

FROM FIRST TOUCH TO SACRED EMBRACE:

THE
EGYPTIAN ENDOWMENT

Presented to
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INTRODUCTION

During the course of this paper I analyze a basic temple ceremony of the Ancient Egyptian. Both the Pharaoh and the commoner participated in these ceremonies in one of three basic religious centers of Egypt: Thebes, Heliopolis and Memphis. The time period with which I wish to deal starts with the Pyramid Age and ends with the Byzantine rule. This period of time is significant because as B. H. Stricker put it, "The main idea of Egyptian religion can be traced in an unbroken line" from these periods.¹

As we begin this journey through the Egyptian temple ceremony, the reader must remember that there are many different versions of many different rituals. The study of this paper deal with books such as the Book of Breathings, edited by J. de Horrack of the Louvre Papyrus No. 3284. The ceremonies and rituals found in these books, along with their people, time period, places, and thoughts will be the topics of this paper.

Each of the individual stages of the ceremony will be separately studied with the aids of; pictures and diagrams, as well as verbal descriptions. In addition, a brief discussion of the human touch will be made.

Officiators were an important part of Egyptian ceremonies. To receive the highest glory available, was the eternal goal of the Egyptian temple goer, but this glory could not be accomplish-

ed by oneself, hence the need of officiators.

The human touch is a moving action. Motion itself signifies life. For it is warm, not cold. It is alive, not dead. One would be led from place to place by the hand, this touch symbolized the power of leadership, and guidance for the officiator. For the initiate it symbolized: humility, meekness, security, devotion, and a willing heart.

As the title may imply, ("From First Touch to Sacred Embrace: of the Egyptian Endowment"), some ideas on touching will be discussed in this paper. However, I make no claim of being comprehensive in covering the subject of the touch.

Scholars for along time have felt that many of the rituals discussed in this paper were performed only for the dead; however, the fact that they were also done for the living is being increasingly recognized.²

PURIFICATION RITES

The first touch that occurs in the Egyptian Ceremony is nothing more than an officiator leading the initiate by the hand to the first of a series of rites in a larger ceremony. The first touch is, by itself, insignificant when compared to the later series of more sacred touches which end in the final sacred embrace. And so it is with the first rite, for it is inconsequential when compared with the later series of rites that culminate in the final rite all of which enables the initiate

to enter into the presence of God. It should be evident, therefore, that as the ceremony progresses the touch, as well as the ritual acts, become more and more significant.

To begin a description of the Egyptian "Endowment," is to begin with the purification rites. These are a series of activities that cleanse and prepare the individual for other more sacred activities which are yet to come and which require this cleaner condition. The purification rites, rather than being an end in themselves, are always preparatory to the larger sequence of ordinances.³

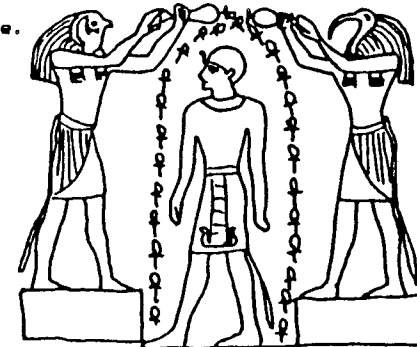
One of the first steps in these rites is accomplished by the initiate taking upon himself the name or the title of Osiris. This he must use in conjunction with his own name until the very end of the temple ceremony. It is understood, in many ancient and sacred works, that the very possession of the name of a deity gave one a degree of that deity's powers.⁴ The place for this activity was the embalming house, when the initiate was dead. But when the initiate was living, it was the temple vestry or clothing room. It always began at sunrise. It would usually take the major part of a day to complete the activities, and only one per day would be performed. In the old Kingdom these temple rites were enjoyed only by the Pharaoh and a very few high ranking priests. However, by the end of the Middle Kingdom and during the New Kingdom period the rites of the temple had been extended to the upper class and eventually even some commoners.

These purification rites included seven major elements: washings, giving incense, anointing, robing, the placing of

insignia, and sometimes the taking of a meal.

The washing was often termed a "baptism."⁵ The agent used in washings was water. Water had two major symbolic meanings. It was the source of all life in Egypt, and it was the most common means of cleaning something. Therefore it symbolized the washing away of the sins of the old person. The water used in the ceremony was housed in two vases or containers. They would be lifted up and poured simultaneously over the head of the initiate.

The people who officiated in the temple rituals were called priests. They were only people, but nearly all the assignments filled in the temple were in behalf of some deity, and therefore, the priests represented that deity. In the case of the washings, there were two deities involved; Horus and Thoth. They are shown here in the act of washing the candidate. The water is represented by use of an Egyptian symbol called the ankh, which symbolizes eternal life.



A liquid called Natron, which is sort of a natural soda, was placed on various parts of the body during the temple rites. It symbolized the saliva of Seth and thus a divine life. The

Egyptians used a similar word for the embryonic fluid of life.⁷ Natron was also used as a soap. Consequently, it is not difficult to see the cleansing symbolism.⁸ Natron balls were even chewed by the initiate to show that he was cleansed from within as well as without. He wanted to obtain purity and worthiness sufficient to make him acceptable in the presence of deity.

