Kemetic Spirituality

Lesson 5

Lesson theme: Knowing the Neteru

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Introduction:

Em hotep - Greetings in peace (hotep)

When you do studies or research you would like to answer certain question and one of them is to get to know who the Divine or Neter is as it is known in the Ancient Egyptian (Kemetic) tradition. You would like to know how the Gods (Neter) and Goddesses (Neteret) fits into the creations and other aspects of Creation. I am going to use this lesson to introduce you to an author whose books are of exceptional standard – in my own opinion – and his works regarding all of the Kemetic Neteru and their aspects is seen from modern perspective.

Now remember what I told you there are numerous writing on this subject and you have to work through all of these works to find the one that compliments your viewpoints. Normally you will read several (hundreds) books and visit a multitude of websites until you take that one book in your hand and it is like a door which opened. As I see this as guidance by Thoth (or Djehetu), who guides you to the writings where you need to be as we all understand things differently, so my books which I understand you might not be interested in and that is why I urge you to read and to build up a library.

I am not going to discuss the Neter or Neteret in detail in this lesson, but give you only an overview on what Neteru is and the different spiritual groups there was throughout the Ancient world.

Neterianism

Extract taken from Devotional Worship book of Shetaut Neter by Muata Ashby

"men and women are to become God-like through a life of virtue and the cultivation of the spirit through scientific knowledge, practice and bodily discipline"

- Ancient Egyptian Proverb

Who is Neter?

The symbol of Neter was described by an Ancient Kamitan sage as:

"That which is placed in the coffin"

The term Ntr, or Njtr, come from the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic language which did not record its vowels. However, the term survives in the Coptic language as “Nutar.” The same Coptic meaning (divine force or sustaining power) applies in the present as it did in ancient times. It is a symbol composed of a wooden staff that was wrapped with strips of fabric, like a mummy. The strips alternate in color with yellow, green and blue. The mummy in Kamitan spirituality is understood to be the dead but resurrected Divinity. So the Nutar is actually every human being who does not really die, but goes to live on in a different form. Further, the resurrected spirit of every human being is that same Divinity. Phonetically, the term Nutar is related to other terms having the same meaning, the latin “Natura,” Spanish Naturaleza, English “Nature” and “Nutriment”, etc. In a real sense, as we will see, Natur means power manifesting as Neteru and the Neteru are the objects of creation, i.e. “nature.”

The Follower of Neterianism

Written by Sekhem Dragonfly (Het Ra Sat Ankhu)
The term “Neterianism” is derived from the name “Shetaut Neter.” Those who follow the spiritual path of Shetaut Neter are therefore referred to as “Neterians.”

Neterianism is the science of Neter, that is, the study of the secret or mystery of Neter, the enigma of that which transcends ordinary consciousness but from which all creation arises. The world did not come from nothing, nor is it sustained by nothing. Rather it is a manifestation of that which is beyond time and space but which at the same time permeates and maintains the fundamental elements. In other words, it is the substratum of Creation and the essential nature of all that exists.

So those who follow the Neter may be referred to as Neterians.

The fundamental principles common to all denominations of Ancient Egyptian (African) Religion may be summed up in four “Great Truths” that are Common to all the traditions of Ancient Egyptian Religion.

**Why are the Gods and Goddesses worshipped?**

As stated earlier, the concept of Neter and Neteru binds and ties all of the varied forms of Kamitan spirituality into one vision of the gods and goddesses all emerging from the same Supreme Being. Therefore, ultimately, Kamitan spirituality is not polytheistic, nor is it monotheistic, for it holds that the Supreme Being is more than a God or Goddess. The Supreme Being is an all-encompassing Absolute Divinity.

The term “Neteru” means “gods and goddesses.” This means that from the ultimate and transcendental Supreme Being, “Neter,” come the Neteru. There are countless Neteru. So from the one come the many. These Neteru are cosmic forces that pervade the universe. They are the means by which Neter sustains Creation and manifests through it. So Neterianism is a monotheistic polytheism. The one Supreme Being expresses as many gods and goddesses and at the end of time, after their work of sustaining Creation is finished, these gods and goddesses are again absorbed back into the Supreme Being.

