



# ***Freemasonry and the Ancient Egyptian Mysteries***

The Egyptian Rites of Isis, Serapis and Osiris  
and their comparison to Freemasonry

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Map 1: THE KINGDOMS OF EGYPT

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## **Introduction**

Before endeavouring to bring your thoughts to bear on the relationship between the Craft and Ancient Egypt, some explanation of our present ceremonies is necessary. Antient, Free and Accepted, or Speculative Masonry was, at its beginnings, a purely Christian organisation and some of the Orders, such as The Ancient and Accepted Rite, the Knights Templar and others, are a remnant of that era. In order to attract a greater number of people into the Craft whom, although worthy men, could not be admitted because of their religion, much of the Christian emphasis was removed from the various rituals.

However, the concept of the hope of resurrection into a better, or eternal, life, as taught by Christ, is maintained in the perambulations about our Lodge Rooms. We pass from Light and Life in the East through to old age in the West. From there, we encounter Death and Darkness in the North, until we finally return born again, or resurrected, to the East. This perennial quest for eternal life, or the "*Word of God*", or Truth, is something that has persisted with Man for countless ages. The Ancient Egyptians, however, first recorded this quest, and their writings have been handed down to us.



Figure A: THE "WINGED GLOBE"

Egypt has always been considered as the birthplace of the Mysteries. It was there that the ceremonies of initiation were first established. It was there that Truth was first veiled in allegory and the dogmas of religion were first imparted under symbolic forms. From Egypt - "the land of the winged globe" - this system of symbols spread through Greece, Rome, and other countries of Europe and Asia. Freemasons have always looked with great interest to Egypt as the cradle of that mysterious science of symbolism, whose peculiar modes of teaching, they alone, of all modern institutions, have preserved to the present day.

## **The Egyptian Mysteries**

The initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries was, of all the systems practiced by the Ancients, the most severe and impressive. The Greeks at Eleusis imitated it to some extent, but they never reached the magnitude of its forms, or the austerity of its discipline. The system had been organised for centuries and the Priests, who alone were the teachers of the Mysteries, were educated, almost from childhood, for the business in which they were engaged. That "*learning of the Egyptians*", in which Moses is said to have been so skilled was all taught in these Mysteries. It was confined to the Priests and the initiates. The trials of initiation, through which the latter had to pass, were difficult to be endured. None but those who were stimulated by the most ardent thirst for knowledge, dared to undertake them, or succeeded in submitting to them.

## **The Priesthood**

The Priesthood of Egypt constituted a sacred caste, the functions of which were hereditary. They exercised also, an important part in the government of the state and the Kings of Egypt were but the first subjects of its priests. They had originally organised and continued to control the ceremonies of initiation. Their doctrines were of two kinds, exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric or public, were communicated to the general populace and esoteric, or secret, were revealed only to a chosen few. To obtain the latter it was necessary to pass through an initiation, which was characterised by the severest trials of courage and fortitude.

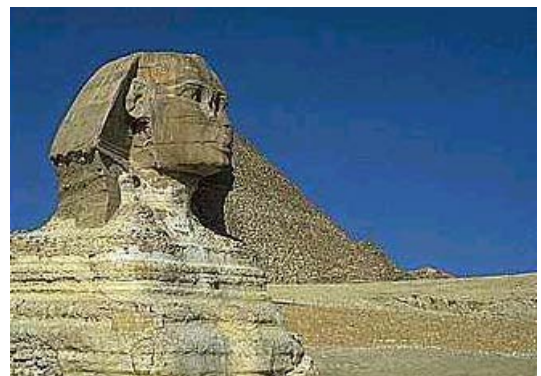


Figure B: THE SPHINX AND THE GREAT PYRAMID

The principal seat of the Mysteries was at Memphis, in the neighbourhood of the Great Pyramid. The Mysteries were presided over by the High Priest of Ptah, the human-form creator-god. The title given to the High Priest was Master Craftsman, for he represented Khnum, the ram-headed god, who created Man on a potter's wheel, under the guidance of Ptah. Both of these gods were the creations of Ra, the sun god. The Egyptian Mysteries were divided into two groups, the greater and the lesser - the former being the Mysteries of Osiris and Serapis, the latter those of Isis. The Mysteries of Osiris were celebrated at the autumnal equinox, those of Serapis at the summer solstice and those of Isis at the vernal equinox. These important astronomical events observed by the Ancients were deemed especially suited occasions for the most ceremonial of their mysterious customs.