Incense was burned during the purification rites. The incense seemed to have at least two major purposes: one, symbolically it represented the breath of life, and two, it literally cleansed the air. The Egyptians were distinctly preoccupied with the purification of every detail before the initiate entered the temple proper, including the air he would breathe. Again signifying that the initiate was cleansed within and without. With the crowded conditions of normal populations, without sanitary conditions, even a daily breath of air would be less than desirable. Thus part of the purpose for using incense was to sweeten or purify the air in the temple so that at least it would be pleasant. The smoke from the incense also represented the very breath of life. Since the breath of life is air and invisible, burning incense became a visible, moving symbol of life.⁹

The washings were simply the first half of one stage in the purification rite. Washings were always followed by anointings. Anointing agents were nearly always oils and a liquid called *wpwnt*. Once one was washed, had his body cleansed by natron within and without, he was prepared to be anointed.

The purpose of the anointings was to sanctify the individual. It gave vigor and endurance to the body and the soul. It

also acted to revive, preserve, and protect one from the dangers that would follow. The words revive, preserve, and protect, may be thought of as life, endurance, and well being.¹⁰ This is significant when one realizes that life, endurance and well being are definitions of the symbolic *ankh*, *djed*, and *was* symbols, which are three instruments given to the initiate upon the completion of the temple ceremony. With the anointing the individual receives but a foretaste of that which is to come. In essence, one is anointed in order to qualify for the right to receive these instruments, at some future time.

This is the most sacred and holy of moments during all the royal ceremonies one passed through, with the possible exception of the sacred embrace experienced at the end of the ritual. Unlike washings or other stages of the ceremony the anointings are never depicted, due to the sacred nature of the event. In this respect it is the most holy rite. In fact, the one who administered this stage of the ceremony was referred to as the "Greatest of Anointers."¹²

The oil used in the anointings was a symbol and an agent of resurrection and eternal life. This power was enjoyed by Ptah, Horus, Seth, and Thoth, who possessed the life giving olive tree. Olive oil was used in many sacred settings and in many different cultures, and was commonly used by the Egyptians.¹¹

Different parts of the body were anointed during this stage of the ceremony. Each member of the body had a specific function to perform. Therefore, each member was touched and verbally

blessed. With the exception of being led by the hand into the place of purification, this was the first of many touches that the candidate experiences. It is obvious that when one is in a learning environment with verbal instructions the learning ability of the individual is enhanced when the sense of touch is added. In an effort to emphasize the verbal blessing given, the part of the body talked about and blessed was touched by the officiator and anointed with oil. Unlike the touch of a guiding hand, this touch had the specific purpose of administering the anointing oil. The areas of the body touched and anointed were the head, cranium, brow, eyes, nose, mouth, tongue, teeth, lips, chin, back, arms, heart, belly, buttocks, thighs, legs, feet, and toes, in that order.¹³ The blessing for each area would be that it might perform it's function well. For example: the eyes to see with, the ears to hear with, the mouth to eat and talk with, the hands to work with, and the legs to walk with.¹⁴

In both the washings and anointings, when the part of the body was touched with the liquid, the air would dry it and there would be a cool feeling. Once again the significance of touch plays a role. As the liquid dried the initiate would be reminded of the actions that had been performed.

THE NEW GARMENT, STONE, AND NAME

After the purification rites were complete, the initiate was given a special garment. The garment was white in color to

symbolize the state of purity to which the initiate had attained. It was given to the individual for the purpose of serving as a covering for his body, which was not only clean, but had been anointed and blessed. The garment also served as a protection to the body parts.

The insignias in the garment were a major reason for one's receiving it. These insignias consisted of marks which were cut or sewn into the material. These marks served as reminders and as signs of the high level of honor and authority one had attained to in that stage of the ceremony.¹⁵

By replacing the old garment with the new, one symbolically puts off the old man and becomes a new one, thus exemplifying the god which he wished to become. At this point a treading or trampling of the old garment took place, signifying the giving up of the old way of life and accepting the new. This leaving of the old and accepting of the new, is a repeated theme throughout the entire ceremony; starting with the taking of the new name, the washing away of the old, the anointing of the new, and so on. With these new garments one came to resemble and even become the god he wished to be. Thus it became the challenge of the individual involved to keep the new garment clean by his deeds. It also gave the wearer protection from evils and powers and enabled him to overcome his enemies. The garment was a symbol of identity to the sacred process, not openly to public and non-temple peoples, but to oneself and one's god. It signified the direction and dedication of the individual. Some of the garments were worn in the temple as a sign of

authorit., such as the garment of leopard skin.16

The garment always had the ensignias or marks, and they embodied cosmic symbolism. Many times the marks represented a whole ordinance. They believed that it was the same garment they had worn in a pre-existent life. In the garment of the Egyptians there were a total of five marks. Each mark was placed in one of three different sets. Each set represented a different degree of glory. Each mark also held, in its unique design, a certain mystery or representation. The first is the greeting of peace, by which one was to become a son of peace. The second is the grasp of the right hand, by which he is brought into the church. The third is the embrace by which he becomes a son.17

In Nibley's work Sacred Vestments, he quotes Petrie as describing two of the marks and their positioning as being "the compass and the square on either breast." Petrie had learned this from the discovered robes of a Thebean Princess.18 These marks are called gammata marks after the third letter in the Greek alpha beth gamma, which looks like . These marks of the square meant rectitude, and uprightness; while the compass represented equilibrium, balance and the measure of all things. These same marks were found on the veil, however this will be discussed at a later point in the ceremonial endowment.