Shetaut Neter religion recognizes that there is one supreme and transcendental Divinity - as in all other African religions. However, this divinity cannot be known by the unenlightened mind. For that reason images that the mind can grasp have been created by the sages of ancient times to allow a person to direct their attention and devotion towards an aspect of the Divine. Since all aspects (the gods and goddesses) are regarded as manifestations of the transcendental Divine Self which has no form or name, the worship (directing the heart and mind) of these divinities gradually leads to the discovery of their transcendental essence.

In this manner the worship of any of the divinities (neteru) if entered into correctly, will lead to awakening. So the worship of the gods and goddesses is a proper way to lead the mind to discovery of the perspective of higher consciousness. In order to have success it is necessary to worship in two ways, by ritual, chant and offering to the divinity and next by study of the qualities, myth and teaching of the divinity (Devotion and Wisdom). As a divinity is discovered an aspect of the transcendental divine is discovered and if all divinities are known then the transcendental divine is also known. The teachings of Shetaut Neter are disseminated through the different branches of Shetaut Neter Religion. Each branch constitutes a variation on the original theological teaching of Shetaut Neter religious philosophy through different but related divinities that all ultimately emanate from the single original ONE.

**The Anunian Tradition**

Written by Sekhem Dragonfly (Het Ra Sat Ankhu)
The Mystery Teachings of the Anunnian Tradition are related to the Divinity Ra and his company of Gods and Goddesses. This Temple and its related Temples espouse the teachings of Creation, human origins and the path to spiritual enlightenment by means of the Supreme Being in the form of the god Ra. It tells of how Ra emerged from a primeval ocean and how human beings were created from his tears. The gods and goddesses, who are his children, go to form the elements of nature and the cosmic forces that maintain nature.

The Theban Tradition

The Mystery Teachings of the Wasetian Tradition are related to the Neterus known as Amun, Mut and Khonsu. This temple and its related temples espouse the teachings of Creation, human origins and the path to spiritual enlightenment by means of the Supreme Being in the form of the god Amun or Amun-Ra. It tells of how Amun and his family, the Trinity of Amun, Mut and Khonsu, manage the Universe along with his Company of Gods and Goddesses. This Temple became very important in the early part of the New Kingdom Era.

The Goddess Tradition

Written by Sekhem Dragonfly (Het Ra Sat Ankhu)
The hieroglyphic sign Arat means "Goddess," General, throughout ancient Kamit, the Mystery Teachings of the Goddess Tradition are related to the Divinity in the form of the Goddess. The Goddess was an integral part of all the Neterian traditions but special temples also developed around the worship of certain particular Goddesses who were also regarded as Supreme Beings in their own right. Thus as in other African religions, the goddess as well as the female gender were respected and elevated as the male divinities. The Goddess was also the author of Creation, giving birth to it as a great Cow. The following are the most important forms of the goddesses: Aset, Net, Neith, Sekhmit, Mut, Hetheru, Mehurt.

**The Asarian Tradition**

This temple and its related temples espoused the teachings of Creation, human origins and the path to spiritual enlightenment by means of the Supreme Being in the form of the god Asar. It tells of how Asar and his family, the Trinity of Asar, Aset and Heru, manage the Universe and lead human beings to spiritual enlightenment and the resurrection of the soul. This Temple and its teaching were very important from the Pre-Dynastic era down to the Christian period. The Mystery Teachings of the Asarian Tradition are related to the Neterus known as: Asar, Aset, Heru.

The tradition of Asar, Aset and Heru was practiced generally throughout the land of ancient Kamit. The centers of this tradition were the city of Abdu containing the Great Temple of Asar, the city of Pilak containing the Great Temple of Aset and Edfu containing the Great Temple of Heru.

**The Aton Tradition**

This temple and its related temples espoused the teachings of Creation, human origins and the path to spiritual enlightenment by means of the Supreme Being in the form of the god Aton. It tells of how Aton with its dynamic life force created and sustains Creation. By recognizing Aton as the very substratum of all existence, human beings engage in devotional exercises and rituals and the study of the Hymns containing the wisdom teachings of Aton explaining that Aton manages the Universe and leads human beings to spiritual enlightenment and eternal life for the soul. This Temple and its teaching were very important in the middle New Kingdom Period. The Mystery Teachings of the Aton Tradition are related to the Neter Aton and its main exponent was the Sage King Akhnaton, who is depicted below with his family adoring the sundisk, symbol of the Aton.

