

## *Yx22 – Clerical Quackery 2 – The Judgment-After-Death Lie in ancient Egypt*

This has been a tough one. In fact, trying to learn this stuff is a lot like studying physics: the more you learn, the more you learn that you don't know; the deeper you dig, the deeper the hole you find yourself in!

Anyway, for this 22<sup>nd</sup> installment (!) of this series of posts dealing with what I call the God Lie and for this second installment of this series of posts dealing with what I call Clerical Quackery, my plan is to continue down the list (displayed in the previous post) to try to expose at least a little of the history of the lies

- That gods exist,
- That people have immortal souls imbued by the gods,
- That people's souls are judged by the gods,
- That the dead are ruled by the gods...

More specifically, my goal for this post is to try to outline at least a little of some early history of the Judgment-after-Death Lie, in particular, as it arose in Egypt. At the outset, though, I should repeat that I'm incompetent to expose all aspects of the history of such lies – a caveat that I repeat in an attempt to defuse charges against me of engaging in “historical quackery”!

Perhaps a comment on ‘quackery’ would be appropriate. Thus, if someone professes to know and attempts to profit from what he or she doesn't know, then that someone can be appropriately charged with professional quackery, i.e., lying for profit.

For example, I have no qualms about charging clerics with quackery, since they “make a living” by claiming that they know what can't be known, e.g., what happens to people's “immortal souls” in some “afterlife” (both “immortal souls” and “afterlife” being meaningless concepts). Selling such nonsense is apparently easier than working for a living. As Voltaire said:

*A clergyman is one who feels himself called upon to live without working at the expense of the rascals who work to live.*

Similarly, if I claimed to know the history or, more generally, the archaeology of the speculation that people's souls are judged after death (in

particular, how the idea started and how it evolved), then I'd be vulnerable to the charge of "archaeological quackery", because in reality, I don't know – nor does anyone else, as far as I have been able to determine.

Therefore, in an attempt to at least deflect charges of being an archaeological or historical quack, let me not only admit my incompetence (and point out that my only "profit" from my efforts is the hope that I'll be able to help some youngsters break free from their indoctrination in religious balderdash) but also invite those more knowledgeable to correct inaccuracies in these posts. In the main, what I'm trying to do in these posts is "just" show what I've found (mostly on the internet) about what those more competent have learned about the God Lie, in general, and for this post in particular, about the Judgment-after-Death Lie as it developed in ancient Egypt.

In general, the Judgment-after-Death Lie seems to have resulted from what was a to-be-expected amalgamation (or evolution) of three related experiences:

- 1) Primitive people's experiences with the concept of justice,
- 2) Their experiences with their own shadows, images, and dreams (leading to their speculations about the existence of sprits and souls and life-after-death), and
- 3) Their observations of regeneration (or what was considered to be "rebirth") in nature.

How rapidly the amalgamation of those three ideas occurred is (as far as I know) unknown; it appears to have depended on the period and its circumstances.

Thus, in prehistory the evolution of those ideas may have taken 10,000 years (but perhaps a single person had the idea!), in Egypt and Mesopotamia it seems to have evolved during a period of at least 2,000 years, while during a particular period in Jewish history (when the idea of judgment-after-death was already widespread throughout the Middle East), the amalgamation appears to have occurred within a few decades or less (during the forced Hellenization of the Hebrews under Antiochus Epiphanes and then the Maccabean revolt). Below and in subsequent posts on this topic, I'll sketch at least a little of the evidence supporting those claims; in this post, I'll focus on the lie as it developed in ancient Egypt; I'll organize the material in this post under the three topics listed above, starting with:

## 1. Justice

It seems reasonable to speculate that, of the three concepts listed above, ideas about justice probably came first, because soon after we're born, Nature teaches all animals the meanings of natural and personal justice.

As I've reviewed early in my online book,<sup>1</sup> natural justice is just the principle that all effects have their causes (the principle of causality), and personal justice is just the consequences of natural justice applied to individuals. For example, if a monkey uses a boulder to try to break a nut, and if, instead, the boulder hits his hand holding the nut, then the monkey experiences both natural justice (the effect had a cause) and personal justice (the effect had a personal consequence). As a summary,<sup>2</sup> it's personal justice to generally get what we deserve – and, we hope, not get what we don't deserve.

For social animals such as monkeys, dolphins, elephants, and humans, interpersonal (or social) justice is personal justice for cases in which the interaction is not with something inanimate (such as a boulder) but with another member (or members) of the same species. As a result, social justice is subjective. As Emerson said:

[One man's](#) [interpretation of social] [justice is another's](#) [interpretation of social] [injustice](#).

Given the data showing that animals such as monkeys display a sense of social justice,<sup>3</sup> it therefore seems reasonable to assume that primitive people similarly sought social justice. In fact, evidence shows that at least by about 3000 BCE, the ancient Egyptians “deified” the concept of justice (and more) as their goddess Ma'at. Thus, as Wallis Budge stated in his amazing and important 1908 book *The Gods of the Egyptians*,<sup>4</sup> Ma'at was:

...the personification of law, order, rule, truth, right, righteousness, canon, justice, straightness, integrity, uprightness and the highest conception of physical and moral law known to the Egyptians.

Similar seems to have occurred in ancient India. Thus, as described in an excellent article on Philosophy of Ethics in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

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<sup>1</sup> At [http://zenofzero.net/Part\\_3x.html](http://zenofzero.net/Part_3x.html).

<sup>2</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/J2JusticeandMorality.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/J3InterpersonalJandM.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://www.bencourtney.com/ebooks/egypt/>.

