

CHAPTER 3 WHAT ARE NETERU?



11: Detailed Hieroglyph for Neter, from Leiden Museum

Neter

An in depth look into Ancient Egypt must begin with the Neteru. Egyptologists translate the Neteru as gods or goddesses but this is far from the truth. No matter what the books, Egyptologists, or documentaries continue to mass market, Egypt believed in only One God who according to A.E. Wallis Budge was “self-evident, immortal, invisible, external, omnipotent, almighty, the maker of the heaven and the underworld, the creator of all things.”ⁱ

“God is always hidden from us, yet God is also the world around us.” Hermetic Wisdomⁱⁱ

The Ancient Egyptians used the name Neter to describe this concept, known as Brahma to Hindus, Hunab Ku to the Maya, Tao to Taoists, and Great Spirit to Native Indians. All religions have always held the belief of one God. The symbol for Neter has been translated as an axe. It is claimed that the mightiest man in prehistoric days had the best weapon, thus the mightiest axe became the symbol for the mightiest thing, God. The symbol is most likely a flag, which appeared at even the earliest temples. Neter, or God, as the creator of the universe was symbolized by the wind. It is an unseen force on the earth, but as with a hurricane, holds tremendous power. This unseen God can in fact be seen, through the moving flag. Thus the flag symbolizes that just as the wind can be noticed from the movement of the flag, so to can God be seen through the movements of material objects of the earth.

An Ancient Egyptian text provides this description of Neter (referred to as God in this translation by Dr. Brugsch), “God is one and alone, and none other existeth with Him. God is the one, the one who hath made things. God is spirit, the spirit of spirits, the great spirit of Egypt...He existed when nothing else existed, and what existeth He created after coming into being...God is hidden and no man can know His form. No man hath been able to seek out His likeness, He is hidden to gods and men...His name remaineth hidden...He is the King of Truth. He gives life to man...God is the father and the mother...He produceth, but was never produced...He createth but was never created...When He hath spoken, it cometh to pass and endureth for ever...God knoweth him that acknowledge Him. He rewards him that serveth Him, and He protecteth him that follows Him.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The translation provides some excellent ideas on the Egyptian ideas of the Creator, however Brugsch has added his own personal religious beliefs into the translation by using the word Him to describe Neter. In the text Neter was referred to as “father and mother.” Thus Neter is not a male creator, but a perfect combination of both male and female energies which is the heart of any mystical teachings. The idea of a male God is a ‘modern’ revelation imposed by a male dominated society who wished to suppress feminine energy and place women into subservience. Our goal as mystical humans is to obtain a perfect blending of male (right eye) and female (left eye) energies. To have too much of one will make you unbalanced, thus unlike the perfect balance of the Creator.

It is also interesting that the Egyptian passage claims, “No man can know His form, or name.”

The Hermetica also explains, "There is nothing that He is not, for He is also all that is, and this is why He is all names...and why He has no name, because He is Father of them all...He is One not two. He is All not many. The All is not many separate things, but the Oneness that subsumes the parts."^{iv} When one understands that all that exists is God, you come to a very important place. When you see a tree, or a person, or a desk, you are seeing them but also the Creator Spirit at the same time. When you say staple, table or banana you are also saying the Creator. Thus the Creator can be found in everything, and since we (like the other objects) spring from the same source, we too must only be Neter. To injure someone actually means we are injuring ourselves because we are the only thing that exists. The alchemist refers to this concept by stating that everything on earth is just the One Thing (all is the same) which comes from the One Mind (God) yet this One Mind and One Thing are the same. It was important to show reverence and respect, for God is part of every second of our lives.

Neteru

The best way that Neter can be experienced is through its creations. The most powerful of these are called the Neteru. This brings my faithful reader back to the concept suggested in the previous section, if God cannot be named why use a name of Neter? In English we use the term God to refer to the Almighty, but use the term gods to refer false deities of cultures not as advanced as ours. Thus God and gods are really not related and are opposites of each other, but at the core this is like saying that cat and cats are not related. Today through the misguided teachings of modern religion, we have lost the true connection that the word God and gods are supposed to have. The Egyptians named the almighty Neter and what came from it, Neteru, to show a connection. What we perceive, Neteru, is actually part of Neter. The Bible itself uses many words that are all lumped together in modern translations as God, including the plural Elohim (gods).