As a pre-requisite to their ceremonies, the candidate was required to exhibit proofs of a blameless life. For some days before the commencement of the ceremonies of initiation, he abstained from all unchaste acts. He confined himself to an exceedingly light diet from which any food such as meat, fish, or any other of animal origin, was rigorously excluded. He also purified himself by repeated ablutions. The first degree of the Egyptian initiation was that into the Mysteries of Isis. The Mysteries of Serapis constituted the second degree and those of Osiris were the culmination of the Egyptian system. It is unfortunate that there is little information available which details the Rites of either Isis, or Serapis.

### **The Rites of Serapis**

It is believed that Serapis was the name given to Osiris while he was in Hades. Hence, the Serapian initiation might have represented the death of Osiris. The main place of worship and the site of the original temple to Serapis was on the west bank of the Nile, near Saqqarah. It was originally a monument to the deceased Apis bulls, the sacred animals of Ptah.

### **The Rites of Isis**

#### **Lucius Apuleius**

As to the Mysteries of Isis, the best description comes from the Platonic philosopher, Lucius Apuleius. This man was born in AD124. From the account of his initiation, it appears as though Roman and Greek mythology had found their way into the rites. He writes thus:

*"The priest, all the profane being removed to a distance, taking hold of me by the hand, brought me into the inner recesses of the sanctuary itself, clothed in a new linen garment. Perhaps, curious reader, you may be eager to know what was then said and done. I would tell you if it were lawful for me to tell you, you should know it if it were lawful for you to hear. But both the ears that heard that thing and the tongue that told them would reap the evil results of their rashness. Still, however, kept in suspense, as you probably are, with religious longing, I will not torment you with long-protracted anxiety. Hear, therefore, but believe what is the truth. I approached the confines of death, and, having tread on the threshold of Proserpine, I returned therefrom, being borne through all the elements of fire, air, earth and water. At midnight I saw the sun shining with its brilliant light; and I approached the presence of the gods beneath and the gods above, and stood near and worshipped them. Behold, I have related to you things of which, though heard by you, you must necessarily remain ignorant."*

From the manner in which this account was written it can be seen that an obligation, with an accompanying penalty, to retain the secrecy of the rite, was in use. The reference to the sun shining at midnight can also be equated to the sun's position with respect to Freemasonry, that is,

always at its meridian. The significance of the linen garment, as worn by the candidate, would also not be lost by Freemasons.

### **Proserpine and Persephone**

The apparent corruption of the Rite of Isis stems from the mention of Proserpine, the Roman pronunciation of the Greek goddess Persephone, the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. Persephone represented the corn seed, which remains concealed in the ground during part of the year, but whom, returned to her mother each year as the rising corn. This Greek myth is another Ancient concept of resurrection and eternal life.

### **The Mysteries of Osiris**

The Mysteries of Osiris taught the lesson of death and resurrection and were based on the funerary texts, which today are known as the *"Book of the Dead"*. The legend of the murder of Osiris, the search for the body, its discovery and restoration to life were scenically represented. Considering that the legend of Osiris dates from before 6000BC, it is quite remarkable how, in some instances, it parallels the story of Christ. Our own Hiramic legend could well have been based, in part, on the Osirian legend. However, before delving into the legend, an explanation of the religion of the Ancient Egyptians is necessary.