Some kinds of elements used for symbols such as water, not only symbolically represent a cleansing but literally perform that function. These kinds of symbols are very powerful. The garment is such a symbol. It symbolizes; protection, dignity, modesty. Of course these are the literal functions of clothing

as well.

Here again an element of touch is present. This time however it is much more subtle, but they are very real to the careful observer. The touch occurs every time the individual put on or took off the garment. The garment was a means of teaching, and one was reminded of its presences, teachings, and meanings, every time one dressed and undressed. It was hoped that the sacred garment would be worn on the body in such a way, that the touch of it constantly against the skin would remind one of its symbols and of the sacred vows that were associated with it.

All vows, promises, contracts, and covenants were given as a means by which initiate was shown the way to becoming a god. It was something that constantly obsessed the mind of those involved. There could be few better ways to remind one of his responsibilities than the touch of a garment against the body. Although this touch was not the human touch, the garment was made by, brought to, and placed on the initiate by living beings, and constantly reminded the initiate of the live symbols it represented.

To strengthen the idea that the initiate was putting off the old person and putting on the new, before the initiate was allowed in the temple or even allowed to participate in the preliminary activities associated with it, he was asked to remove his common street clothes and don the new garment. The clothing activities were not ended at that point, the initiate would change his garment or rather the positioning of it as he prog-

ressed through the temple ceremony.¹⁹

Something else that was given the initiate at the time of his receiving the new garment, was the receiving of a white stone and a new name. After the washings and anointings and before entering the first of many halls or rooms in the temple proper, the candidate received the stone of righteousness. It was at this point that a new name was given. Upon receiving the new name the initiate also received the stone as a token of his achievement. This stone gave the candidate a tangible seal and testimony to the actions being taken.²⁰

THE TEMPLE

After the purification rites of washing, natron, incense, anointing, and robing had been completed and a new name and stone were given, the initiate was then ready to enter the temple properly prepared. A brief description and discussion of the physical facilities used in these ceremonies will now be given.

In the Old Kingdom many of the religious ceremonies occurred in the pyramids. Many think that it was the only place of worship at the time. This, however, is speculative since evidence has been found to support the fact that temples in one form or another were built contemporary with the pyramids. Even before the Old Kingdom (2400-2000 BC), in or about the year 2800 BC, stone architecture was beginning with such edifices as the step pyramid at Saqqara. One can only assume that if the early

Egyptians were able to construct buildings which were so massive and difficult, that they must also have possessed the ability to construct buildings smaller and less complicated as well. The constructing of temples continued from 2800 BC to 332 BC (during the time that the Ptolemy Kings were in power and the greatest temple construction was in progress). Constant building of temples continued throughout Egypt until just before 384 AD when the Egyptian temples were closed.²¹

Although actual buildings may not have been constructed until 2800 BC, people of all ages have been attracted to sacred places of some kind or another. People have had different reasons for choosing their sacred space. The Egyptians held to the primordial hill in their reasoning of what was sacred and what was not. Very briefly, this means that they believed that the first life or element to come forth from the watery beginnings was the mountain. Therefore, they all believed that all life originated from the mountain.²² Out of this notion came the mountain shaped pyramids.²³

The knowledge of the symbolic meaning of the temple was crucial to the initiate and one could not have attempted even the first stages of the ceremonies without having had this knowledge presented to him. Through the ceremonies in which he participated, coupled with the knowledge of sacred space, and the importance of the physical temple central in his mind the initiate was mentally, physically, and spiritually prepared.

THE HALL OF TWO MAATS

Having been prepared by participating in all the above mentioned activities, the next stage of progress for the initiate began. Once in the temple the learning was not delivered in a lecture fashion, but rather a progressive ceremony from room to room within the temple; by way of a dramatic re-enactment of certain events and activities. Beginning in one of the rooms closest to the outside and furthest away from the center place (which was the most sacred space); the ceremony progressed deeper and deeper into the center of the temple. Each point along this progressive route could only be attained by successfully receiving all of the prerequisite portions of the ceremony.

The first place the initiate found himself was in The Hall of the Two Maats or The Great Hall of the Field of Reeds, or it was sometimes called simply The Great Hall. This room housed two giant Maat Gods. Maat was a feminine deity who symbolized every principle of social order and the entire concept of Godhead.²⁴ At this point one of the officiators would introduce the candidate, who was often wearing a crown with two Maat feathers in it. When entering each room it symbolized entering different worlds.