The symbolism for Neter is a single flag, explaining the Creator is One and alone. It is the undefined Monad. The symbol for Neteru is three flags. As will be further explained in the chapter on sacred number, the Neteru must manifest in the plural. When duality, two, is present there is nothing. A male and female can be in the same room for eternity and nothing will happen until a third force, love or lust, enters to combine the opposites. From this combining of opposites create the many. In fact when one says they have three of anything, they in fact have an unlimited number. Another name for this All was the Nebertcher, meaning All-powerful and was defined as a trinity of the Neteru Amun-Ra-Ptah.

The creation of a pantheon of "gods" is not the work of some unknowing savages who do not understand the universe. It is modern humans that may be the unknowing ones. When one does not see equality in all things and all forms, this leads to battles of my God versus your untrue God. By acknowledging many different gods it allows a person to follow many different paths, understanding that each is just a way back to the All. No one God would be seen as better or worse, just an individual's choice. Teaching texts, like the Instructions of Ptah-Hotep, often left blank spaces for the student to write in the name of their particular Neteru. Again the idea that no student's deity was better than anyone else's, all were equal just simply a matter of preference as one who likes chocolate to vanilla ice cream. They are both just ice cream. Why can't we do that today with religion?

In China a myth claims that Empress Wu asked sage Fa Tsang to show the relationship between Oneness and the apparent multiplicity of life. In a room he placed eight mirrors at the compass points and one on the floor and ceiling. A candle was supported in the center of the room, and when the Empress entered it was lit. The room was filled with the splendour of the reflected light. "You see your majesty, the candle is the One consciousness of God and the reflections are the many individual consciousness of His creation." Thus the source and the reflection are the same light.^v The candle is Neter, the reflections are us, while the streams (fibers) of light that bind the two are Neteru.

How is this concept of Neteru helpful to the initiate of the mysteries? The Creator, when manifesting in Creation, does so in many different forms or qualities. These aspects, such as love, wisdom, healing, writing, anger, fish, birds are all part of the perfect All, but some parts will have greater strength or intensity than other aspects. The Hermetica stressed that God is One and the Creator of all things. The powers that bind this structure together are called energies. These energies operate all bodies, whether immortal or mortal, animate or inanimate. They are what cause growth,

decay and sensation and were the origins of the arts, sciences and every other human activity.^{vi}

However it becomes hard for a seemingly imperfect being (us) to learn and understand something that is All-perfect. It is what makes modern religions a very difficult chore to fully understand. In Egypt each of these individual aspects or energies of the All-perfect Creator, were expressed by the Neteru. Jeremy Naydler calls a Neteru “not a god, but a divine principle,” while E.A. Wallis Budge says, “Neteru refers to the great cosmic power...and are nothing more, nor less, than forms, manifestations, phases or attributes of the One God.” The One God, which cannot be represented in its true form, can be better represented through its attributes and functions. The Hermetica explains that we “speak, hear, touch, taste, walk, breathe, think...it is not a different you who does these things, but one being who does them all.”^{vii}

Each of the Neteru were given a name such as Osiris, Isis or Atum that were actually carefully chosen to reflect specific energies, vibration and number. The word Neteru, through Greek and Latin, became the English word nature. Thus the Neteru, the attributes of God, are seen in nature around us. This is why studying nature is such an important starting point for those following the mysteries. When one understands that every part of nature is in fact a Neteru, they realize that God is involved directly in each second in our life and can be communicated with through every part of nature. We know Ptah can communicate with us through every rock, Ra through every ray of sunshine. This would keep the student in a state of awareness, looking for omens that would be speaking directly to our heart, helping us open the feelings of love and increase our connection with God. We have 360 Neteru, aspects within us, yet most today use only five. Thus the other 355 are dormant, yet as we access a new Neteru within a sense of life comes from within. An ancient site or temple was designed to help open us to these inner Neteru.

