

25 The Great Initiations

In ancient Egypt there were many initiations at different stages of a person's life. Some were for special people entering public office. Perhaps the greatest of these public initiations was the coronation of a pharaoh that was held during New Kingdom times at the Apet Weret (Karnak Temple Complex, the largest ancient building in the world).



Apet Weret The Great Temple.

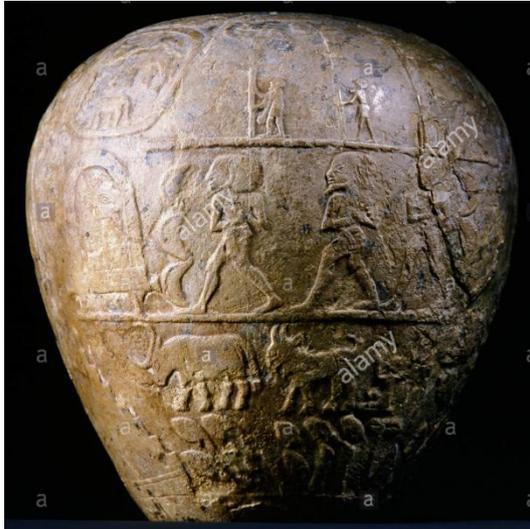
In this article I will just discuss some of the most important spiritual initiations a person would pass through. These rites of passage recall the name of the game we have been discussing: Senet, A Passing Beyond. Each initiation moved a person beyond one level of life experience into a new and richer level. In most cases there was a ritual implement or symbol associated with such an initiation passage. I will introduce the special symbolic instruments along with a brief description of the initiation. Usually the initiation was done by a special priest, but it is possible to self initiate if you understand the point of the initiation. Initiation is about a fundamental shift in point of view to a broader and grander view of and participating role in the Cosmos.

illuminating the Eye of Horus

One of the earliest initiations we know of is mentioned over and over in the Pyramid Texts. The texts about this contain offering ceremonies (*pujah*) in which this instruction was repeated over and over: "Illuminate for Yourself the Eye of Horus." (Hej enek Aryt Heru).



In the above tableau Osiris witnesses as Thoth gives Young Horus his Eye that activates his Will. The shepherd crook symbol indicates Horus has become a leader capable of making responsible decisions and taking actions that bring about the intended results. This vignette is from the **Amduat**, Hour 4, and is about awakening the Heart Chakra.



Photograph of a ritual mace head used in the illumination of the Eye Initiation. This object may go back to before the first dynasty. To the right is a pictograph of a mace (Hej), plus the letter "j" and the glyph for illumination.



Eye of Horus Amulet

The Seven Rays (Sefekhet 'Abut)

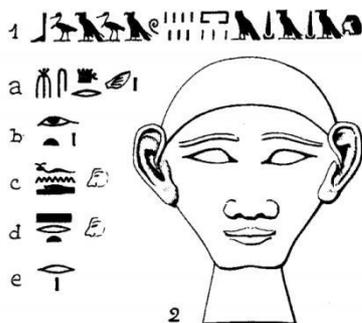


By Jeff Dahl - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

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See Wikipedia, "Seshat".

Here we see the goddess Seshat holding a calendar record in the form of a palm frond on which she makes notches. The base of the frond has a frog, symbol of ancient time, and a Shen loop for eternal continuity. Seshat is Thoth's second wife and is in charge of developing civilizations and record keeping. She wears a dress made of a leopard skin, which shows she is in the role of a ritual shamaness performing an initiation. Her headdress tells us she governs the Initiation of the Seven Rays. This is also called the Initiation of the Seven Caves (Sefekh Babau) and is originally from Baba, the transcendental baboon form of Thoth (the Fool Trump) who lived in caves and practiced yogic disciplines. It is also associated with Horus (*Her*), because "*her*" also means "face". "Baba" means cave.