Part of the job of the candidate was to name the parts of The Hall of the Two Maats. Maat's presence is necessary at the moment one enters the temple to guarantee that one is a bonafide candidate for eternal glory and qualified to enter the Holy Place. Entrance to the temple absolutely necessitated the presence of Maat. The reason there are two Maats in the hall

seems to be because they represent a kind of polarity. Maat by all accounts stands for the basic principle of law and order which can only be governed by a law of opposites.²⁵ The Maats often wash and cleanse the initiate again.²⁶ Maat is a type of recommend needed by the initiate in order to enter the temple.

THE CREATION

In order to understand the next two stages, (the creation and the garden) a series of periodic explanations of the deities involved will be given; however, since the focus of this paper is on the activities of the people in ancient Egypt and not their gods, these explanations will be cursory.

From the Hall of the two Maats the candidate was next led to The Hall of Geb and Shu. It would appear that one would receive a washing and purifying ceremony upon entering this room as well. In this room a dramatization would be enacted. This enactment represented the creation of man.²⁷

The creation story constituted a focal point in Egyptian religious literature and in temple rituals. This phenomenon was not, however, restricted to the Egyptians. In Stephen Ricks' "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East", he points out that many other cultures used a creation epic in their religious worship.

In the creation epic of the Egyptians there were live characters who played dominant roles: Ptah, Thoth, Amon, Atum

and Re. There were three major religious gathering places: Heliopolis, Thebes, and Memphis. At each place the leading role of the drama was played by a different god. The god who played the leading role in Thebes was Amon, in Heliopolis it was Atum, and in Memphis it was Ptah.²⁸ Thoth seemed to always play a secondary role, not to be less important but less active in the dramatization. The fifth and oldest of the gods was Re from approximately the 4th Dynasty he acted as the supreme God common to all the rest. Re seems to be a conceptual adhesive agent in binding all the others together.²⁹

Egyptian gods were associated in a father-son relationship, which said something of their nature and purpose. They are also associated with different times of day. For example: Amon is the god of the sunrise, Re the god of noon day, and Atum the god of the sunset. This became significant, since the word for the setting sun was *ḥt*, which means to come down. The word *ḥt* means not only that the creator was pleased with his handiwork, but suggests also a resting period similar to the one mentioned in Gen. chapters 1-3. Note that *ḥt*, meaning to come down, implies that Thoth was sent down to earth to inspect the condition of things and then returned and reported to the "Most High".³⁰

Atum was unique as a creator, yet being human is just as comfortable on earth as in heaven. He worked closely with Re during the creation. Being Human and being right, that is he being the one who fits, Atum is placed on the earth. He walks and strolls in the evening. The candidate in the ceremony takes

on the role of Atum and is led by the arm and is shown the places in the gardens and is put in charge of the plants of which he freely eats. There are obvious likenesses between Adam and Atum. Even conservatives can see the likenesses. Atum is the archetype who represents all who follow. He is called the ancient one, and the one to whom the breath of life comes. It is Amon and Ptah who actually create Atum and give him this breath of life. Ptah and Re work together as creators of the world, after which Atum is born of Ptah.³¹

Amon and Ptah work together in giving the breath of life to Atum. These combined efforts of Amon, and Ptah, along with Ptah-Naunet as a heavenly mother, are the three who became the ultimate source of all humane life.³² The final step of the creation is accomplished when Atum opened his eyes.

Amon is the least known of the pantheon of Egyptian Gods. There is little history of him except that his strength lies in Thebes. He was the one who stood on the Primordial Hill and created light and order from chaos. There is so little known about him that there is no mention of him in any of the archaic texts and he is often referred to as the "Hidden One". He seems to live at the center of the universe from the beginning of time. Amon is not even his real name. In fact "Amon" is a epithet used in the place of his real name, in order to keep his identity even more hidden. Although he is the most unknown he is also considered the most intimate. It was believed that if some one accidentally discovered and spoke his name he would be struck dead. His real power started about the end of Dynasty II. After

Dynasty XI he reached his peak of power as a god. He is often associated with the Sun and therefore the same word for sun is often used in describing Amon.³³ Both Amon and Ptah were considered to be real persons not mists or spirits only. This is why it was felt that Kings and Priests were able to play their roles in the drama or re-enactment during the sacred ceremonies.

After opening his eyes, having completed the creation, and having obtained a physical body, the initiate is once again assured of eternal progression. Having been born and having forgotten all, the candidate playing the part of Atum, is introduced to his wife, after which he is asked to name the animals.³⁴

THE GARDEN SCENE

At this point the scene changes. The party now leaves the Hall of Geb and Shu and the re-enactment of the creation epic is finished. There seems to be a break in the intensity of activities. The candidate is led into a beautiful garden area. Food, drink, refreshment and a short rest are enjoyed. Although the usual seriousness of the other parts of the ceremony is not as prevalent, it is still very much a part of the endowment. The initiate does not leave the temple, this garden is located somewhere inside the building. A life of paradise is experienced. Then after some time the individual walks over to a tree in the garden and says, "Hail thou sycamore tree of the Goddess