Each temple in Egypt was designed to completely express one of the Neteru. Instead of having to understand this All-perfect being immediately, we can learn one aspect at a time. Love can be studied at the temple of Hathor, inner knowing from Tehuti, or physical matter from Ptah. Once one has traveled through all the temples they will have gained an understanding of all the parts, just as one learns the parts of an car engine separately. Lao-Tzu wrote, “Truly to know the mother, is to know her children.” This is a perfect example. Learn one aspect like Horus. Then learn Isis. By the time you have fully understood all of the different aspects, you will understand the whole.

Symbolism

“The mysteries and symbols are only obscure and unintelligible to the uninformed.” Plutarch^{viii}

“Without the help of symbol, no ancient scripture can ever be correctly understood.” Blavatsky^{ix}



12: Wall relief from a tomb in Sakkara showing the Mer, symbol for love from the tool for planting.

To understand a Neteru one may begin with myths and stories, but the stories alone do not provide enough information. The ancient myths were written using the technique of symbolism. A painting of a Neteru could tell you as much, if not more, than an entire story. The symbols: dress, crown, equipment, colour, position, size and gestures will provide a wealth of information about the energy the Neteru represents. This is why pictures were often included with a text or added to tomb walls because they provide extra symbolic information to compliment the text. The entire written language of the Egyptians were actually symbolic letters. Words are but a bunch of facts (information) that gets stored in our head, but a symbol is understood without words with the heart. Symbols take us to Gnosis

The symbols in Egypt were carefully chosen and were very important. Information (no matter how excellent) is useless unless it can be transferred into easy understanding for the recipient. "Thus the use of symbols [turns out] to be the exact opposite of what it is believed to be. Symbols are direct and exact, it is language (especially modern language) that is misleading and hard to understand."^x Today symbols are still used by advertisers and the media effectively. Our whole world today is influenced by symbol except we do not even realize it. Ask what is the symbol of McDonald's, a crosswalk or the Montreal Canadiens and most will know the answer. In fact we do not even need to say McDonald's or Montreal Canadiens, the symbol is enough.

In order to use a symbol most effectively, that symbol must be studied from several different angles for a long period of time. It "involved careful considered choice, and a deep understanding, based on meticulous observation of the nature of the chosen symbol." While modern Western writing is just a series of scratches upon paper that reveals a fixed concept for our conscious mind, the ancient symbol allowed what was depicted to reach our own places of meaning and knowledge. Each of the Egyptian paintings, books or architecture was designed to have different meanings that could not be understood by our rational mind. In fact, the very use of our modern language itself with a fixed word for a fixed concept actually makes it harder for any of us to reach our heart. The conscious mind wants to fix values for everything from "this is a table," to "this is Bill who never eats peas." In hieroglyphic symbolism a table could mean a table, or stability, or wood, or offerings. As our language becomes less fixed, we ourselves will become less fixed in what we believe is real in the world.^{xi}

A word can become a different meaning as time goes on. In the 1920's rubbers were things you wore on your feet, now they are the slang for condoms. A symbol by contrast does not lose its power to express truth, for the truth always exists in our heart. The more symbols that can be added to one's life, the greater chance for heart connection. The human heart (our true mind) understands

things by actually making a mental picture of it, and then our rational mind takes that mental picture and adds associations and thoughts. When the word “door” is seen in this sentence, our true mind actually gets a mental picture of a door. We don’t see the letters d-o-o-r. Thus a symbolic picture will actually translate information to our true mind far more quickly than words. Only a quick look at a US flag, grim reaper or dollar sign in a cartoon may be enough to pass on a wealth of information. Think of a business meeting with graphs and charts to explain vast amounts of material in a short space or the statement “a picture is worth a thousand words.”