The *Vedas*<sup>5</sup> are, in a sense, hymns, but the gods to which they refer are not persons but manifestations of ultimate truth and reality. In the Vedic philosophy, the basic principle of the universe, the ultimate reality on which the cosmos exists, is the principle of *Ritam*, which is the word from which the Western notion of right is derived.<sup>6</sup> There is thus a belief in a right moral order somehow built into the universe itself. Hence, truth and right are linked; to penetrate through illusion and understand the ultimate truth of human existence is to understand what is right...

Whether the Hindus obtained such an idea from the Egyptians or *vice versa*, or whether the ideas of Ma'at and Ritam developed independently is unknown (as far as I know). There are indications, however, that such ideas were common in the ancient world, suggesting widespread sharing of ideas from ancient Egypt to ancient India and beyond. Thus, in ancient Persia, the similar deification of 'truth' and 'righteousness' appears in Zoroastrianism as *Asha* or *Asha Vahista* ("Best Truth"), in the earlier Assyrian myth *Enuma Elish* (and in still earlier Sumerian myths) similar deification is called *Mummu*, and as I'll outline in the final chapter<sup>7</sup> of this book, in ancient China, perhaps as long ago as 2500 BCE but certainly at least by 1200 BCE, the similar idea of order in the universe was called the *Yin-Yang* of the *Dao*.

Further, it seems understandable that primitive people would have been impressed by the order they perceived: the Sun came up every morning and set every evening; the Moon's regularity became apparent; seasons came and went, and with them, vegetation responded in a familiar way; people were born, grew, married, had children, and died; the wind blew, the ocean waved, and the stars behaved in a regular manner. Given that (similar to essentially all animals) primitive people had concluded that all effects have their causes, and knowing nothing about astronomy, biology, chemistry, and so on (through the rest of the alphabet!), it would then be expected that people concluded that such regularity must be caused by a powerful, knowledgeable "controlling agent" or "god", such as Ma'at, Mammu, Asha, Ritam, or the Yin-Yang of the Dao.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Rig Veda* (meaning "praise knowledge") was written in about 1500 BCE, but its oral tradition seems to go back at least a thousand years earlier.

<sup>6</sup> That is, besides the unfortunate derivation of 'right' from the Latin word *rectus* (meaning 'ruled', suggesting the horrible concept that whatever the ruler said was "right"), the word 'right' is suggested to be derived from the Indo-European base *reg* meaning "straight, put in order".

<sup>7</sup> At [http://zenofzero.net/docs/Z\\_The\\_Zen\\_of\\_Zero.pdf](http://zenofzero.net/docs/Z_The_Zen_of_Zero.pdf).

Wikipedia's thorough article on Ma'at adds:<sup>8</sup> “Ma'at was also personified as a goddess regulating the stars, seasons, and the actions of both mortals and the deities, who set the order of the universe from chaos at the moment of creation.” In some myths, Ma'at is described as the Sun god's (Ra's) daughter; in the figure below (from the Wikipedia article), she's depicted with her telltale ostrich feather; also, notice the staff in her right hand and the cross or ankh (symbol for 'life') in her left hand.



Thousands of years later, Ma'at seems to have evolved into the Gnostic Christians' Sophia (goddess of Wisdom), who the now-orthodox Christians adopted as the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit (in their trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost).

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<sup>8</sup> At <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma'at>.

Consistently, the Gnostics criticized the now-orthodox Christians for their assumption that the Holy Ghost impregnated the “virgin” Mary; for example, in his gospel,<sup>9</sup> Philip states:

Some said, “Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit.” They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?

In Egyptian mythology, Ma’at is frequently associated with the ibis-headed god Thoth, depicted below;<sup>10</sup> his “beak” is also sometimes considered to be a representation of the lunar disc; in some myths, Thoth is Ma’at’s consort.



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<sup>9</sup> At <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gop.html>.

<sup>10</sup> From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thoth>.

Thoth is another Egyptian god whose genealogy is confusing (at least to me): in reality, Thoth may have been the (human!) friend of (the human!) Osiris; if so, the god Thoth is then the deification of a person. Possibly as a result of Thoth's assisting Osiris in Egypt's establishment, the god Thoth is then described as the god of magic, writing, religion, science, etc.

In some Egyptian myths, Thoth (similar to Ma'at) seems to be the deification of concepts – not only concepts similar to those deified by Ma'at but also the concept of mediating or arbitrating between good and evil. In other Egyptian myths (e.g., see the referenced Wikipedia article), Thoth is:

... the heart and tongue of Ra as well as the means by which Ra's will was translated into speech... without his [Thoth's] words, the Egyptians believed the gods would not exist.

Subsequently, Thoth (or Ma'at) was transplanted into the philosophies and religions of the Greeks, Hebrews, and Christians. The following are three examples of such transplants of Egyptian ideas about original order and wisdom:

- 1) Thoth (whom the Greeks called Hermes) and/or Ma'at evolved into Heraclitus' and Plato's "Logos" (meaning 'word' or 'reason' or 'order' or "the principle of divine reason and creative order"),
- 2) The Hebrews appear to have adopted Thoth and/or Ma'at as Wisdom, "the master workman", e.g., from *Proverbs* 8, 12–30:

I, Wisdom, dwell in prudence... The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old... I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the Earth... before he had made the Earth... When he established the heavens, I was there... I was beside him, like a master workman...

- 3) Thoth and/or Ma'at (transformed into the Logos and/or Wisdom) then appeared in [orthodox] Christian "holy scripture" (*John* 1, 1) as:

In the beginning was the Word [or, in the original Greek version of the text, "the Logos"], and the Word [or, in the Hebrew tradition, Wisdom] was with God, and the Word [i.e., for the ancient Egyptians, Thoth] was God.