### **Misunderstanding of Ancient Egyptian Religion**

There is an old expression reputedly attributed to British tourists of the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries that goes. *"Any foreigner can understand English if it is shouted loudly enough."* In other words, it was up to the peoples of other nations to learn English, if they wished to communicate, rather than the British to learn the languages of other nations. This was held by many, including learned individuals, to be the proper method in dealing with *"damn foreigners"*. Even though French has been the Court language of the Royal Household since the time of the Henry II, the only languages, other than English, tolerated by British intellectuals were the classical Latin and to a lesser extent, Greek. There is reference to this fact in the Presentation of the Master Mason's Certificate found in our current Craft ritual.

Regarding the Western Christian world, any civilisation that could not understand English, French or Latin, or at worst, Greek was deemed ignorant. This was especially true if skin colouring was anything other than white, an attitude that, unfortunately, still exists. Although the Chinese, Japanese, Egyptians, Incas, Mayans, etc., had advanced civilisations whilst the white races were still living in caves, white man deemed himself superior. If that superiority was ever questioned, then it was usual for the white man to destroy, or ridicule, any evidence that gave credence to the suggestion that any other race could rise above that of ignorant savage



Figure C: THE ROSETTA STONE

Therefore, it was that when Europeans discovered the "wonders" of Egypt, they, while reluctantly agreeing that the Egyptians had had a reasonably advanced civilisation, classed them as illiterate. This was due to the supposed lack of any form of written language. The pictographs were thought to be no more than a primitive form of art. If there was any meaning to them, it was unfathomable. It was not until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, in

1799, that it was acknowledged that the Egyptians did have a written language. By that time, however, the attitude of Europe was that of plunder and ridicule. To mollify learned organisations, the notion that the religion of Ancient Egypt was nothing more than a pagan form of idol worship was encouraged and taught. The panoply of figurines and artefacts were represented as images of the various gods of the Egyptian pantheon. After some time, these gods were equated with those of the Romans and Greeks, though of lesser quality. The reason for this last qualification was that the former used images of animals, something that was abhorrent to biblical scholars, whilst the Romans and Greeks human images.

### **The God "Ra"**

The Egyptian name for their god was Ra. The other names referred to his different attributes, in much the same way as the various saints of the Christian religion are patrons of certain groups, or creatures. Similarly, Freemasons give different attributes to God, by naming him, *"The Great Architect of the Universe"*, *"The Grand Geometrician of the Universe"*, *"The Most High"*, and many more. Indeed, even the Jews had many names for the God of Israel. The greatest attribute of Ra was the sun, for, without it, life on earth could not exist. He was therefore, known as the sun god. He was born in the east every day and was carried across the sky in a boat called the day-bark. He died each night in the west, which was believed to be the underworld. Ra was, in character and as worshipped, almost identical to the God of the Hebrews, as is shown in the ancient texts which state:

*"God is One and alone, and none other existeth with Him; God is the One, the One who hath made all things."*

*(C/f. St. John Ch.1 v.1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word was God.")*

*"God is a spirit, a hidden spirit, the spirit of spirits, the Great Spirit of the Egyptians, the divine spirit."*

*"God is from the beginning, and he hath been from the beginning; He hath existed from of old and was when nothing else had being. He existed when nothing else existed, and what existeth He created after He had come into being. He is the father of beginnings."*

*(C/f. Revelation Ch.1 v.8 - "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.")*

*"No man knoweth how to know Him. His name remaineth hidden; His name is a mystery unto His children. His names are innumerable, they are manifold and none knoweth their number."*

*(C/f. Exodus Ch.6 v.3 - "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.")*

*"God is life, and through Him only, man liveth. He giveth life to man, and he breatheth the breath of life into his nostrils."*

*"God hath made the universe, and He hath created all that therein is: He is the creator of what is in this world, of what was, of what is, and of what shall be."*

*(C/f. St. John Ch.1 v.3 - "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was not made.")*