13: Owl hieroglyph, relief in British Museum

A more complex example is the Egyptian glyph of the owl. In modern translations the owl is shown to depict the letter M. When shown alone in a text the usual translation of M is ‘in, into, from, at, as or with.’ This may in fact be true but it is definitely missing a key component of the information. The owl is well known for its ability to see at night. Egyptian hieroglyphs use close to fifty birds, but only the owl is shown looking towards the reader. This holds significance that few ponder. It could just as easily be drawn like the others, from the side, but it is not. The owl is turning to look at us. Thus the glyph must include the ideas of looking, penetrating, seeing beyond darkness. This is but a small example of one glyph, one idea that needs to be fully examined.

Another example comes when experts claim that the Egyptians often depicted their daily activities, like hunting or fishing, in art. Ancient Egyptians did not really care about day to day affairs, and certainly would not waste valuable time making pictures of it. They are symbol, of events to which the initiates could relate. To hunt a bull is to hunt the inner sexual desires of the body. To throw a net around birds is to grab hold of the conscious thoughts, which can disrupt our attempt of hotep (inner peace). A glyph painted in green will have a completely different meaning to a glyph painted in red. It is not because the painter ran out of the colour so decided to use another, the explanation of Egyptologists. The glyph’s colour, sound the words make, and the symbol used to carry the sound are but some of the things one needs to lean in order to fully open to the wisdom of Egypt.

To truly work with the symbols requires one to understand nature around them. If the hieroglyph of a door bolt is to be understood one needs to spend time studying a door bolt, how it operates and what it does. If a lotus is drawn one needs to spend time with the lotus and watch how it opens in the light and closes at night. As you begin to try and understand the symbols, you may begin to look at things differently. The coffee table in the living room could become a symbol. It could show tiredness as one rests their feet upon it at the end of the day, or stability as things are placed upon it. Working with the symbolic ideas behind hieroglyphs will change your entire life. It forces us to spend more time focusing on the world around us, and to see the many aspects of that world beyond what we normally think. Symbols help to open us to more of the potential of the universe. Egyptian priests spent tremendous time and effort to choose the correct symbol to explain a key concept and help with an individual’s quest for the mystical.

The Hermetic wisdom was transmitted in pictures and symbols because images could be sealed and kept pure. Thus the idea that anything Hermetically sealed is air tight. While words can be mistaken, like the rubbers, the Hermetic symbolism only explains the truth. The Hermetic truths were said to contain 72 layers, and this is why the modern word for word translation of hieroglyphic text is so incomplete. This is but one of the 72 layers of symbolic wisdom, while 71 other layers are left hidden for the wisdom of the heart. A problem with symbols is that the conscious mind will try and step in to do what it does with everything else in the world it perceives, fix it to one and only one value. The symbol is a table, and can only be a table. As long as we question the reality of the world around us, the conscious mind knows we can also start to question its reality. So instead of allowing the heart to

register the symbol and find ways to develop that particular quality in ourself, it may cause us to believe that the power is in a statue, or a painting, or some other person who is 'better than us.' Horus or Christ are not real beings or in the pages of some book, but are within all of us.

Egyptian Animal Symbols

"It is the unexplainable force of symbols which give awareness of divine things." Iamblichus^{xii}

I would now like to examine a few of the Egyptian symbols in order to give my readers a start on a new examination of all Egyptian painting, texts and reliefs. Animals were one of the main symbols used and this had led "experts" to believe that the Egyptians followed cults of animal worship, and that temples of different animal gods fought each other for supremacy in the country. There was NO animal worship in Egypt. The animal-headed Neteru were symbolic expressions of a deep spiritual understanding. Usually the Neteru were shown with a human body, and a specific animal head. The Greeks portrayed all of their gods in human form, but in Egypt the Neteru were not brought down to Earth to become human, rather they were attempting to explain that it is humans "who must be raised to become gods." That being said, some Neteru are only depicted in human form, for example Amun, Atum, Ptah, and Maat. In human form they represent the forces of the creation that sustain the universe. These energies are so powerful and important that no animal could possibly convey their meaning. Usually they are shown as having no navel, thus they are not connected to the energies of creation; they are the energies of creation.^{xiii}