Nut, give me of the water and of the air which is in thee." The belief was that one could live forever if he could continually receive of the water. The water was called the water of life and it came from the tree of life.³⁵

During the time in this garden one is to wear a garment of leaves. The candidate and his wife are to look for the Father and perform all the essential ordinances.³⁶

One of the dominant features of this garden area was the presence of many sacred trees. The cedar of Osiris, the vine, the sycamore, the *iborocasia*, and most importantly the *ished* tree. Many Near Eastern cultures had traditions or religious myths dealing with the *ished* tree. The *ished* tree is thought to have been an olive tree. This tree grew in the middle of the others mentioned. Every sacred temple had its sacred grove. Pools of water and other smaller plants were also present. The place represented the heavenly abode of those who die, but yet unattainable to those still living.³⁷

Every temple in Egypt had its own version of the forbidden fruit in its cultic drama. If one were to eat this fruit then everything surrounding the candidate would be changed. When the initiate came out of the grove and had partaken of the fruit, nothing about him is as it was prior to entering. He has undergone a complete physical and mental change, and after partaking of the fruit he leaves the garden. It is of interest that the man is given the fruit by the woman. Where she gets it will be discussed at a later time. The eating of the fruit represented the consumption of a book called the Book of Knowl-

edge. Having not truly earned the book the initiate is punished by being cast out of the heavenly environment of the garden area. A punishment must attend this outcast. The initiate is promised that his new physical body will die someday. There is to be, however, one consolation: the outcasts are given the promise of bearing children. Upon leaving this stage of the ceremony the gods give a new garment to the initiate.³⁸

The serpent is another element important to the garden scene. It plays an important role in the drama, and just as every temple had its sacred grove so too each temple had its snake or serpent. The serpent is the negative force in the drama. He is the archenemy of the whole of the human race. He lives in trickery and violence. He was considered to be the "Dangerous One". Every initiate had to face him as the principle of evil, he represented the irrational and bestial side of human nature as known by every man, and which must be recognized and overcome. It is the woman who deals with the snake directly. There is a desire for the woman to advance over the man in knowledge and thus she is tempted to eat the fruit. She does so and then in some epics makes wine out of the fruit and tempts the man with the wine.³⁹ He partakes, and the result is that they must leave accompanied by the promise of death. The gods curse more than the man, in this case the serpent is also cursed and driven out of the garden. He is deprived of his arms and legs and thus exposes his vulnerable head to all who walk. He is told to depart from Re and may his head be smitten. After which Atum cuts off the head of the serpent in the name of Re.⁴⁰

THE LONG JOURNEY

Upon being cast out of the garden the participants are forced into a long journey. One might consider this a long road back. The garden was the ideal condition and the quest is for the initiate to find a way to return. This journey is necessitated because of being cast out of the garden.

Before starting his journey the initiate undergoes a series of preparations, in order to be properly equipped for the dangers that lie ahead. Many of these preparations are tools or protections that are promised by the gods. Anubis promises to guard the candidate from approaching dangers. When a series of checkpoints are reached the initiate is promised he will not be turned away. Thoth guarantees his survival, and Re blesses him with his authority. He is further blessed to be physically conditioned with plenty of food provided along the way. Sakhmet promises to forestall any adverse operations, and Horus becomes his personal bodyguard.⁴¹

At first it was thought that this part of the ritual was only for the dead, however in light of new materials and texts it has become increasingly regarded as something done for the living as well.

Like Adam, the initiate begins his journey, terrified of the unknown, darkness and dangers that surround him. The best advice to all participants is to simply keep moving. At least part of

the journey is illustrated by his riding in a ship over the sand. Some of the problems encountered are as follows: he is to be attacked by lady demons, 12 snakes will come, then more snakes until finally a great serpent called Apophis lies across the path and completely bars his passage. At this point only the prayers to Re and his super power can save the initiate.⁴² The theme of this stage of the ceremony is that one must have both guidance and protection during the journey. For without these divine helps it would be impossible to make it back.

After being cleared for the journey and having had all legal and other hindrances preceding the journey itself removed, the candidate is on his way. The body of the individual is sealed up against destruction. In order for this to be accomplished one's body was written on or marked. One also had to be dressed properly with the anointing oil, including natron behind the ears, bed natron in the mouth, dressed in two white garments, shod in white sandals, then his tongue was painted green.⁴³

All this qualified Horus to be the initiate's protector. After being given escorts and guides and having all roads opened, the initiate passes from room to room. The presence of Horus is visible above each doorway in the symbolical form of wide spread protecting wings. Each room symbolically causes the initiate a change of nature. Each of these gates or doorways represented among other things a rebirth, and a desired change in attitude, in mind, and activities. The initiate took on new responsibilities and was given new powers as he went. This was enhanced by the changing of garments or the adding of clothing

along the way. The clothing represented a shield of protection, against the evils and challenges met while on the journey. The clothing was also associated with new knowledge that was constantly being revealed along the way. This knowledge was introduced to the initiate periodically by different messengers who were divine beings that were sent from the gods. Atum or Horus became the first guide that all others would follow. Divine help is also given from Thoth, Wepwawet, Anubis and others. These jointly guide the initiate to a full knowledge of the eternities. His promise is that his soul might never die if he would discover this knowledge and follow Osiris.⁴⁴ Although they appear to guide the initiate from time to time, the messengers are not always there. Giving the candidate time to himself to be proven worthy the messengers are constantly appearing and disappearing. The constant goal in mind was to reach the life of Osiris.⁴⁵