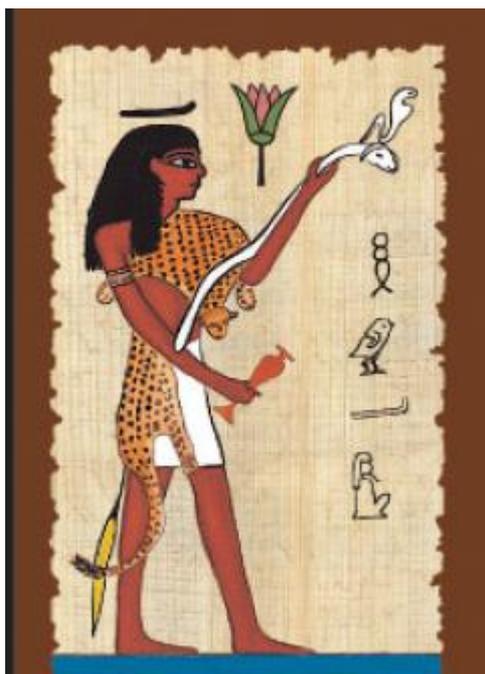


The 7 Caves of Baba and the Face Beyond the Face

The secret of her initiation ritual is that the word “cave” refers anatomically to the holes in the face for the channels of perception: two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, and a mouth. The seven rays are the beams of attention we send from our face to the world (which is our real “face”). The idea of the initiation is to turn the attention backward into the Caves of Baba to discover the sources of these 7 beams of attention. Along with this initiation come further instructions into the science of yantras (visual symbols), mantras (subtle hearing), breathing exercises, meditation, and much more. The deeper double meaning of this initiation was the awakening of each of the Seven Major Physical Chakras in the body.

The Great Mastery of the Ka's (Wer Hekau)

This initiation was usually performed by a Sem priest who also traditionally wore a leopard skin robe.

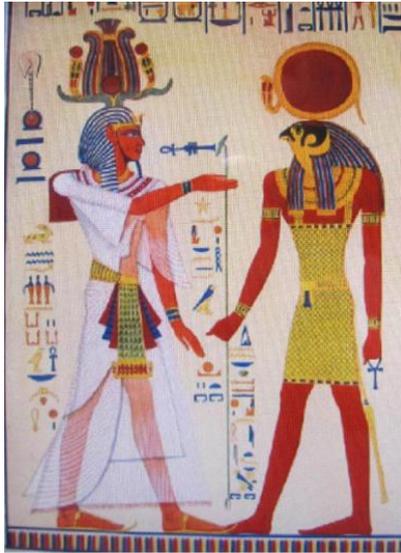


Hew, Lord of Taste, on the Senet Oracle Board plays the role of a Sem shaman wielding the Wer Hekau scepter to activate a person's 14 Ka energies (electromagnetic signals in the nervous system). Chief among these is the Second Chakra, which potentially hosts the most extreme bliss sensations in the body. But the Ka energy also activates the motor nerves so we can live active lives.

kau                  

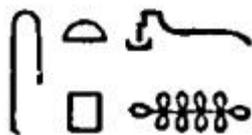
the Solar Boat. Hathor holds the Yang and Yin (Sun and Moon) binary system in her hands and gestures toward the tableau that spells out the whole system plus much more.

The Da Rekh (Tarok = Bestows Knowledge) Higher Self Initiation into the Shedy Training System by Amen Ra-Horus, the Hidden Sun Higher Self



This systematic initiation was established by Tutmose III and formalized by Sety I. It includes the deck of Tarok cards known commonly as the **Litany of Ra**, and a handbook about how to use them. That work became a formalized royal Shedy Program of Study. To begin this self initiation simply study my textbook on the **Litany of Ra** with the Hieroglyphic text and a detailed index. The initiation “tools” held by Amen Ra-Horus begin with the Key of Life, then the Stability Pillar, and lead to the Was/Jaam scepter that transforms human into divine. We will discuss these Process tools later as the so-called “Minor” cards.