Some Neteru were shown purely in animal form, and these operate only upon the physical sphere on Earth (birth, death, and decay). If they are shown in human form with an animal head, they symbolize energy within the human sphere that is connected beyond the physical world (wisdom, strength, instinct). During the myth of Horus and Set, the human depicted Neteru could not make a judgment on who should rule because they are aspects that represent the harmony of creation. Only Thoth (combined human and animal attributes) could become a judge because he had attributes that went beyond the fixed values of the creation that could operate on the physical sphere.^{xiv} Their headgear related to spiritual creative power, while what were held in their hands were the principles that could be used in the human sphere. Thus the priest would have to know not only which specific Neteru was needed for specific rituals, but also which form of the Neteru was required.

Animals were used to explain a specific idea, and are still used today when someone says they are as "sly as a fox," or "slow as a tortoise." This is another reason nature was so vital. The idea that the fox represented slyness, the dog loyalty, or a vulture motherhood would never be specifically explained to the student. These are things they would have to observe themselves. Nearly every great ancient site from Mexico to Egypt to Cambodia used the serpent symbolism. Today the serpent has gathered a very sinister meaning, due to its symbolic description in the Bible. The serpent can carry a sinister meaning, but it also carries a very positive one as well. The serpent is actually the symbolic depiction of the two forces that exists in the human etheric body. Many are aware of what the Asian teachings call kundalini, the sleeping serpent that lies coiled at the base of the spine. As explained this serpent must be awakened to rise through the energy centers (chakras) to reach enlightenment. However almost no texts today tell of the second serpent that lies within our being. While the kundalini serpent tries to take us upward, this other serpent tries to bring us back down to the physical.

Kundalini and Chakras

The modern teachings of kundalini today come from Asia. However, all ancient mystery traditions understood these great forces. The chakras are invisible locations of the body that spin energy in and out of our being. While there are hundreds of points, seven centers are key areas. They travel up the spine from the pelvis to the head. These seven centers are acknowledge in myth as seven: headed snakes, steps to heaven, gates of the underworld, liberal arts, dwarves, seals, swords etc. Each major chakra relates to one of the bodies of our being: physical, emotional, spiritual etc. Should one obtain the place of purified chakras it will lead to a state of health, love and peace. They could miraculously heal, and gain the seeing powers listed above. These were typified in medieval

paintings as a person with halo surrounding them, showing the flow of energy through the head after the purifications.

As each chakra is purified, so to is a part of our being. It is an important teaching of the ancients that one must first work on their lower four bodies (chakras) signified by the four Sons of Horus in Egypt, before working on the higher centers. Too many begin work of the upper chakras without first producing a vehicle that can handle the higher energies that it can create. It is the equivalent of plugging a 110 volt body into a 220 volt socket. We would fry ourselves. Thus to try to gain psychic powers (fifth and sixth chakras) without the lower work done, leads to the inability to use the power properly even if obtained. In fact, if the work is done in proper sequence, conditions one day will occur naturally to obtain these powers without even striving to obtain them. They are the gifts of the process and not the goal.

We all have our own personal life force, called kundalini. It is depicted as a sleeping, coiled serpent that lives at the base of the spine. The spine and upper energy centers were symbolized in Egypt by the djed pillar of Osiris. When the serpent force is aroused, either by spiritual growth or personal life training, it will rise up one of three channels. There is a male and female channel along with the central spine, and the serpent is symbolized winding its way up. This is symbolized by the caduceus held by Tehuti in the tomb of Seti I, and by his heir Hermes Trismegistus. The caduceus, now used as a symbol for the modern medical profession, depicts the three channels by which this serpent energy can flow.

The inner spiritual force is shown sleeping because it lies dormant from our lack of development. As it rises trying to reach the head, it will reach blocks we have created in our being. Since it rises from the spine, it will begin with the lowest ones first. This can lead to tremendous pain and torture while it cleans as it tries to rise, especially in cases where the person does not know that it is raising kundalini. Many illnesses or strange experiences are the result of an unknown release. Thus the need to assist the purification process as much as possible, to not waste the energy of the kundalini to face issues we can do ourself.