**The Memphite Tradition**

Written by Sekhem Dragonfly (Het Ra Sat Ankhu)
The Mystery Teachings of the Menefer (Memphite) Tradition are related to the Neterus known as Ptah, Sekhmit, Nefertem. The myths and philosophy of these deities constitute Memphite Theology. This temple and its related temples espoused the teachings of Creation, human origins, and the path to spiritual enlightenment by means of the Supreme Being in the form of the god Ptah and his family, who compose the Memphite Trinity. It tells of how Ptah emerged from a primeval ocean and how he created the universe by his will and the power of thought (mind). The gods and goddesses who are his thoughts, go to form the elements of nature and the cosmic forces that maintain nature. His spouse, Sekhmit has a powerful temple system of her own that is related to the Memphite teaching. The same is true for his son Nefertem.

The Forces of Entropy in Shetaut Neter Religious Traditions

In Neterian religion, there is no concept of “evil” as is conceptualized in Western Culture. Rather, it is understood that the forces of entropy are constantly working in nature to bring that which has been constructed by human hands to their original natural state. The serpent Apep (Apophis), who daily tries to stop Ra's boat of creation, is the symbol of entropy. This concept of entropy has been referred to as “chaos” by Western Egyptologists.

As expressed previously, in Neterian religion there is also no concept of a “devil” or “demon” as is conceived in the Judeo-Christian or Islamic traditions. Rather, it is understood that manifestations of detrimental situations and adversities arise as a result of unrighteous actions. These unrighteous actions are due to the “Setian” qualities in a human being. Set is the Neteru of egoism and the negative qualities which arise from egoism. Egoism is the idea of individuality based on identification with the body and mind only as being who one is. One has no deeper awareness of their deeper spiritual essence, and thus no understanding of their connectedness to all other objects (includes persons) in creation and the Divine Self. When the ego is under the control of the higher nature, it fights the forces of entropy. However, when beset with ignorance, it leads to the degraded states of human existence. The vices (egoism, selfishness, extraverted ness, wonton sexuality (lust), jealousy, envy, greed, gluttony) are a result.

Worksheet

This worksheet is different - you have a choice to do EITHER worksheet A OR complete worksheet B

Worksheet A is an overall quick questionnaire while Worksheet has a more advance level to its questions.

Enjoy and remember the choice is there if you want to do both you are welcome.

Worksheet A

Please answer the following questions:

1. Horus was the falcon-headed god of the sun and what?

2. Who was the vulture-goddess of Upper Egypt?

3. Who was the cobra-goddess of Lower Egypt, associated with the Nile and the sun?

4. A scarab beetle was considered to be a form of the sun god and the symbol of what?
5. Who was the Egyptian god of the Nile?
6. Who was the Egyptian goddess of magic and household skills?
7. In Egyptian mythology the god Anubis is often seen with the body of a man and the head of which animal?
8. Which goddess was said to judge the trial of Horus and Seth?
9. Which god ferried Isis across to reach the meeting of the gods?
10. How did Hathor, the cow goddess help restore Horus’ eye after he had been attacked by Seth?
11. How were Ra and Horus related?
12. What was the Uraeus serpent on Pharaoh’s crown said to have done?
13. How many scorpions did Selket send in order to protect Isis?
14. In the most common telling of the myth, which of these was undertaken by Seth in order to kill his brother, Osiris?
15. How did Isis come to know the true name of Ra?

Worksheet B

1. Describe what Neter, Neteret, Neteru and Shetaut Neter means in your own words.

2. About Evil:
   a) What do you understand under the term Evil?
   b) Did the Ancient Egyptians believe in a “Satan”?
   c) From the reading write down an extract on how the Ancient Egyptian saw bad situations?

3. Is the Ancient Egyptian spiritual path monotheistic or polytheistic?

4. Explain the following extract in your own words: “for it holds that the Supreme Being is more than a God or Goddess. The Supreme Being is an all-encompassing Absolute Divinity”

5. Research on Traditions:
   a) How many traditions were there?
   b) Each tradition had its own center of worship. Do some research on the Internet to find out which tradition was honored in which center.
   c) Which of the above traditions attracts your attention, and why?
   b) In relation to a previous lesson on the aspects of the Ennead Neteru do you think that these traditions are interwoven or are they lose standing spiritual traditions made by the likes of certain people in certain areas? Explain your answer in short.
   c) Write down an extract from the above which state how the Ancient Egyptians saw the Goddess in their worship.

Send your answers to per.saret@gmail.com