What a pity that someone before Darwin didn't see (or wasn't successful in showing others) that "the natural order" was (and is) to evolve from the simpler to the more complex, rather than *vice versa*. It could have saved the world from at least 5,000 years of religious, metaphysical (viz., "supernatural") insanity!



## 2. Rebirth After Death

As for when people adopted the idea of an “afterlife”, in an earlier post<sup>11</sup> in this series and in an earlier chapter,<sup>12</sup> I reviewed at least a little of the substantial amount of archeological evidence from tens of thousands of years ago and interpreted to show that most prehistoric peoples adopted ideas about life-after-death. Their conceptions of what sort of life was available after death are (of course) unknown, but a common assumption is that primitive people must have thought life-after-death would be similar to the life-they-knew, since their dead were buried with implements, trinkets, etc. that were needed or cherished in the life they knew.

It seems likely that ancient people first developed the idea of rebirth (after death) from observations of “rebirth” (or regeneration) of vegetation, but as far as I know, evidence of that speculation doesn’t appear until some of the first myths were written, after ~3000 BCE. In an earlier chapter,<sup>13</sup> I sketched how Mesopotamian (viz., Sumerian, Akkadian, Kassite, and Assyrian) myths suggest how ideas changed, over the course of about 2,000 years, about life-after-death and judgment-after-death. I also sketched some of the changes in similar ideas among the Greeks, illustrated by writings from Homer to Plato, during a ~400-year period. In that earlier chapter, I purposefully avoided describing how such ideas evolved earlier in ancient Egypt, because the evolution seems to have been so complicated! Here, I’ll “take the plunge” and try to at least outline how such ideas seem to have evolved in Egypt – although, once again, because I’m no historian, *caveat lector!*

In contrast to Mesopotamian myths that mention life-after-death and judgment-after-death, the Egyptian myths are so explicit and elaborate that they boggle the mind. In view of time and space constraints (and, in truth, in view of my relative disinterest in any wild speculations, let alone interest in data-less ideas about life- and judgment-after-death), I won’t describe Egyptian myths in much detail; as readers can determine from searching on the internet, many others have described the myths extensively. Instead of digging into such details, I’ll emphasize aspects of Egyptian myths that will be relevant to achieving my goal for this and the next few posts. That goal is to provide at least a little evidence describing:

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<sup>11</sup> At <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/09/basic-ideas-borrowed-for-bible.html>.

<sup>12</sup> At <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix02SpiritsSoulsandGods.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> At <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix11ChangingIdeas.pdf>.



- 1) How Mesopotamian ideas about “the afterlife” seem to have dominated the first part of the Old Testament (OT),
- 2) How those Mesopotamian ideas in the OT about “the afterlife” started to change later in the OT (e.g., in the *Book of Daniel*), caused by a confusing array of influences, first from the Zoroastrians, then by the Greeks (whose ideas originally were influenced by the Egyptians and then were influenced by the Persians, whom the Greeks had conquered), and then by the Romans (whose ideas were influenced by the Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians), and
- 3) How Egyptian (and Persian and Greek) ideas about life- and judgment-after-death completely dominated the New Testament (NT), the Koran (or Quran or Qur’an), and various “sacred scriptures” of the Mormons.

Ancient people seem to have developed the idea of rebirth not only from the annual revival of vegetation but also from observations of repeated patterns of astronomical bodies, including:

- The Sun (“reborn” both daily and annually, the latter soon after the winter solstice, celebrated in essentially all ancient cultures and still every “Christmas”, when Jesus and Mithras and Horus were allegedly born),
- The Moon (reborn monthly, after being “dead” for 3 days, similar to claims about the “resurrected” Jesus as well as similar claims made about many earlier “gods”),
- The constellations (e.g., in the Zodiac, see the figure<sup>14</sup> below, “reborn” annually), and
- The planets (with varying times for “rebirth”, including Jupiter’s 12 years and Saturn’s 30 years, both claimed to be significant “periods” in the life of Horus, Jesus, and other “gods”).<sup>15</sup>

In addition, there are hints that at least by 2000 BCE and quite possibly earlier, both Egyptian and Mesopotamian priests were aware of the period for “the great year”,<sup>16</sup> that is, the ~26,000-year period of precession of the Earth’s rotation axis (e.g., the ~26,000 years from now when the Earth’s rotation axis will again return to pointing at the “North Star”, i.e., Polaris).

As a result of this precession of the Earth’s rotation axis (and the associated “precession of the equinoxes”), the constellation of the Zodiac that arises just before dawn at the spring equinox advances by one constellation every

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<sup>14</sup> From [http://visav.phys.uvic.ca/~babul/AstroCourses/P303/Module1\\_p3.htm](http://visav.phys.uvic.ca/~babul/AstroCourses/P303/Module1_p3.htm).

<sup>15</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix07StarStories.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_year).

~26,000 ÷ 12 constellations  $\cong$  2,200 years. For example, 2,000 years ago, the constellation Pisces (the fish) rose just before dawn of the spring equinox, whereas ~200 years from now, Aquarius (the water carrier) will – and therefore the lyrics of the song “Aquarius” in the musical *Hair*:

This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.



The time of the spring (or vernal) equinox was apparently monitored by ancient people in “Stonehenge-type” structures. At the time of the spring and autumn equinoxes, the Sun (of course) rises exactly in the East and sets exactly in the West, everywhere on Earth.