The downward turning serpent is related to the conscious mind. As anyone who had first tried to mediate will tell you, it is very hard to stop the mind from moving. This was symbolized as the serpent Apop, which is the constant moving and wiggling thoughts of our mind. This lower snake will always be shown with its belly on the ground (where it is keeping us) or having a great number of undulations (the moving thoughts of the mind). The kundalini serpent can defeat Apop and take us up to the height of our being, the third Eye of Horus and the ability to embrace the Light. The upward moving serpent can be shown standing upright or with wings in the sky. The ancients understood snakes do not fly, but just like in Mexico (with Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent) they are symbolizing that the kundalini serpent will give us the power to no longer crawl on the earth but gain the wings of freedom (associated with Horus) to rise to the heavens and connect with God.

Statues



14: Minkaure Statue, Cairo Museum

Every temple included great numbers of various statues. The most important were very small by comparison to some of the larger ones found in the rest of the temple. They were kept in the farthest room from the temple entrance, and represented not only that big things come in small packages, but also the distance to travel from the entrance represented the distance one had to travel on the spiritual path. Only the highest of priests had access to this room. While this statue was the most direct link, all statues were considered the earthly residences of the Neteru. Each statue of Isis gave a person the chance to connect directly with the energy of Isis, for the statue actually held some of the energy of the particular deity. When visiting the Oriental room at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, I am always drawn to a few Buddhist statues. Some of them are still alive with the energy of the Buddha that can be felt and seen when one changes their state of awareness. The main temple statues were well looked after, bathed, clothed and fed on a daily basis. It was not that the statue was revered, but the cosmic principles the statue represented.

One does not need a statue or picture of any kind to connect with Christ, Buddha or Osiris, yet until we are fully aware of this fact and of the ways to do so, the statue which has the specific energy of the deity concentrated in it could help us begin the process.

In the west many are still frightened from a line in Exodus, "thou shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness in heaven or earth; you shall not bow down or serve them for I Yahweh am a jealous God."^{xv} While this quote holds power on the human mind, one must wonder if it should. The mystic knows that all that exists is God, thus how could the All possibly be jealous with anything? It is our conscious mind that gets jealous. It is key that any image made by the ancients is really just an outer symbol which is only able to help the heart when it is ready to transcend the symbol itself. This is why there are many statues in India, Mexico and Egypt. Each symbol or myth carries a different aspect or view of the divine, which helps the aspirant better understand the nature of the divine. If one does not understand that the image is helping them to connect with a part of God, but instead worships the statue as an actual divine thing then they have gone beyond the power of the statue.^{xvi}

The Egyptians made statues not as pieces of artwork, but were carefully created to draw in the specific energies of that which they were calling on. The type of stone used, its exact mathematical measurements, or the exact timing when making it were all key factors during its creation. The Renaissance Hermeticists knew of the Egyptian wisdom when it came to statues. Marsiglio Ficino wrote about making the particular image of Scorpio when the moon is in Scorpio, "as was done in Egypt...so that the spirits of the stars are enclosed in them." They used the symbols to reach the power of God. The Western religions in time began to teach that the world of spirit cannot be reached in the physical (or otherwise everyone could do it and have no need for them), thus soon physical objects began to be seen as stuff to be possessed. An idol is a physical object, but the Egyptians understood that nothing was just a physical object, the gods could speak to them through any object or force of nature.^{xvii}