*"God is the father of the gods, and the father of the father of all deities."*

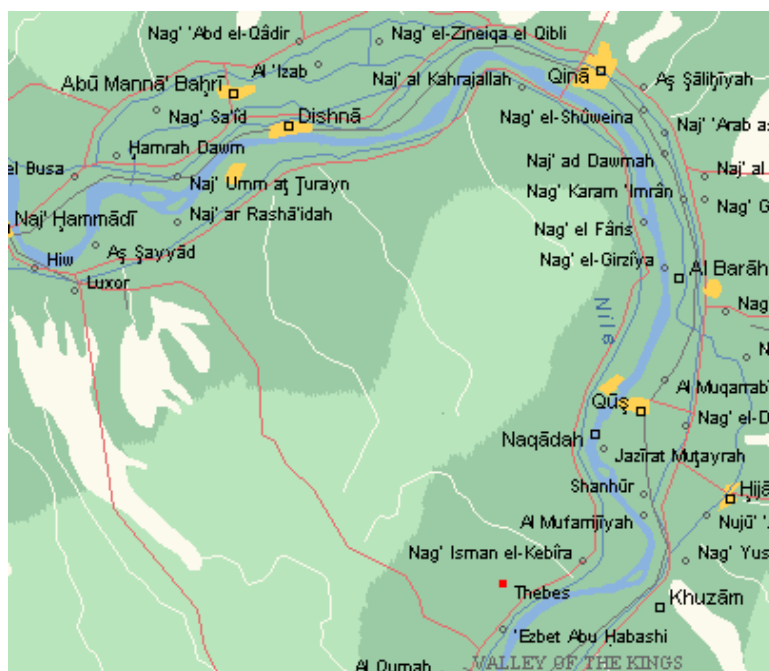
Ra, as the father of the gods, created Shu and Tefnut from his eyes; Shu was the right eye and his twin sister Tefnut was the left. Seb, the son of Shu, became the father of the first mortal gods who dwelt on Earth. These gods were Osiris, Isis, Typhon and Nephthys. Their mother was Nut.

## **The Legend of Osiris, Isis and Horus**

According to legend, at the birth of Osiris, a voice from the heavens exclaimed, "*The lord of all the earth is born.*" Osiris took his sister, Isis, as his wife and together, they ruled Upper or southern Egypt. Their capital was Abydos, on the western bank of the River Nile, about 160km downstream from Thebes. Osiris and Isis ruled their domain well and were credited with teaching their people the sciences of irrigation and cultivation. Typhon, who had taken Nephthys as his consort, was very jealous of Osiris but, although he often fought against him, he was not able to overthrow him. Finally he sought and gained the assistance of Aso, queen of Ethiopia, and seventy-two other conspirators.



Figure D: THE SITE OF ABYDOS



Map 2: THE NILE VALLEY OF THE UPPER KINGDOM

They then nailed the lid down and poured molten lead over it. The chest was then carried to the banks of the Nile, from where it was conveyed downstream by boat to beyond his kingdom and near Neref, it was thrown overboard.

When Isis, who had remained at Abydos, heard of this, she immediately set out in search of her brother and husband. After quite a long time, she received word that the chest had been washed up on the shores of Byblos, in Phoenicia. (*Byblos is now known as Jubayl and was known in Biblical times as Gebel.*) The chest had become lodged in the branches of a bush of tamarisk, which grew very quickly into a large and

Typhon had managed to obtain the exact measurements of Osiris' body and using these, he caused to be made a jewelled chest. One evening, this chest was brought into the banquet hall of the palace at Nedit, a town near Abydos. This chest was much admired by all that saw it. Typhon as though in jest, promised to give the chest to whomsoever it would exactly fit. The guests, having found that it would not fit them, invited Osiris to try, whereupon the conspirators ran to it and closed the lid upon him.



Map 3: JUBAYL (formerly BYBLOS)

beautiful tree, completely enclosing the chest. Melcarthus, the king, was so amazed at the tree's unusual size that he ordered it to be cut down and the trunk to become a pillar to support the roof of his house. Isis, on entering the kingdom of Melcarthus, became an object of curiosity to the people, especially to those of the king's household. They saw her every day at the local well, where she would hold the children spellbound with stories and fascinating magical tricks. She was eventually taken before the king, who, at the suggestion of his wife, Astarte, gave Isis a position in the household. Isis became a nurse to one of their sons.