The Life Mission Initiation (Setep Sa)



Setep Sa (3 letters S, T, P plus a tool for opening the mouth and an endless knot).

This very ancient rite of passage is mentioned a number of times in the Pyramid Texts and occurs when a person has discovered his Life Mission. There was a special chamber for the initiation, and the ritual symbols were a crowbar-like scepter (Setep) for prying open the mouth so the

person could give utterance to his Mission. “Setep” means to choose, and the choice becomes formal when it is spoken out in public. The endless knot means that the Life Mission will keep the person occupied in life with strength and a happy heart, so it must be a true and honest declaration. There is no end to the Mission. It is not just a goal. It therefore demands mastery over death, so that a person can continue his Mission in other space time locations throughout the universe. Discovery of a Life Mission is a great passage into the Beyond and relieves from worries and suffering. Everything works smoothly for the unfolding of the Mission and becomes a part of the endless knot weaving through space-time and other dimensions. The knot shows a person travels forward and backward in time and space, weaving the fabric of his Mission.



“He gave him Life, Strength, and Joy of Heart in the Setep Sa Chamber.”

Sometimes people reduced the “initiation” to wearing an amulet for good luck and protection. That is a complete misunderstanding of the true purpose of the initiation. “Setep Sa” could be a title of a pharaoh and was way more than just a good luck charm.



Setep Sa with an amulet glyph for the “Sa” portion. I am not sure what the amulet glyph is supposed to represent. Perhaps it is like a medallion with two tassels hanging from it. Gardiner believes it is a pictograph of a rolled up papyrus shelter used by herdsmen out in the fields to protect them from the hot sun, later abstracted into an amulet for protection. The true meaning is much more profound.

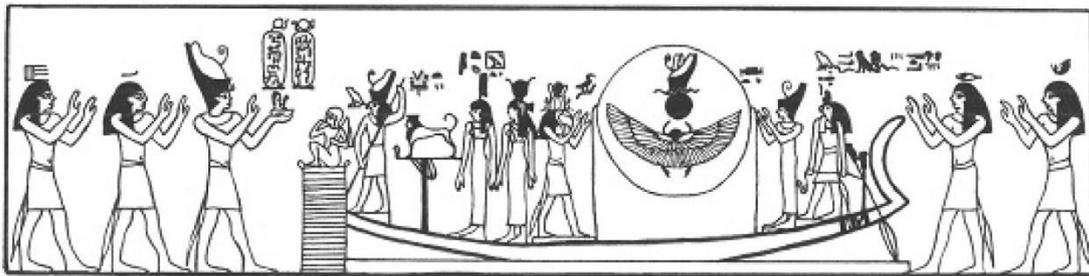


The King of North and South cartouche title of Rameses II is Weser Maat Ra Setep en Ra, which means he is a Wizard of the Truth of Ra who has

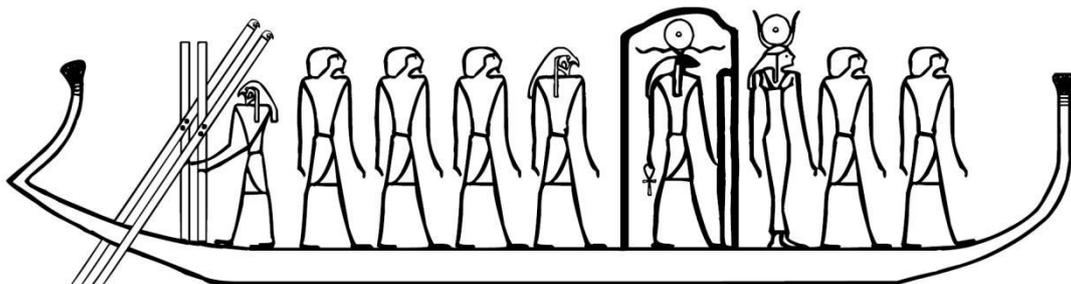
been Chosen by Ra. This tells us that the choice of the Life Mission is mutual. He chooses to follow Ra (his Higher Self), and Ra chooses him as his follower. The wizard staff  has the head of Anubis, the death's head, indicating that the wizard is no longer bounded by death of the physical body, so his Mission expands to much larger realms of space-time.