15: Sekhmet statue, Cairo Museum



The beauty of artwork, reliefs, temples or books were all a spark for humans to understand the beauty involved in creation. When a statue was finished it was then charged with the specific energy of the Neteru it was made for. Charging is similar to the idea of charging a battery today, to infuse something with power that has the space to hold it. One of the first statues I personally charged was a statue of Horus. During it I felt as if I was growing, while the statue began to glow a brilliant blue (the colour of Horus). The falcon statue seemed to come to life, with eyes that glowed and followed my rise within the room. While it never actually flew, it would not have surprised me if it actually did. After this the statue is charged, it can be used to reach Horus directly. During an Egyptian exhibit at the Glenbow, I provided tours for many mystical groups and individuals. Unfortunately most of the exhibit was only replicas. Most would not understand the need for the actual Egyptian pieces, for usually the replicas are in much better “shape” than the original. However all

ancient statues were charged, thus they hold power. The modern replicas, no matter how nice looking, are just pieces of art. An example of this was one of the few actual pieces, a statue of the Neteru Sekhmet. She was a goddess of healing and I directed an individual with a very bad back to touch the statue. Within a few moments the pain in her back was gone. I repeated this healing work with a few others who needed help. This is the power of a true statue; for they are beyond just a symbol they are the energy of the universe itself that can be tapped into through the charged piece.

“Once it is grasped that the Neteru are interwoven with states of consciousness, the religion of Ancient Egypt assumes something of its original power. The Book Of the Dead and other texts are not the products of some wishful fantasy about life after death, but are guides to the unfolding and ever more refined elevated levels of spiritual awareness.”^{xviii} When you are finally able to understand the myth, bridged with the symbolism of nature, along with sacred number/geometry (discussed in the knowledge section) - you will fully begin to understand what the individual Neteru represented, what their energies were, and more importantly, when performing healing or transformation you will know what Neteru is needed for success.

Illusion

“All things on earth are unreal...” Hermetic wisdom

The Hindus refer to the world around us as Maya, meaning illusion. To the Egyptians this was called the Veil of Isis, something draped over our eyes to obscure truth. The world we experience every day is thought of as a dual world (up-down, good-bad, male-female) but in reality there is only One. To the alchemist this would be described as every object is but the One Thing, all created by One Mind, and the One Mind and the One Thing are the same. Most people do not live in a world of Oneness but rather a world of separateness, believing they are this body, but not that person, or rock, or tree, or stream. Buddhists teach that we suffer because we believe that we are our body. Gurdjieff and eastern mystics often explained that we are in a prison and we are asleep. We have created the prison (our mind) and our first step is to be aware of this fact. They claim that we are asleep during the day, just as we sleep at night. When we wake in the morning most ignore our night experiences saying they were just a dream. With awakening it is claimed that one day we will wake from our daily consciousness and say “oh it was just life.” By this token, our waking life is as unreal as the dream world, and paradoxically then the dream world must be as real as this world. This life is really a dream, but instead of waking up from the dream, we want to wake up IN the dream.

Even the world of science is now not so sure of the reality of things. All of what we experience comes from the work of our senses. Yet our senses are just electro-magnetic impulses that are

registered in our brain. Thus the world of science now claims that the world is not really out there, but made up in our own brains. Another scientific problem has to do with the makeup of matter. Anything in our physical world, including you, is really made up of very few atoms and molecules, made up of empty space. It is claimed that if “a human being were compressed to the parts that were actually matter, they would be invisible to the human eye.” Some say that ‘empty space’ is made up of more matter (atoms and molecules) than the things we believe to be solid. Thus the Zen teaching of “matter is void, and void is matter.”^{xix} One of my teachers claims that everything you believe about the world is actually the opposite.

Of course a mystic or enlightened being is not really interested what science has to say at all, they are concerned with their personal experience which tells them that the world is not that solid. Some compare it to the 1999 movie *the Matrix*, while Graham Hancock claims eastern mystics call it a “sinister virtual reality game...a mass hallucination designed to distract souls from awakening.”^{xx} The big problem with the hallucination is that we are a part of it, not just affected by it.

However this world also exists. Life is not the illusion, but rather it is our perception of it that is the illusion. Any illusion by definition is something that is mistaken for something else. There is definitely something being perceived, but just because mind replies back chair or mountain, and out there, is not actually correct. Our conscious mind tells us what is real, and not to question its perception. No one ever contemplates if what the conscious mind is telling us is in fact correct. Actually we rarely even have the chance to do so, for our own conscious mind quickly uses words to explain these perceptions to us and others. Not only have we believed the illusion; we have become it.