The precession of the equinoxes (and of constellations) arises mainly because the gravitational forces on the Earth from the Sun and Moon don't act through the center of the Earth (as a result of the Earth's equatorial bulge and the Moon not being on the solar plane), causing an unbalanced torque on the Earth about its center.<sup>17</sup>

Audrey Fletcher suggests<sup>18</sup> that the ancient Egyptians recognized the effects (but, of course, not the cause) of the precession of the equinoxes at least by ~4400 BCE, the start of the Age of Taurus. This was when the constellation that the Mesopotamians and then the Greeks called Taurus the bull first appeared just before dawn at the time of the spring equinox. Fletcher further suggests that the “world's first historical document”, the Narmer Palette (or Narmer Plate) doesn't commemorate the uniting of Upper and Lower Egypt (as I mentioned in an earlier post and as is suggested in a Wikipedia article<sup>19</sup>) but instead commemorated the start of the Age of Taurus.

In any case, the beginnings of the various “astrological ages” appear to have been important, because the astrologically fixated clerics apparently invented new gods (and associated sacrifices to the gods of “sacred” animals of the Zodiac) with the start of each age.<sup>20</sup> Thus,

- The bull seems to have been sacred during the Age of Taurus the bull (~4400–2200 BCE),
- To start the Age of Aries the ram (~2200–0 BCE), the bull was killed (e.g., in subsequent myths about Gilgamesh and about Mithras), i.e., in astrological terms and because of precession of the equinoxes, Taurus the bull no longer was the constellation that arose just before dawn at the spring equinox; instead, Aries arose, and sacrifices were subsequently made (e.g., by the Hebrews) to the ram or lamb, and
- To start the Age of Pisces the fish (~0–2200 CE) the lamb of God (aka Jesus) was killed (i.e., the constellation Aries, the ram, no longer arose just before dawn on the first day of spring; instead, Pisces did), the followers of Jesus (including nuns, which is the Chaldean word for ‘fish’) became “fishers of men”, Jesus allegedly fed the multitude with two fishes (i.e., Pisces), and even today, Christians put fish decals on their automobiles!

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<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precession\\_\(astronomy\) - Cause](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precession_(astronomy) - Cause).

<sup>18</sup> See <http://ancientegypt.hypermart.net/narmerplate/index.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmer\\_Palette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmer_Palette).

<sup>20</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix09ChangingGods.pdf>.

Maybe when the Age of Aquarius starts in about 200 years, people will discontinue looking at their daily horoscopes (of course named after the Egyptian god Horus) and finally demand a halt to all such astrological and clerical quackery.

But such happy possibilities aside for now, data are available to help establish early dates when people carefully monitored the Sun's behavior, e.g., at the site at Stonehenge, England, which seems to have been built in about 3000 BCE. To date, what appears to be the first such structure was recently found in what is now Egypt's Nubian Desert; it has been dated (via carbon isotopes in wood associated with the site) to be from about 5000 BCE. In addition, arrangements of the stones at the site suggest that it may have been established by 6400 BCE.<sup>21</sup>

At a minimum, the "Nabta Playa calendar site" demonstrates that its creators were avid "sky watchers". Further, though, it seems reasonable to infer that they were impressed with the regularity and "rebirth" of the Sun and specific constellations. In particular, there are suggestions that the stone structure was used not only to mark the summer solstice but also to locate the three stars in what the Greeks called "Orion's belt".

By the way and not entirely incidentally, questions continue<sup>22</sup> about whether the Egyptians identified just one of the bright stars in the Orion constellation as their god Osiris, or if Osiris was the entire "stick man in the sky" (i.e., what the Greeks called Orion and what at least some Sumerians seemed to have called Gilgamesh). In any event and as far as I can tell, it's unknown why the Egyptians became so fixated on the stars, a fixation succinctly summarized in their expression (the mantra of all astrologers): "as above, so below" – rather than the more realistic "as below, so above"! Nonetheless, what seems to be a reasonable speculation is the following.

Surely one of the most significant events in the lives of the ancient Egyptians was the annual flooding of the Nile. Without a calendar to record the date of the flood, people must have been unable to prepare for it. Eventually, however, someone noticed that the flooding occurred each year, 70–72 days after the brightest star in the sky (i.e., the fourth brightest astronomical body in the sky – after the Sun, Moon, and Venus) disappeared

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<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabta\\_Playa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabta_Playa).

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.legon.demon.co.uk/osirion.htm>.

in the West, i.e., when it first appeared in the East just before dawn. The Egyptians identified this star with the goddess Isis, which is the star the Greeks called Sirius. As a result of Sirius' role in Egyptian life, in their myths and rituals 70 (or 72) days became a pervasive number, representing the time between death and rebirth. As examples,

- 1) In the Isis/Horus myth, Isis searches for Osiris' body for 70 days before Osiris was "resurrected",
- 2) Isis disappears for 70 days before giving birth to Horus, and
- 3) "When a king died, his body was mummified, then interred in a pyramid or other tomb. By custom, burial took place 70 days after death, when the king was 'reborn' in the stars."<sup>23</sup>

Subsequently, the number of days that Sirius/Isis was invisible, 70 (or 72), appears frequently in the Abrahamic religions. Thus,<sup>24</sup>

- Seventy souls went down to Egypt to begin the Hebrew's Egyptian exile (*Genesis 46: 27*),
- Seventy elders were assembled by Moses on God's command in the desert (*Numbers 11: 16–30*),
- The Old Testament (OT) allots three score and ten (70 years) for a man's life (*Psalms 90: 10*),
- According to Jewish tradition, there is a core of 70 nations and 70 world languages,
- In Jewish tradition, there were 70 men in the Great Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of ancient Israel. (*Sanhedrin 1:4*),
- Ptolemy II Philadelphus ordered 72 Jewish elders to translate the *Torah* into Greek; the result was the *Septuagint* (from the Latin for "seventy"),
- The Roman numeral seventy, LXX, is the scholarly symbol for the *Septuagint*,
- In the *Gospel of Matthew, 18: 21–22*, Jesus tells Peter to forgive people seventy times seven times,
- In the *Gospel of Luke 10: 1–24*, Jesus appoints Seventy Disciples and sends them out in pairs to preach the Gospel, and

<sup>23</sup> From <http://souledout.org/nightsky/dogdays/dogdays.html>.