When the ceremonies have reached the 54th line of the Book of Breathings, which reads, "Thou art firm in the possession of life, Prosperity, Health." This is a salutation reserved only for Kings, and acknowledges the real end of the dangerous journey. Having passed through all the tests, having overcome, and having been justified in all things the initiate is then told, "thine enemies no longer exist".⁴⁶

The words of Life, Prosperity, and Health in line 54 of the Book of Breathings, is sort of the last part of a formula used in the title of a king or god. Therefore it is enough in itself to indicate that this section treats the subject of the coronation rites since the formula is not applied to common mortals. The text also makes mention of a throne in heaven which further clarifies the fact that this stage accompanies the coronation rites.⁴⁷

In the dramatization it was important that the old king be buried so that the new king could mount the throne. As the initiate becomes Osiris, so Osiris become the initiate in the resurrection; without the coronation rites this could not be completed. The coronation rite of a pharaoh did not take place in a palace or in a tomb, but significantly in the temple, as part of the regular temple ordinances.⁴⁸

Since the king is the type or model for all to follow, the rites and ceremonies of the coronation becomes prominent in temple ordinances. When discovered, those who owned the different copies of the Book of Breathings were all wearing crowns. The initiate must be a priest and king in order to become a god.⁴⁹ Indeed, the very culmination of all initiations would be the coronation rites. Since the coronation rites were carried out in behalf of every one, all could experience his own coronation, like that of the kings.

Life and Health were mentioned together, showing the same trends of the "Royal" salutation. Therefore, when the only mention in all the Book of Breathings of the word Kꜣ appears

here it is natural to associate it with royalty. The exact meaning of this word is still unclear, except that it is mentioned in this context.

In the next steps the candidate enters the highest of societies. Having been recognized as a king by the official greeting of Life, Prosperity, and Health, and the possession of a Kꜣ, only one higher state remained to be attained by the initiate: his full recognition as a god.⁵⁰

At this presentation according to the Book of the Dead, one was able to justly state, "I am the oldest, a son of the Great One,... the Son of the Burning one, I am exalted, I am renewed, I am rejuvenated, I am Osiris."

Once the divinity of the king was recognized as sonship, identity with the king automatically gave one authority to that same divinity. At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom local princes imitated the royal ordinances and put themselves in the place of the pharaohs. It was first the pharaohs' ordinance that made possible the rest.

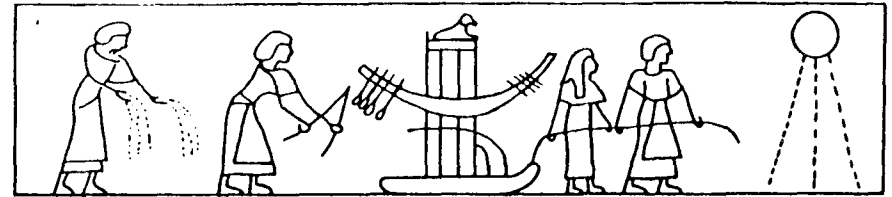
When those present wanted to recognize the arrival of a visiting deity, there was a short rite that was enacted. It was done by raising one arm to the square the other arm held to breast in a "v" shape, at the same time touching the ground with one knee.⁵¹

threat to progression and is an obstacle to be overcome. The serpent takes a leading role here at the seven gates of challenges.⁶¹

One of the last steps one passes through before being admitted into the presences of the gods is the "psychostasy", or the weighing of the soul or heart of the initiate. This judgement occurs by having the initiate's heart symbolically weighed in the balance of a huge scale against the weight of truth. What is actually being judged here is the person's wickedness or the righteousness of his heart.⁶² The way the initiate passed this last test is by proving that he had lived by the precepts of Maat. In the defence of the initiate the gods are told: "He hath given bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked." ⁶³ To top it off no negative reports are issued. Of those present all are asked if there is any reason the initiate should be denied entrance into the presence of the gods.

After all this the request for final clearance is made. The change to the imperative mood implies a different person is speaking, the opening words are, "let him enter".⁶⁴ In most versions of the Book of Breathing, this speaker is one of three or all three Gods; Thoth, Maat, and or Hathor.

The process of entering into the presence of god is accomplished by towing or drawing some kind of sled or ship toward the life giving sun. The candidate and his wife are shown here in such a scene.



65

This is not a long journey, but at first they are on land then later they draw it across a lake or pool, named Khons.⁶⁶

THE RITUAL EMBRACE

Ritual embraces are not isolated to this stage of the ceremony. It has been only by concerted effort, that its mention has been avoided until now. The most sacred embrace occurs at this point of the temple ceremony. Upon entering the presence of deity it happens between the initiate and the God of thrones, Shu.