Carlos Castaneda would describe that we experience the world through our assemblage point. This point registers certain energy streams out of the many that exist in the universe, based on the point's location, which we usually keep in the same place. The few filaments that the point registers is what we use to make up the world. If we move the point, we will register new filaments, thus perceive a completely different world, as happens when we dream. In fact potentially millions of ‘worlds’ exist simultaneously, but we only experience the same one during waking consciousness. He says this is because we have allowed the point to become fixed at a particular place, the same place that most other humans are fixed. Children's points are not fixed but can move easily which allow them to experience many different worlds. Those imaginary friends are only imaginary to adults; the child may have tapped into another world. In time adults and teachers will fix the child's point, at the same place as their own, by rewarding when the child sees or experiences the same world as the adult, or punishing them when they do not. Soon the child will gain the same fixed point as everyone else, so we all experience the same world in roughly the same way. While this reality exists, there are many other worlds and realities that exist on top or with this one. He would claim to not get too focused on this world as it is only here because we make it be here, by fixing our assemblage point. Our habits and patterns (created by the conscious mind) is what will over time keep the point fixed, thus the need to begin breaking our patterns and habits. However to break those habits would mean we would potentially no longer believe everything we currently believe.^{xxi}

What creates all of this illusion is really our conscious mind. That is why all the true teachings in the ancient wisdom are designed around eliminating its hold on us. Our personality, beliefs and thoughts make up the world. As long as you think, “it is a tree,” it will always be a tree. When one begins to question that perhaps it may not be a tree, the object (energy) is freed to be something else. We make our world by repeating it to ourselves over and over. Without these thoughts, our conscious mind can no longer force the energy streams to be perceived in the way our thoughts want it to. With enough time and effort, the world may one day stop. The limitations we have always thought ourselves to have, and the world we have always believed to be solid and real, just goes away. I can safely say that nothing can prepare you for the first glimpse of that moment, as it can only be experienced. It is only then that the idea of the world is an illusion really hits home. That being said, when one understands the world is an illusion and they choose at this moment to be in this particular one - they do so to the best of their ability yet still understanding its true nature.

By performing enough personal work, one can gain the shamanic technique of “seeing.” Seeing is not done with the eyes, but with the Egyptian Eye of Horus. When Horus can finally defeat Set, representing the inner forces of the conscious mind that tie us to this world and create disorder

and hate and unhappiness, the Eye will open. This Eye allows us to perceive not just with our normal eyes, but with our entire being and experience the reality of the universe as it is. This is the goal of all ancient traditions, to “see” the universe as it is not as our conscious mind makes us believe that it is. It is the core of the teachings of Tehuti/Hermes.

- i Budge, EA Wallis *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life* (Putnam 1899) p.1
- ii Freke *Hermetica* p. 43
- iii Budge *Book* p.93
- iv Copenhaver *Heremtica* (Cambridge U 1982) p.20, *Corpus Hermeticum* Book 5
- v Freke *World Mystics* 135
- vi Fowden pp.77-78; *Corpus Hermeticum* 16-5, *Asclepius* 19)
- vii Naydler p.154; Budge *Book* p.83; Budge *Future Life* p.29; Copenhaver p.42
- viii Ozaniec p.84
- ix Chaney p.83
- x West *Serpent* p.130
- xi West *Serpent* pp.58, 130; Schwaller *Sacred* p.124
- xii Lamy 24
- xiii Schwaller *Sacred* p.187; West *Serpent* p.133
- xiv Schwaller *Sacred* p.142; West *Serpent* 133
- xv Naydler p.132; *Exodus* 20,4-5
- xvi Ashby *Wisdom* p. 76
- xvii Ficino, Marsiglio *Book of Life* p.152; Naydler p.134
- xviii Naydler p.27
- xix Berendt pp.104-06
- xx Hancock, Graham *Heaven's Mirror* (Doubleday Canada 1998) p.157
- xxi Books of Carlos Castaneda.

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