<sup>24</sup> From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/70\\_\(number\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/70_(number)).



- [Seventy is a priesthood office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints \(the Mormons\).](#)

As well, there are three references to the number 70 in the Koran, a report<sup>25</sup> on the internet states that there are (then) 106 references to the number 70 in the Islamic Hadiths (although I haven't verified that claim), and of course, Islamic warriors who are killed in some clerically defined "holy war" are promised 70 (or 72) perpetual virgins in paradise to finally relieve their culturally (and therefore clerically) imposed sexual frustrations.

As another aside, the word 'sirius' in Greek means 'scorching', suggesting that the star Sirius was so named by the Greeks not only because it was so bright but also because, each year, it first arose before dawn during the hottest days of the summer. This so-called "heliacal rising" (with heliacal referring to a star's rise near the Sun or Helios) is "[the first, brief, visual appearance of a star on the eastern horizon before sunrise; on the prior morning, sunlight makes the star invisible.](#)" Further, it appears that the phrase "the dog days of summer" (which the Romans described as *caniculares dies*) were so named not only because the dogs probably were inactive in the heat but also because such days started with the heliacal rising of Sirius, which is located in the constellation Canis Major (i.e., in one of the constellations imagined to be Orion's two hunting dogs, Canis Major and Canis Minor). Sirius is also called "the dog star".

But returning to the ancient Egyptians, the Greek biographer and philosopher Plutarch (c.46 – c.120 CE) wrote: "[Sirius is the one consecrated to Isis, for it brings the water.](#)" Apparently this discovery was so significant (because the people – or at least the astrological priests – then had a way to predict the Nile's flood) that this heliacal rising of Isis/Sirius was taken as the first day of the Egyptian calendar. Not knowing that the flooding of the Nile (in mid-July) arose because of springtime rains in the headwaters of the Nile (in central Africa), the effective use of Isis/Sirius to mark time in an annual calendar confirmed to the ancient Egyptian the "truth" in their mantra "[as above, so below](#)" and seemed to provide "proof" that the stars were gods, controlling events on Earth.

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<sup>25</sup> At <http://void.nothingness.org/archives/situationist/display/7990/index.php>.

Accepting that the stars were gods controlling events on Earth, the ancient Egyptians apparently found that it didn't require much of a leap in imagination to accept the claim that their leaders (who obviously had control over many events on Earth) were also gods, destined after death to join the "heavenly host" of stars. Consistent with that conclusion, with the bounty of the Nile Valley providing substantial leisure time, with an amazing administrative structure that developed (taxing the harvests and then paying the people with the grain that had been collected in taxes – a scheme that every government in the world has been copying for the past ~5,000 years!), and probably consistent with women's desires to get the men folk out of the house (!), the most elaborate burial edifices the world has ever known were constructed.

Their pyramids, however, apparently didn't satisfy the egos of the rulers; in addition, they had their tombs inscribed with boastful statements of their stature and accomplishments. The Pyramid Age<sup>26</sup> began in about 2800 BCE. One of the oldest inscriptions was for King Snefru, who ruled for ~24 years in about 2600 BCE and who oversaw the building of the first "true" pyramids [large, and orientated east-west rather than north-south, apparently reflecting an emphasis on the Sun god (Ra) rather than on the stars].<sup>27</sup> Snefru's son, Khufu, was responsible for building the Great Pyramid at Giza. The inscription on Snefru's tomb states:<sup>28</sup>

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, favorite of the Two Goddesses [probably Isis and Ma'at], Lord of Truth, Golden Sun-god, Snefru. Snefru, great god, who is given power, stability, life, health, joy of heart, forever. Subduer of the Barbarians.

Subsequent tomb inscriptions were even more boastful, as recorded in what are now called *The Pyramid Texts*,<sup>29</sup> found in the pyramids of the kings Unas (c.2350 BCE), Teti (c.2340 BCE), Pepi I (c.2300 BCE) and Pepi II (and three of his queens, c.2200 BCE). Illustrative is the inscription on the tomb of King Unas (or Unis), which includes:

The sky is clear, Sothis [Isis/Sirius] lives, I am a living one, the son of Sothis [i.e., I'm Horus-the-Younger]...

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<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.robertbauval.co.uk/articles/articles/70days.html>.

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/snefru.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> At [http://www.archive.org/stream/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft_djvu.txt).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramid\\_Texts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramid_Texts).



My house in the sky will not perish, my throne on earth will not be destroyed, for men hide, the gods fly away. Sothis has caused me to fly up to the sky in the company of my Brethren (the circumpolar, “imperishable” stars)...

Appointment as “Great One” is given to him [Unas] by Orion [Osiris], father of gods. King Unas has dawned again in the sky, shining as lord of the horizon.

Further, the inscription describes Unas as being not only a god among men but also a god among gods – who eats other gods! It’s now called “The Cannibal Hymn” and includes:

A god who lives on his fathers, who feeds on his mothers...

Unas is the bull of heaven, who rages in his heart, who lives on the being of every god, who eats their entrails...

[The goddess] Shesmu cuts them up for King Unas and cooks for him a portion of them in his evening kettles (his evening meal). King Unas is he who eats their charms, and devours their glorious ones (souls). Their great ones are for his morning portion, their middle-sized ones are for his evening portion, their little ones are for his night portion.

King Unas is the “Great Mighty-One” who overpowers the “Mighty Ones”. Whom he finds in his way, him he devours...