The Hand of the Way of Horus ('A Wat Her) Initiation.

Horus was often just called "The Way", meaning the Path of the Sun, the Gyre of the Hawk, the Pathway on a Life Mission. Once a person found his Life Mission, he could become a "Hand", a crew member (deck hand) on the Boat of Ra. The word "Boat" in Egyptian sounds almost the same as the word for meditation. This is a dynamic life meditation with moments at dawn and at dusk for deep silent meditation to bring clarity to the innate balance of life.



Pharaoh pays homage to the Solar Boat (Edfu Horus Temple frieze.)



Solar Boat in the Amduat. Hathor is in front of Ra-Awef, who is inside the canopy. Horus the warrior stands behind him as a body guard, and young Horus steers the boat in the rear.



Sety I holds a censer shaped like an arm and hand as he pays homage to his list of traditional great pharaohs that he and his son will perpetuate. This “hand” is the ritual tool for the “Solar Boat Crew Member” initiation. Sety I is initiating his son, the young crown prince Ramases II, into the tradition of service to Egypt as a pharaoh. Ramases holds two scrolls that represent his commitment to the responsibilities of administration. In the hands of his adult Luxor temple statues he still clutches those scrolls of duty, one in each hand, but there he is shown striding forward with authority as a great pharaoh.

The Transcendental Amenet Menat Initiation

This initiation is done by Amenet Hathor when a person has found his Life Mission in service to mankind and the Higher Self. This initiation takes the individual into Hathor and beyond all time and space to the realm of the eternal Self playing within its Self.



Photograph and a drawing of Sety I receiving the Menat Initiation from Amenet Hathor. The goddess wears her signature Menat necklace that represents her everlasting spirit of loving nurture and care for all. Sety and Hathor join hands near their genitals (to signify their loving identification) and Hathor, with her left hand (from the heart) holds out the necklace so that Sety can link his thumb inside it. The back of the necklace is a balance for the heavy jewels and gold on the front, but it is shaped like an infant's pacifier. Once Sety places his thumb inside the necklace he steps into her entire Cosmic Reality that is Love (awareness) and Light (physical phenomena) shimmering forever. We will see how that transforms into Sety's career of service to the people of Egypt as pharaoh.



Isis rises to her cosmic role as Hathor to bestow a “Breath of Life” Initiation on the Queen, who wears the crown of Mut, the Cosmic Mother. Notice how the two ladies join hands. The posture is similar to that of the Menat Initiation, but not on as cosmic a scale. This is just transmission of life energy so a person can discover his or her Life Mission. Notice that the Queen has two left hands.

25 Study Questions

- * During the New Kingdom where did they hold the coronation of the pharaoh?
- * What was the Initiation of Enlightenment ritual that was promoted and described in great detail in the Pyramid Texts?
- * What aspects of the psycho-physiology was awakened in that Initiation.

- * What ritual instrument was used even from predynastic times?
- * The Initiation of the 7 Rays has a double meaning. Explain.
- * The Initiation of the 14 Kas covers the energies of Ra, including the Light Body. What are the 14 Kas?
- * Study the Baba Amen Initiation of **Amduat** Hour 6 and explain its mathematical and multi-dimensional aspects.
- * Describe the New Kingdom Tarok Initiation into the Shedy Training System as designed by Sety I and ritual instruments that were used.
- * What was the purpose and the ritual tool used in the very ancient Step Sa Initiation?
- * Describe the “Hand” of the Way of Horus Initiation and the ritual instrument used in it.
- * Describe the Amenet Menat Initiation and the ritual tool used.
- * See if you can find other examples in Egyptian art of these initiations being performed.
- * How do these initiation ceremonies relate to the main points of the Series Overview?