There are many kinds of sacred embraces associated with the temple. They most often occur as proof that the candidate has symbolically embraced and accepted the new responsibilities and commitments that are associated with the vows taken in the temple. I will attempt to describe in brief some of the major embraces incurred during the temple ceremony.

The first, occurs as the initiate finishes his washings and anointings, he embraces symbolically the new life born from the washings of his old life.

The second, is during a marriage ceremony at the end of which there is an embrace that occurs between husband and

wife. This embrace however unlike others between husband and wife, is not affectionate. It symbolizes the willingness on the part of each individual to accept the other as their mate.

Third, there is a symbolic embrace that occurs when one is buried. As the sarcophagus lid is being placed over the dead body the priest reads aloud the words from the Book of Breathings. On the under side of the lid is a large painting of the sky Goddess Nut. Thus symbolically the closing of the lid represents the dead being received into the embrace of Nut into her womb, so as to be born again.

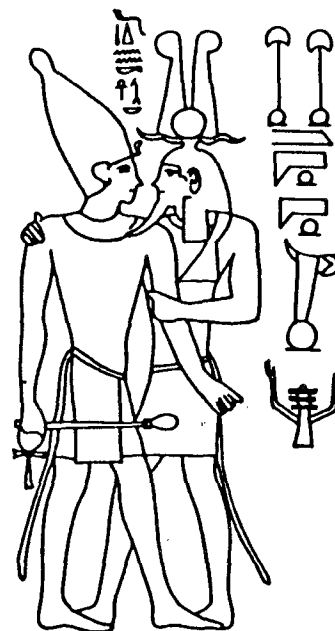
Fourth and fifth, are minor family and social embraces that occur at lesser significant times in the temple ritual.

Sixth, are a series of embraces which occur at some of the gateways or doorways of the inner temple sanctuaries. Not only at the seven gates, but as the candidate moves from major stage to major stage he gives embraces at the point of leaving and entering the old and new phase of each stage.

Seventh, is a far more significant embrace which involves the "Father". This occurs in a "Celestial Room", when the "Creator" himself embraces the initiate to represent the fusion of the heaven bound individual with the sun god Re.

Eighth, and most sacred of all is an extension of the seventh embrace, something called the "Royal Embrace". The climax and finishing of the coronation rite was the ritual embrace of father and son. The Egyptian word for this was *gbbg* and meant embrace of the Father and the Son. It is interesting that the plural form means enthronement or installation. This

embrace is the very moment of passing to the greatest glory. In the Pyramid texts as well as others, the most common deity portraying the possession of the Father is Atum. This marks the end of the long and dangerous journey back to the presences of the gods that each temple goer went through. His enemies are no more, the dangers are over, and he is pronounced guiltless and worthy of the presence of deity.⁶⁷



Through this embrace there is a donning of power, by which he was joined to the sun god Re and received all power and dominion. It symbolized indissoluble togetherness, an enduring

relationship between god and man and the actual binding of that initiate, to that relationship.

This last embrace served partially as a recognition rite. The initiate was expected to give to the officiating priest certain passwords in response to certain questions put to him. At one point a certain formula was exchanged which had to be repeated back exactly. This was done in a low voice so as not to be over heard by others present.⁶⁹ Although the formula was not written any where, it was shown by the use of three symbols:



Ankh



Was



Djed

70

These three as previously mentioned give a clue as to what this formula was about. The Ankh represented the navel string and is associated with health and life. The Was stood for power, dominion, and lordship. The Djed is associated with the backbone and represented life, durability, stability and protection.⁷¹

The place where the last embrace happens is at a barrier, which separates the initiate from the eternities. The candidate or his guide begins by the request, "Glorious one, reach me thy hand, . . . let thy voice come forth".⁷² Then from behind the partition, Osiris then converses with the initiate. Osiris then

somehow put his two arms upon the partition or covering. This covering is not solid because one must speak through it.⁷³

Once the initiate had passed the questioning of this last embrace, he could be united with the gods in their realm. The veil was parted and he stepped through. The temple endowment now came to a close in a blaze of glory, for the initiate stepped out into a court onto which was reflected from a pyramid the full power of the sun thus symbolizing the joining of the initiate with the sun god Re.⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

There are few cultures, Past or present, which have been so centered in religious activities as that of the Ancient Egyptians. Their ceremonies were complicated with covenants, vows, promises, and secrecies. A few select groups such as the masons, Hopi Indians, and a few small christian faiths, have similar activities in their own religious ceremonies, and see deep significance in Ancient Egyptian religious rites.

Although the human touch was only briefly discussed, it is clear that there are definitely effects the individuals involved with the ceremony. Beginning in a small and insignificant way, one is led to begin the Purification rites by the hand. This is the first touch, but has little effect on the rites themselves. During this first rite as the liquids of the water and oil were applied the touch becomes more significant. Then again as the liquids dried, the cool feeling came as reminders of the vows taken. Then the garments felt against the skin was the constant touch, which subtly witnessed its importance. As one entered the temple proper and participated in the reenactment of the creation, one was reminded of the creation of the human sense of touch. The touch being motion is a moving symbol of life. The Garden scene and Long Journey continue the ceremony and maintain the elements of the touch. At one point, the initiate is beaten as a harsh reminder that by means of touch

one could lose his spiritual life if he did not keep the promises from the temple. The touch progressed to a climax when the initiate took part in the Sacred Embrace of the Coronation rites just prior to the entrance into the presence of the gods.