Possibly the above is describing how the stars disappear either in sunlight or with the annual rotation of the Earth about the Sun, but possibly it suggests that some ancient Egyptians practiced cannibalism. If the latter possibility seems unsavory to the reader, consider the subsequent Christian “Eucharist” ritual (copied from a similar ritual in Mithraism), in which Christians symbolically eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus!

In any event, obviously *The Pyramid Texts* became “ritualized” (no doubt from the encouragement of the priests), eventually including no fewer than 759 “utterances” that the deceased king was to recite to ensure his eternal life. Relevant to these posts dealing with the life-after-death lie, *Utterance 373* is particularly relevant:

Oho! Oho! Rise up, O Teti!  
 Take your head, collect your bones,  
 Gather your limbs, shake the earth from your flesh!  
 Take your bread that rots not, your beer that sours not,  
*Stand at the gates that bar the common people!*

That is, the line in the above *Utterance* that I italicized states that eternal life was only for the kings, not for “the common people.” It therefore appears that, in the earliest Egyptian period, only the kings laid claim to eternal life among the stars. Subsequently, however, apparently some of the “nobles” claimed similar. Thus, *The Inscriptions of Harkhuf, The Explorer* (on the walls of his tomb) include:<sup>30</sup>

O ye living, who are upon earth, [who shall pass by this tomb whether] going down-stream or going up-stream, who shall say: “A thousand loaves, a thousand jars of beer for the owner of this tomb.” I will [...] for their sakes in the nether world. I am an excellent, equipped spirit, a ritual priest, whose mouth knows [“a promise to intercede with the powers of the hereafter on behalf of the living who repeat a prayer for the sake of the deceased”].

As for any man who shall enter into [this] tomb [as his mortuary possession, I will seize] him like a wild fowl; he shall be judged for it by the great god.

I was one saying good things and repeating what was loved. Never did I say aught evil, to a powerful one against any people, *(for) I desired that it might be well with me in the great god’s presence...* [Italics added]

The last clause in the above quotation is, as far as I know, the first indication that other than Egyptian kings expected a chance for eternal life; i.e., that they would be judged, after death, “*in the great god’s [i.e., Osiris’] presence.*”

### 3. Judgment after Death

Given the people’s speculations about life-after-death derived from the “rebirth” of vegetation and astronomical bodies, and given that Nature had taught people the meaning of ‘justice’, then upon experiencing injustices, the people probably began to speculate about the possibility of attaining justice in their next life, possibly thinking something similar to:

Well, if there’s no justice in this life, at least we’ll finally get justice in the next life – when everyone will be judged – and get their just desserts!

King Teti, however, stated that the gates were barred for “the common people”. But “people power” eventually prevailed: after approximately a thousand years (!) of corruption, by the kings and their clerics and then in

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<sup>30</sup> From the multi-authored, 1917 book *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East – Egypt* available at <http://www.archive.org/details/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft>.

addition by “the elite” (such as Harkhuf), the social order began to collapse and the world’s second, known, political-revolution occurred.

Recall from an earlier post<sup>31</sup> in this series that the first such revolution occurred in Mesopotamia, led by Urukagina in about 2350 BCE. The result was to (temporarily) curb the excesses of the priests. In his great on-line book *The Ancient World*, Frank E. Smitha describes circumstances leading up to the revolution in Egypt as follows:<sup>32</sup>

Egypt’s politics, like its religion, changed. Local authorities who had been appointed by ministers at the king’s court were allowed to bequeath their positions to their sons. Their descendants became hereditary nobles, and they believed that their positions were part of the god-given order. The new hereditary nobles wished to be united with Osiris after death, as was the king. And if the opportunity presented itself – if a king were weak or lazy – some nobles ruled their domains without interference from the king.

Feuds within royal families and problems involving the succession of kings led to the demise of many Egyptian dynasties. When the eighth dynasty collapsed, around 2130 BCE, nobles took control over what had been units of the king’s army stationed in their area, and these nobles began to rule on their own. Kings remained, at least in name, but for two centuries no pharaoh ruled over the whole of Egypt, and common people suffered under the control of the local nobles. This happened during a period of unusual dryness in Africa and low flooding of the Nile. Famine appeared. Common Egyptians became violent, and anarchy swept north and south along the Nile. Peasants seized property. Servants overpowered their masters and made their masters servants. It was written that the high-born were full of lamentations and the poor full of joy. And taking advantage of the anarchy, people from Nubia (called Cush by the Egyptians) came north and settled in Egypt, as did mercenaries from elsewhere.

Rebellions in different areas failed to unite with each other, and eventually nobles with armies suppressed the uprisings. Amid the warring, the same tendency that brought unity to Egypt a thousand years before brought unity to Egypt again. One ruler (from Thebes) spread his power over the whole of Egypt. Shortly thereafter (around 1900 BCE), someone usurped power at Thebes. This was Amenemhet I, who began a new dynasty – the twelfth...

The new king had learned from the past. He believed that it was his duty to promote justice – as embodied in the goddess Ma’at. The worship of Ma’at now included a belief that, during the social upheavals, the gods had abandoned Egypt, and that it had been prophesied that a king would come and end the injustice. And it was believed

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<sup>31</sup> At <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/09/basic-ideas-borrowed-for-bible.html>.

<sup>32</sup> From <http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/index.html>.

that the prophecy had been fulfilled. The king was aware that poor people and nobles expected their king to be more concerned with their welfare than had kings centuries before, that they expected a system of justice that redressed mistreatment. The king and his ministers were more concerned than were previous kings about protecting common people from exploitation. The king opened positions in government to people of ability from outside his family.