Alone in the room set aside for her and her charge, Isis, each night, caused the child to be surrounded by flame, in order to imprison his mortal being. She, meanwhile, transformed herself into a swallow and hovered round the pillar, bemoaning her fate. Astarte, one evening, wishing to see her son and Isis, observed the latter's behaviour and, fearing for the life of her son, agreed to give Isis the pillar, from which she rescued the chest containing the body of Osiris.

At the start of her long journey home - a journey she was never to complete - Thoth, the messenger of Ra, visited her. He whispered to her the magical words that were needed to revive the spirit of her husband. These words were "*maa-kheru*", meaning "*triumphant*", or "*true of voice*". To the revived spirit of Osiris, she conceived their son, Horus. Isis gave birth to Horus whilst hiding from Typhon, at Chemmis, which was at the far eastern edge of the Nile delta. She stayed there for three years before moving on again. With her baby and the body of her husband, Isis continued on her way. She decided to leave her infant son in the care of friends in the city of Buto, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt in the Nile Delta. She also, left the chest in what she thought was a safe hiding place. Unfortunately, Typhon was hunting game in the area and came upon the chest. Recognising the body inside it, he tore the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces and scattered them throughout the country.



Map 4: XOIS (SAKHĀ)

Once more, Isis set forth in search, this time for the scattered remains of her husband's body. Aided by her sister Nephthys, she was successful in finding all but one piece. Every time she found a part of Osiris' body, she buried



Map 5: BUBASTIS (TELL BASTA)



Map 6: MEMPHIS

it and built a sepulchre over the spot and these became the centres of the Osirian cult. The sepulchres were located at Netjeru, Xoïs, Busiris, Andjet and Bubastis in the Nile Delta; Memphis, Asyut, Wenes and Wenu in central Egypt and Thinis, Nekheb, Edfu and Tjebu in Upper Egypt.



Map 7: ASYUT



Map 9: EDFU (IDFU)

Shortly after finding and burying the thirteenth piece, Isis died and her spirit joined that of Osiris in the underworld, or the West, where they were to rule for eternity.



Map 8: NEKHEB (AL KĀB)

Horus, their son, grew to manhood and avenging his father, fought and overcame Typhon after two successful battles. The first typified the victory of day over night; the second, in which Typhon was slain, was understood as the victory of good over evil. It was during the second of these battles that Typhon tore out one of Horus' eyes. Thoth later restored this eye to Horus. It is symbolised as that well recognised emblem, the udjat-eye, which is often, erroneously called the all-seeing eye. This emblem was the symbol for everything that was good, pleasant and beneficial.

The wanderings of Isis in her search could well be compared to the much later wanderings of Moses and the Children of Israel in the wilderness, in their search for the Promised Land. It might also be compared with the search made by the Fellowcrafts in the Hiram legend. The Egyptians of every period in which they are known to us, believed that Osiris was of Divine origin. They believed that he suffered death and mutilation at the hands of the powers of evil and that after a great struggle with these powers, he rose again. He became, henceforth, the king of the underworld and judge of the dead and because he had conquered death, the righteous might also conquer death. This belief was the corner-stone of the Rites of Osiris, the ceremony of which was an enactment of the number of steps deemed necessary to pass successfully into the underworld.

### **The Rites of Osiris**

The complete ceremony, together with the candidate's preparation, could take as long as seventy days, which was the time required between the death and burial of a king. Most of this time was taken in learning the necessary ritual. In order to pass into the underworld, the candidate had to be in possession of no less than one hundred and fifty-one chapters, or spells, as they are referred to in the *"Book of the Dead"*. This paper will not address all of these, but will refer only to some of the more important. To the more serious student, a reference to either a full or selected translation of the *"Book of the Dead"* is recommended. Some of the spells are somewhat similar to part of our Masonic rituals, especially the Craft, Mark, Mariners and Holy Royal Arch. Even more similar are the rubrics accompanying them. Rubrics were the written instructions to the candidate, detailing the method of incantation of each of the spells. They were written on the same papyrus rolls, preceding the appropriate spell. They were written in red, as opposed to the usual black; hence the name.

