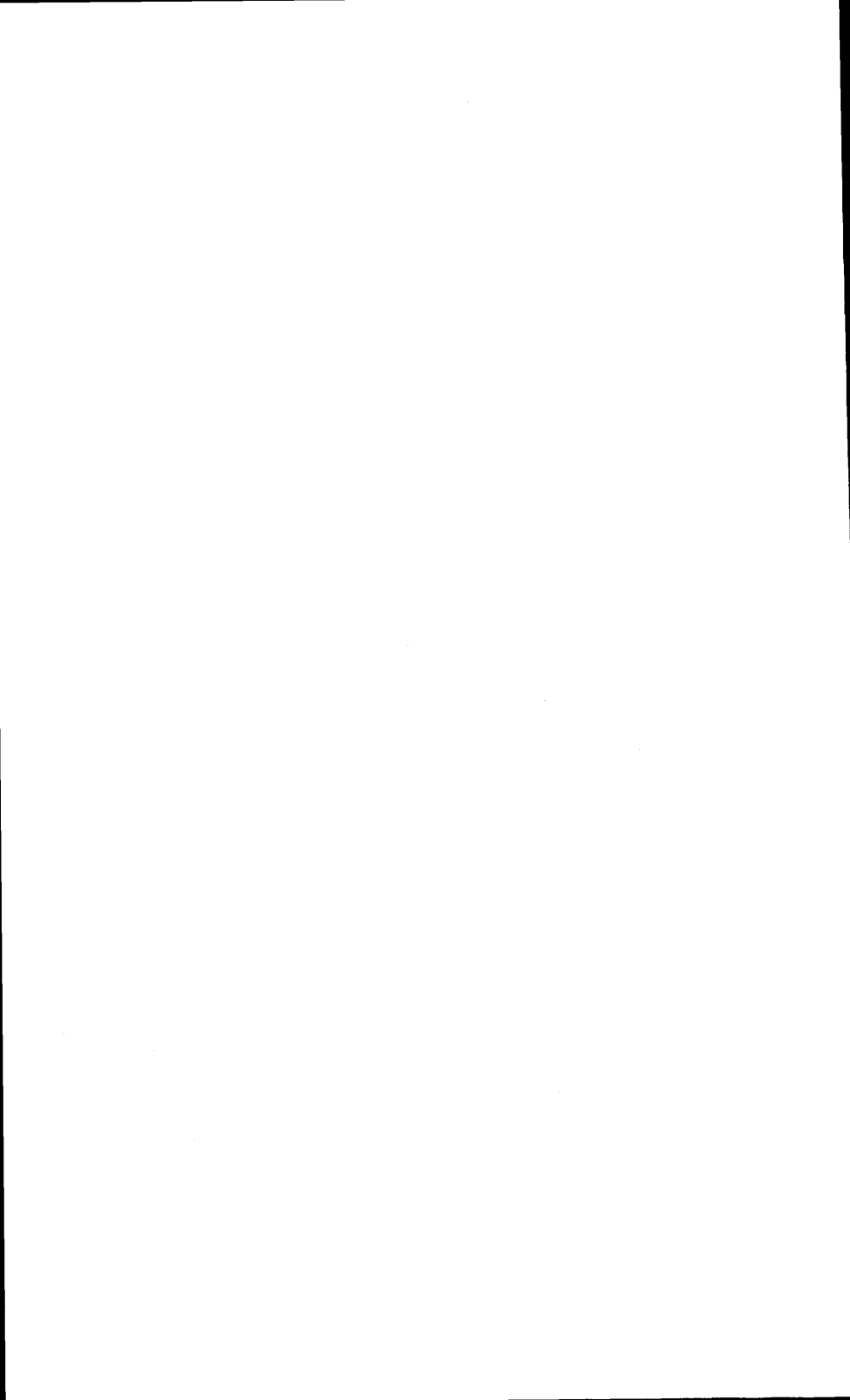
"How beautiful to behold and wonderful to witness," says Isis, sacred mother, when you ascend in the heavens, with your power upon you, your awe around you and your words of power at your feet. You are helped by Ra, the Perfecter, just as He always does. The Exalted Ones of heaven are brought to you and the exalted ones of earth are assembled for you. They place their hands under you and make a ladder for you so that you may ascend on it to the heavens. The doors of the heavens and the entranceways of the starry expanse are opened for you. Ra, the Perfecter, has gathered together the districts for you and has given you the cities of earth. You are the one who presides over Upper Egypt and Nubia. Have they killed you or said you shall die? You shall never die, but shall surely live forever. You shall be effective against them *(and)* superior to them, living and enduring forever and ever.

XVIII.

I have come to you O' Mother of Heaven, I have duly buried my father and left Horus, *the new pharoah*, behind me. My wings have grown into those of a falcon, *full of* feathers of the sacred hawk. My soul has brought me and my words of power have made me effective.

Behold me O' Ra and recognize me. I belong to those who know you; therefore know me also. If this vindicated one is raised up, I will not forget the good deed done for me. Commend me to the four fierce and raging winds which are around you and which see with two faces, the winds which confront with furious roaring those who are destined for distress, those whom they would destroy. May they offer no opposition when I turn to you, when I come to you and tell you this name of yours, "Great Flood which came forth from One-who-is-Great." I will not be blind, even if you put me in darkness and I will not be deaf, even if I do not hear your voice. Take me with you, O' Ra. For I will drive away storms for you, clear away clouds for you and break up and scatter hail for you. Surely, I will produce praises upon praises for you and adorations without end.





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