Nobles were allowed to retain some of their powers, and they received recognition of the place in the afterlife that they had wanted. *Commoners were also recognized as having an afterlife, and it was now believed that commoners would meet Osiris when they died, and that Osiris, working with Ma'at, would judge people entering the underworld.* [Italics added] The Egyptians now believed that before one entered the underworld, his or her sins were put onto scales of justice. An ostrich feather represented Ma'at, and if an individual's sins outweighed the ostrich feather he was rejected. Commoners saw their sins as weighing little, for most of them expected an eternal afterlife of paradise in pleasant labor, maintaining their earthy status amid kindly gods.

But in reality, wouldn't you know it, the clerics won again. Whereas previously they had power only over the king (through massaging his ego), and then power over both the king and the nobles (dictating the rituals required to achieve "eternal life"), once the people also claimed their "right" to live forever, the clerics then controlled the imagination of everyone!

As for detail of the rigmarole that the clerics of ancient Egypt concocted and that the people imagined they'd need to follow to achieve eternal life, they're mind-boggling in their complexity. I don't see much point in reviewing the complexity (many websites provide full details), but in the remainder of this post, I want to show at least a little of the imagined "judgment ceremony" to provide a contrast with another crazy concoction by the Mormon's "first prophet and seer", Joseph Smith, Jr.

To outline the imagined judgment ceremony, which is specified in astounding detail in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* [or *Book for the Dead* or *Spells of Coming (or Going) Forth by Day*],<sup>33</sup> I'll rely on the great presentation at the Crystalinks website.<sup>34</sup> It starts with the following figure.

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<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_the\\_Dead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_the_Dead).

<sup>34</sup> At <http://www.crystalinks.com/egyptafterlife.html>.



In this figure, both to the far left and the far right of the “balance scale” (the purpose of which I’ll get to) are depictions of the goddess of truth, Ma’at. Measuring with the scales (kneeling) is the jackal-headed Anubis. Immediately to the right of the scales (perhaps recording the result of the measurement) is the ibis-headed Thoth. The balance, itself, was imagined to compare the weight of the sins of the deceased (the fellow to the left of the scales, in “the house coat”!) as they weigh on his heart, which is on the left pan of the balance) against the weight of Ma’at’s feather (shown on the right pan). If the sins of the deceased weren’t “light as a feather”, if they outweighed Ma’at’s “feather of truth and justice”, then the god Ammut (shown at the center, with “crocodile head and hippopotamus legs”) would devour the deceased’s heart – which would be the end of him! Along the top and bottom of this figure are shown the 42 (!) gods (each representing a Nome or province of Egypt), whose names the deceased (namely, in this case, a fellow called Hunefer) must know and to whom he must make his (42) “negative confessions”.

In an earlier post, I displayed the full list of these “negative confessions”. Here, I’ll list only a few, but I’ll include the names of some of the gods to whom the “confessions” (or claims!) were made:<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> From <http://bookofthedeath.book-lover.com/bookofthedeath10.html>.

O Usekh-nemmit [“He of long strides”], comer forth from Anu [Heliopolis], I have not committed sin.

O Fenti [“He of the nose”], comer forth from Khemenu [Hermopolis], I have not robbed.

O Neha-hāu [“Stinking member”!], comer forth from Re-stau, I have not killed men.

O Neba, comer forth in retreating [or “who comest and goest”], I have not plundered the property of God.

O Set-qesu [“Breaker of bones”], comer forth from Hensu [Herakleopolis], I have not lied.

O Uammti, comer forth from Khebt, I have not defiled any man’s wife.

O Maa-anuf, comer forth from Per-Menu [Panopolis], I have not defiled myself.

O Tem-Sep, comer forth from Tetu [Busiris], I have not cursed the king.

O Nefer-Tem, comer forth from Het-ka-Ptah [Memphis], I have not acted deceitfully; I have not committed wickedness.

O Nekhen, comer forth from Heqāt, I have not turned a deaf ear to the words of the Law (or Truth)...

In the second figure (shown below, copied from the same Crystalinks website;<sup>36</sup> originally from the *Papyrus of Hunefer*), more of the imagined “judgment ceremony” is depicted. At the top left, the deceased is addressing 14 senior gods,<sup>37</sup>

...beginning with Heru-akhuti or Ra (Sun), Tem (Tower), and Shu (Emperor). Then comes Nut (Star), Seb/Geb (Earth), Tefnut/Sekhmet (Strength), followed by a repeat of Horus, Isis, and Nebthys. Then come H\*u (Ministrant of Cups), Saa (Ministrant of Discs), Uat-rest (The Way of South, the goddess of dreams), Uat-meh\*t (The Way of North, the Full Moon [meh\*uatchit]), and Uat-ament (The Way of West, goddess of the abode of dead). Mut, The Vulture Mother Goddess of Egypt is the Empress. The Vulture Mother Goddess of Egypt is the Empress.

<sup>36</sup> At <http://www.crystalinks.com/egyptafterlife.html>.

<sup>37</sup> From <http://www.dpedtech.com/TThnfr.pdf>.





At the lower left in the above figure, the jackal-headed Anubis is leading the deceased (Hunefer) toward “the balancing act” (shown in detail in the earlier figure). In the next scene, the measurement is being made by Anubis and possibly the result is being recorded by Thoth. In the third scene (near the center), the falcon-headed Horus (presumably Horus-the-Younger) leads the deceased toward the final judge of the dead, Osiris, behind whom stands both his sister-wife Isis (in red) and his sister Nephthys (in green), standing so close together that it’s a little difficult to detect that both of them are there. Osiris “holds the symbols of Egyptian kingship in his hands: the shepherd’s crook to symbolize his role as shepherd of mankind, and the flail, to represent his ability to separate the wheat from the chaff.”