### **The "Spells" - Spell 1 to Spell 108**

Starting at the candidate's entrance into the Hall of Justice, as found in Spell 1, he is told to utter the spell to the god of that Hall. He must do this, being pure and clean and well-vouched for by Horus and being clad in white garments and sandals. (C/f. *"Being free and of good report"*, etc.) Sixteen spells later, we come to a very lengthy chapter containing many questions as well as the required answers to the same. All of these relate to the sun god, Ra. Following the statement, *"I am the Great God, the self-created"*, the candidate is asked, *"Who is it?"*, and answers, *"He is Ra, who created His names, Lord of the Company of Nine Gods."* On being asked, *"Who is He?"* the candidate replies, *"He is Ra when He rises in the eastern horizon of the sky. To me belongs yesterday, I know tomorrow"*. He is then asked, *"What does it mean?"* to which his answer is, *"As for yesterday, that is Osiris. As for tomorrow, that is Ra, on that day in which the foes of the Lord were all destroyed"*. These questions are followed by thirty more and the answers, at times, contain more than two hundred words.

### **Spell 137A - "The Great Secret of the West"**

Spell 137A is the most important stage of the Rite. This spell was the most secret and sacred to the Ancient Egyptians, for after this spell was uttered, the spirit, or in this case the candidate, was recognised as a god, or master. As such, he was now able to attempt entry into the kingdom of Osiris, through the seven gates. (C/f. *"Raised as a living corner-stone, perfect in all its parts"*.) The candidate was accompanied by four torchbearers, on whose arms were painted the names of the four Children of Horus: Hapy, Tuamautef, Kesta and Qebhsennuf, who represented the four cardinal points. The torches were made from red linen, smeared with the best quality Libyan oil, renowned for its pure, smokeless flame. Recitation of this spell guaranteed immortality to the candidate's soul. This spell was not to be repeated to anyone other than the son, or father, of the candidate, under a penalty of having his name removed from all memory. This penalty was the equivalent of excommunication, banishment and forfeiture of all possessions, titles and property of the entire family, through all generations, past, present and future.

Now in possession of the Great Secret of the West, the candidate approached the seven gates. At each gate he was challenged by the outer guardian to give the names of the gate-keeper, inner guard and watcher of that particular gate, in order to gain admission. Successfully passing through these, the candidate had now reached the portals of the House of Osiris, in the Field of Rushes - the Egyptian equivalent to the Elysian fields of the Greeks, or heaven. These portals, twenty-one in all, presented the last obstacles to overcome. Once again, in order to pass through each one, the candidate had to name the gate-keeper. At last, with all the difficulties and dangers behind him, the candidate was admitted into the Field of Rushes. There he beheld fourteen mounds, belonging to the various attributes of Osiris. From these he could obtain all of his requirements for his eternal life in the underworld.

### **Spell 151 - "The Words of the Supreme God" - The Final Spell of the Rite**

According to Spell 151, the candidate is now invested with a torch which will never die and an amulet, in the shape of a heart, upon which is inscribed the most sacred spell. Osiris himself now communicates the words of the Supreme God - words known only to Osiris, Isis and Horus and to those admitted into the presence of Osiris. All the responses and spells leading to the candidate's final entry into the Field of Rushes had to be memorised. No error was permitted and a candidate who erred was not allowed to continue with the ceremony, or try again.