There is much to be gained and learned from the Ancient Egyptians, who were advanced in many ways. The human race progresses best when people learn from past people's mistakes, rather than insisting upon making their own.

NOTES

- 1 Hugh Nibley, The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975),
- 2 Ibid., p.183.
- 3 Ibid., p.96.
- 4 B. Porter and S. Ricks, "Names in Antiquity: Old, New, and Hidden" (Unpublished Paper), 1.
- 5 Nibley, Message, p. .
- 6 Ibid., p.46.
- 7 E. A. Budge, Book of the Dead 3 (New York: Putman, 1913), Pl. B.
- 8 A. M. Blackman, "Some Notes on the Ancient Egyptian Practice of Washing the Dead", Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 5 (1918), 118.
- 9 Nibley, Message, p. 97.
- 10 Ibid., p.99.
- 11 A. H. Gardiner, "The Coronation of King Haremhab", Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 39 (1953), 26.
- 12 Nibley, Message, p. 99.
- 13 S. Bjerke, "Remarks on the Egyptian Ritual of Opening the Mouth and its Interpretation", Numer 12 (1965), 213.
- 14 A. Moret, Kings and Gods of Egypt (New York: Putman, 1912), 88.
- 15 E. A. Budge, The Book of the Opening of the Mouth (London: Kegan Paul, 1909), 187.
- 16 H. Nibley, "Sacred Vestments", (F. A. R. M.), 3.
- 17 Ibid., p.4.
- 18 Ibid., p.10
- 19 Ibid., p. 15.

20 Nibley, Message, p. 120.

21 Serge Sauneron, The Priests of Ancient Egypt (New York: Mouton & Co., 1960), 191.

22 C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 251.

23 Ibid., 249-251.

There is obviously much more to the subject of sacred space, but due to the limited purpose of this paper, whose primary topic does not deal with sacred space, I have simply chosen to mention the fact that sacred space does exist and is significant to the ancient Egyptian.

24 R. Draper, "An Egyptian Endowment", (Unpublished Paper), 4.

25 Nibley, Message, p. 118.

26 Ibid., p. . "There is reference to as many as four different washings in four separate halls."

27 F. J. Horrack, Le Livre des Ceremonies d'ouverture des sépultures du Musée du Louvre (Paris: Klincksieck, 1877), 110-137, lines 19-20.

28 A. H. Gardiner, "Hymns to Amon From a Leiden Papyrus", Zeitschrift für Ägyptische 42 (1905), 35.

29 Nibley, Message, p. 131.

30 Ibid., p. 132.

31 Ibid., p. 133.

32 A. H. Gardiner, "Hymns", p. 39.

33 Nibley, Message, p. 135.

34 Ibid., p. 135.

35 Budge, Opening, p. 458.

36 E. Navville, Biblical Archaeology and Social Iconography (n. p.), 13.

37 T. E. Peet, The Present Position of Egyptian Studies (Oxford, 1934), 68.

38 Nibley, Message, p.177.

39 E. A. E. Reymond, The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian

Temple (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 34.

40 Nibley, Message, p. 179-180.

41 Horrack, Excalibour, lines 29-54.

42 Nibley, Message, p. 183-184.

43 A. Frankoff, The Shrines of Tutankhamon (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1962), 32-33.

44 Klaus Baor, "The Breathing Permit of Hor", Dialogue 3 (Aut. 1968), 132.

45 Budge, Opening, p. 226.

46 Nibley, Message, p. 197.

47 Ibid., p. 198.

48 Gardiner, "Coronation", p. 25.

49 Nibley, Message, p. 198.

50 Horrack, Breathings, lines 59-60.

51 Nibley, Message, p. 202.

52 Ibid., p. 236.

53 Horrack, Breathings, lines 59-60.

54 Nibley, Message, p. 204.

55 Ibid., p. 205.

56 Ibid., p. 211.

57 A. H. Gardiner, "The House of Life", Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 24 (1938), 157.

58 Draper, "Egypt. Endowment", p. 5.

59 Nibley, Message, p. 218.

60 Ibid., p. 219, 220.

61 Raymond, Mythical Origin, p. 107, 209.

62 F. Griffith, Stories of the High Priests of Memphis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 153.

63 Horrack, Breathings, line 92.

64 Ibid., line 93.

65 Nibley, Message, p. 234.

66 Ibid., line 98.

67 Nibley, Message, p. 242-243.

68 Ibid., p. 251.

69 Ibid., p. 250.

70 Draper, "Egypt. Endowment", p. 6.

71 Ibid., p. 6.

72 Nibley, Message, p. 250.

73 Ibid., p. 251.

74 Draper, "Egyptian Endowment", p. 6.

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