Now, finally, for comparison (with all that Egyptian nonsense!), consider the nonsense perpetrated by Joseph Smith, Jr., the “first seer and prophet” of the Mormons.

At the “official website” of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (aka the LDS or Mormon Church),<sup>38</sup> as part of the “sacred scripture” called *The Book of Abraham*,<sup>39</sup> there is Facsimile No. 3,<sup>40</sup> shown below, with its accompanying EXPLANATION, as given by prophet (profit!) Joe himself – and to which I’ve added the notes that appear in brackets.

<sup>38</sup> At <http://www.lds.org/>.

<sup>39</sup> At <http://scriptures.lds.org/en/abr/contents>.

<sup>40</sup> At [http://scriptures.lds.org/en/abr/fac\\_3](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/abr/fac_3).





### EXPLANATION [according to Joseph Smith, Jr.]

- Fig. 1: [The numbers refer to the labels near each “subfigure” shown in the figure.] Abraham [rather than Osiris!] sitting upon Pharaoh’s throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood [rather than the unification of Upper- and Lower-Egypt] as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.
- Fig. 2: King Pharaoh [rather than Isis – couldn’t Joe at least notice her dress?!] whose name is given in the characters above his head.
- Fig. 3: Signifies Abraham in Egypt as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1. [Sorry, Joe, but that’s “the ever present libation platform that is common in nearly all drawings containing major god-figures. It is topped by the customary stylized papyrus blossom.”]<sup>41</sup>
- Fig. 4: Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt [In a dress? It’s the goddess of justice, Ma’at!] as written above the hand.
- Fig. 5: Shulem [the deceased!], one of the king’s principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.

<sup>41</sup> From <http://www.irr.org/mit/bhoh-pt1.html>.

Fig. 6: Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince. [Of course, it's actually Anubis, depicted as black and with a jackal head; Smith obviously changed the head but kept Anubis' color – and concluded that Anubis was a slave, probably with the thought: “Aren't all black people slaves?”]

Abraham [Osiris!] is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king's court [rather than welcoming the deceased to the underworld, now that he's passed “the feather test”].

Which leads me to wonder: when will the majority of the world's people support passing laws to outlaw such balderdash as was promoted by Smith, Muhammad, “Saint” Paul, Ezra et al. – and is still promoted by the clueless but conniving clerics of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism, etc.? It could be a simple law, such as: “Anyone who promotes concepts unsupported by evidence is liable for all resulting damages.” As Joseph Lewis wrote:

Let me tell you that religion is the cruelest fraud ever perpetrated upon the human race. It is the last of the great scheme of thievery that man must legally prohibit so as to protect himself from the charlatans who prey upon the ignorance and fears of the people. The penalty for this type of extortion should be as severe as it is of other forms of dishonesty.

What a revolution would result from such a law! In contrast to the world's first and second revolutions, the result would be a revolution that would make our progeny proud of their ancestors.

Yet, even now, we can be proud of some of our ancient ancestors. For example, apparently not everyone in ancient Egypt bought into their clerics' balderdash. As an illustration, in his great book *The Story of Religious Controversy*,<sup>42</sup> the ex-Jesuit priest Joseph McCabe reports that in “Professor Steindorff's *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*” there is the following “funeral song, which he describes as ‘very old and popular’.” It's commonly called *The Song of the Harper*, the earliest versions of which are from before 2500 BCE.

The gods [kings] who were in past times rest in their pyramids.  
The noble also and the wise are buried in their pyramids.  
They that built houses, their place is no longer.  
Thou seest what is become of them...

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<sup>42</sup> Available, e.g., at [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph\\_mccabe/religious\\_controversy/](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_mccabe/religious_controversy/).

No one comes thence to tell us what is become of them,  
 To tell us how it fares with them, to comfort our heart.  
 Until thou approachest the place whither they are gone,  
 Forget not to glorify thyself with joyful heart,  
 And follow thy heart as long as thou livest.

Lay myrrh upon thy head; clothe thyself in fine linen,  
 Anointing thyself with the truly marvelous things of god.  
 Adorn thyself; make thyself as fair as thou canst;  
 And let thy heart sink not.  
 Follow thy heart and thy joy  
 As long as thou livest upon earth:  
 Trouble not thy heart until the day of mourning come upon thee.  
 With joyous countenance keep a day of festival, and rest not in it;  
 For no one takes his goods with him;  
 Yea, no one returns that is gone hence.

To me, such thoughts suggest that many ancient people were skeptical of their clerics' concoctions, instead concluding that they should enjoy the life they had: "Follow thy heart and thy joy as long as thou livest upon earth." Today, many people are similarly skeptical: well over a billion of us reject all organized religions. In fact, many of us are so skeptical of clerical concoctions that we'd support laws holding clerics liable for the damages caused by their damnable lies, damages that range from distorting the ambitions of youngsters to destroying lives in wars.

Unfortunately, however, clerics still control the imaginations of the majority of the world's people. Such people are obviously quite willing to pay their clerics for stimulating their imaginations and massaging their egos. In particular, Christian, Muslim, Mormon... clerics promote a game of "make believe" in which the people (the players, payers, and prayers) are permitted to imagine that they're so important that they'll live forever in paradise with their fictitious god(s).

In such make-believe schemes (in which it apparently doesn't bother adherents that the concept of "life after death" is an oxymoron), claims are made that, when they die, "good people" (such as they, of course) will go to some speculated version of Heaven and "bad people" (such as those who point out that "life after death" is an oxymoron!) will go to a fantasy place that adherents commonly call Hell. Soon, surely science will save us from such silliness, so that, in the lyrics of Aquarius:

Harmony and understanding  
Sympathy and trust abounding  
No more falsehoods or derisions...  
And the mind's true liberation [...from clerical quackery!]