In the "*Book of the Dead*", there are a further forty-one spells, or chapters. These deal with the secrets needed to ensure a happy and secure life on earth for the mummified body. Those who were preparing for death used these spells. These then are the Mysteries of the Egyptians, into which Herodotus, Plutarch and Pythagoras were initiated. But their knowledge must have been extremely limited for, as Clement of Alexandria tells us, the more important secrets were not revealed, even to all of the priests, but to a select number of them only.

## **Conversion to Christianity**

For about five thousand years men were mummified in imitation of the mummified form of Osiris. They went to their graves believing that their bodies would vanquish the powers of death, the grave and decay because Osiris had vanquished them. They had certain hope of the resurrection in an immortal, eternal and spiritual body and an everlasting life in heaven. The chief reason for the persistence of the worship of Osiris was, probably, the fact that it promised both resurrection and eternal life to its followers. Even after the Egyptians had embraced Christianity, they continued to mummify their dead. For long after, they continued to mingle the attributes of their God and the "gods" with those of God Almighty and Christ.

Never did Christianity find elsewhere in the world a people whose minds were so thoroughly well prepared to receive its doctrines, as were those of the Egyptians. For in the story of Christ, they could see parallels with the worship of Osiris. Did not Osiris also suffer a terrible death at the hands of those who were jealous of him, but rose again to eternal life? They saw Mary as a latter-day Isis, the infant Jesus as Horus. Thoth became the angel who had visited Joseph and Typhon, or Set as he later became known, was the devil, or Satan. Moreover, was not Osiris the son of the god Ra, through Seb and Shu as Christ was the son of God.

As Christianity took a more firm hold on the people of Egypt, little by little, the reasons for the mummification of the dead were forgotten. The knowledge of the art died out and the funeral ceremonies were curtailed. The prayers which the scribes had prepared for each person became a dead letter and the custom of mummification became obsolete. With the death of the art, the belief and worship of Osiris died also. From being a god of the dead, Osiris became a dead god. To the Christians of Egypt, his place was filled by Christ, whose resurrection and power to grant eternal life were, at the time, being preached throughout most of the known world.

## The "Trial of the Negative Confession"

Christians and adherents of the Old Testament are all familiar with the Laws of God, as handed down by Him to Moses and which are known as the Ten Commandments. We are taught that if we obey these Laws our souls will enter heaven. Practicing Christians are familiar also with the Confessional in which the supplicant seeks forgiveness for all his sins.



Figure E: THE DECLARATION OF INNOCENCE

The Ancient Egyptians had a system of their own in this regard, but with an interesting difference. They never confessed to what they had done. Instead, they stated that they had not committed certain acts that were considered sinful. These statements were made during, what has become to be known as, the *"Trial of the Negative Confession"*. This was also used by candidates for the Egyptian Mysteries, as an exhibition of a blameless life. It was believed that before the soul, or *"ba"*, could be united with the spiritual body, or *"ka"*, it had to undergo a trial before a panel of twelve gods, or judges. The candidate must show that he had never have committed forty-two damning offences. These twelve judges were:

<i>Ra Harmachis:</i>	<i>Horus of the horizon - the sun in full strength.</i>
<i>Temu:</i>	<i>the closer of the day.</i>
<i>Shu:</i>	<i>first born of Temu, who represents the space between the earth and sky, the light, heat and dryness.</i>
<i>Tefnut:</i>	<i>sister of Shu, who represents the rain.</i>
<i>Geb:</i>	<i>son of Shu, personification of the earth god.</i>
<i>Nut:</i>	<i>the sky goddess. She supplies the deceased with sustenance on their journey.</i>
<i>Nephthys and Isis:</i>	<i>sister and wife of Osiris.</i>
<i>Horus:</i>	<i>the ancient sun god (not to be confused with Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis). He is Horus, the elder.</i>
<i>Hathor:</i>	<i>mother of Ra, the great sky mother, who gives birth to the sun each morning.</i>

and lastly,

*Sa and Hu:* *the gods of touch and taste.*

This panel of twelve is the origin of our present jury of twelve members, as used in all major trials. Thoth would weigh the soul on a balance: the trial weight being a feather. The heart, or soul, if pure would be lighter than the feather, but if it were weighed down by guilt, the balance would tell against the supplicant.

Each attribute of Ra was named in succession, together with the name of the city to which that particular attribute was patron. This practice was similar to that used by cities and nations these days. Some of the offences not to have been committed correspond to the Ten Commandments.

1. *"Hail Usekh-nemtet, who comest from Annu, I have not done iniquity."*
2. *"Hail Hept-seshet, who comest from Kher-aba, I have not robbed with violence."*
5. *"Hail Neha-hra, who comest forth from Restau, I have slain neither man nor woman."*
9. *"Hail Set-qesu, who comest forth from Suten-henen, I have not uttered falsehood."*
19. *"Hail Thenemi, who comest forth from Bast, I have not set my mouth in motion against any man."*
23. *"Hail Maa-ant-f, who comest forth from the house of the god Amsu, I have not lain with the wife of a man."*
26. *"Hail Seshet-kheru, who comest forth from Urit, I have not made myself deaf unto the words of right and truth."*
37. *"Hail Ahi, who comest forth from Nu, I have not uttered curses against God."*
42. *"Hail An-a-f, I have not thought scorn of the god of the city."*

## **The "Book of the Dead"**

The *"Book of the Dead"* is the source, from which most of the insights into Egyptian and the sacred rites have been found. The title, *"Book of the Dead"*, is not of Ancient Egyptian origin, but is a translation of the Arabic words used by the modern Egyptian tomb-robber. The words describe the papyrus scroll found with a mummy and mean *"dead man's book"*. The *"Book of the Dead"* itself is a collection of these papyrus scrolls written over a period of some five and a half thousand years. In some form or other, therefore, this collection of texts is the oldest body of literature in the world. The *"Book of the Dead"* proves beyond all question that, from the time of the Middle Kingdom at least and most probably from a far earlier, pre-dynastic age, the Egyptians believed that the future of a man's soul depended upon the manner of his life on earth. Moreover, not only a man's soul, but a woman's soul was covered by this doctrine.

## **Conclusion**

It is to the eternal honour of Ancient Egypt that she enunciated this doctrine for the first time on earth and observed its practical import. Ancient Egypt became conscious of the moral mandate at least as early as the fourth millennium BC. They, perhaps of all men, least endowed with a capacity for abstract thinking, made here a discovery which the Greeks, for all their cleverness never made. Just as in practical life the Egyptians solved engineering problems that lay far beyond the experience of the Greeks. Thus we can see what is truly meant by the statement contained in the very first sentence of the Lecture on the First Tracing Board, that *"...the usages and customs among Freemasons have ever borne a near affinity to those of the Ancient Egyptians."*

## **Bibliography and Source of Illustrations**

### **Bibliography**

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## **Source of Illustrations**

### **Illustrations**

The illustrations have been taken from a number of sources, as listed below. The illustration relating to "The Declaration of Innocence" is taken from the papyrus scroll and is given with its British Museum registration number, followed by the number of the sheet on which the vignette is found. In some instances, these illustrations have been enhanced to enable better readability. Figures "A" and "E" have been scanned by a Mustek MFS-6000CX Scanner and have been imported as 24-bit Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) files.

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|--|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Fig. A - “THE WINGED GLOBE”</b>                 | - | John M. Stubbs        |
| <b>Fig. B - “THE SPHINX AND THE GREAT PYRAMID”</b> | - | World Art Treasures   |
| <b>Fig. C - “THE ROSETTA STONE”</b>                | - | Bridgeman Art Library |
| <b>Fig. D - “THE SITE OF ABYDOS”</b>               | - | World Art Treasures   |
| <b>Fig. E - “THE DECLARATION OF INNOCENCE”</b>     | - | BM10470/3             |

### **Maps**

- |                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>Map 1</b>      | - | Encarta 97 Encyclopædia - World English Edition |
| <b>Maps 2 - 9</b> | - | Encarta 96 World Atlas                          |