

## The Book of Knowing the Creations of Ra

Welcome to Myths and Legends of Ancient Egypt. This episode we provide a recitation of the Book of Knowing the Creations of Ra, creation myth of the great Ennead of Heliopolis. After the recitation, we will provide an in-depth discussion on the themes and language of the creation myth. But first, a commercial announcement.

:stinger:

:ad:

Spoke the nb-r-Dr – Lord of the End:

When I came into existence, Existence came into existence. I came into being in the form of xpr – becoming, who came into being on the sp tpy – First Occasion; I came into being in the form of xpr when I came into being, and that is who existence came into existence, because I was more primeval than the primeval ones whom I had made; I was the most primeval of the primeval ones, and my name was more primeval than theirs, I made primeval time and the primeval ones.

I did all that I desired in this land, and I was all pervading in it. I knit together my hand, being alone, before they had been born, I had spat out Sw and tfnt.

I used my own mouth, and HkA was my name. It was I who came into being in my form, having come into being in the form of xpr.

I came into being among the primeval ones, and there came into being a multitude of beings in the beginning, before any being had come into being in this land; I alone achieved all that was made, before there had come into being any other who could act with me in this place.

I made the beings therein with this my bA spirit; I created some of them in nnw as an Inert One, when I could find no place where I could stand.

I considered in my Eye here, I surveyed with my sight, and I alone achieved all that was made; I planned in my Eye here, I created another being, and manifold where the forms of xpr; their children came into being in the forms of their children.

it was I who spat out Sw and spat out tfnt. when I had come into being as sole nTr god, there were three nTrw – gods in addition to myself, and two nTrw came into being in this land; Sw and tfnt rejoiced in the nnw – primeval waters, in which they were.

it was my Eye which brought them to me after a long age when they were far from me; I united my members, and they issued from me myself.

After I had made excitation with my fist, my desire came into my hand, and seed fell from my mouth; I spat out Sw and tfnt.

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After I had made excitation with my fist, my desire came into my hand and seed fell from my mouth; I spat out Sw and tfnt, and my father nnw brought them up, my Eye following after them since the eons past the serpents, when I wept with tears over it; my plans, and that is how humans came into being.

I replaced it with the Glorious One, and it was enraged with me when it returned, another having grown in its place, but its wrath died away when I made replacement in it, and it was soothed. I promoted it in my face, and it exercised governance over the entire land.

Sw and tfnt begat gbb – the land and nwt – the celestial sky, and gbb and nwt begat Asir – Osiris, Hr m xnt n irty – Horus of foremost facing eyes, stS – Seth, Ast – Isis, and nbt Hwt – Nephthys.

and they begat and created many beings in this land, namely the forms of children and the forms of their children. They made conjuration in my name that they might fell their foes; they created the HkA seven formulae for felling App.

He is imprisoned in the arms of Akr, he has neither arms nor legs, and is confined in one place, according as ra – the sun deity blocks him, for he has commanded that he be felled on account of this his isft – wrongness of character. His face is cut away because of what he has done, and he suffers for his isft character. Children fell him and sever his bA spirit from his Dt - body and his kA – spirit, and the learned who are in the boat and the tears of my Eye desire to attack them. He is rendered impotent, and there is made no portion for him in this land at his desire. He is despoiled and his bA is despoiled; those who are in the South fell him, those who are in the North fell him, those who are in the West fell him, and those who are in the East fell him.

O you learned who are in this land, and you psDt – Nine Deities who came into being from my flesh, you are vigilant in felling App! Exorcise him and destroy his name; may your arms fell him, you do not permit his name to be spread; his

children do not exist, his seat does not exist, and he does not have bA or Dt or kA, for he belongs to the Eye of ra, and it has power over him. It devours him.

I am sent to fell him, to destroy his name, and to cease his name and his HkA; I have committed him to the flame, I have allotted him to the heat; I have given him to the Eye of ra, and the Glorious Eye has parched him, it has consumed his bA, his Dt, his Swyt – shadow, and his HkA, and he does not copulate or become erect forever.

:stinger:

:ad:

The book of knowing the creation of Ra is part of a greater work that is combined with the ritual of destroying App or Apep. Known also as Apophis the uncreated, the nameless one, or who was spat out. App is represented as a gargantuan coiled serpent, who attempts to swallow the sun boat of the sun god at the end of his journey through the dwAt netherworld. He is traditionally speared through the mouth by stS or Seth before the sun boat enters the seen world at dawn.

It is therefore apropos that the priests will recite the creations of ra the sun god before performing the ritual of destroying App. This work is contained in a Graeco Roman text known as the Bremner Rhind Papyrus, found at the British Museum, no. 10188. This is the most complete mythology of the creations of the god ra, as the earliest instances of writing through this time creation myths must be pieced together as fragments that were contained in magic texts meant to invoke the creative power of the gods. The papyrus is dated to the end of thirtieth dynasty, the twelfth year, fourth month of the inundation-season of Pharaoh Alexander, son of Alexander', 312-311 BCE. However, the inscription date is written in a different hand than the rest of the text. The last presumed owner of the papyrus and writer of

the date inscription is Nasmin, priest of male fertility god Min and moon god Khansw, living in Apu or Akhmim, living between 170-30 BCE. Also contained in the hieratic texts are Songs of Isis and Nephthys' 'the Ritual of Bringing in Sokar' the 'Book of Overthrowing Apep' and the 'Names of Apep. Translations and commentary were published by Raymond O. Faulkner in 1936-38. The book of knowing the creations of ra begins with narration spoken by ra-xpr or Khepra, the syncretic ra the sun god and the scarab beetle of creation xpr in his form as the nb r Dr – Lord of the end, also known as the neb er djer or neb er tcher. Dr in ancient Egyptian represents the limit or boundaries of creation.

The nb r Dr explains he is self-created at the sp tpy – the first occasion. The time when the world came into existence. He formed his own hand and spat out his two children. Shw who becomes the lower sky or atmosphere, who is depicted as a man wearing a plume upon his head. tfnt, also called tefnut, or sky spittle, who is the goddess of sky moisture. Egypt seldom had rain, but when there was the little precipitation it was tfnt. She was also attributed to fog and morning dew.

Using his mouth, his bA spirit becomes HkA, or Heka, commonly understood as magic. The power responsible for the creation of the universe to the ancient Egyptians is HkA. Gods, Pharaohs, the dead and even the coiled serpent App had HkA as a component of their bAw spirits. Humans carried no HkA within them but would invoke the power in ritual to use the creative power. However, abnormal people like dwarves were considered to have some HkA. Objects of nature, like stones that were naturally shaped like human body parts, herbs, and animal parts also contained HkA. According to the Instruction for Merikara c. 2000 BCE, HkA is a gift from the creator god to the people to ward off the blows of fate. In ancient Egyptian knowledge, the stomach was considered the seat of HkA, as well as

emotions. This is probably the reason why magic was written on papyrus, dissolved in beer and then drunk.

As a god, HkA had priests and shrines dedicated to his care, but no temples existed to the deity. He is represented as a man holding two cobra staves. HkA requires two components, represented also as men, siA or divine thought, and Hw or authoritative utterance. This represents only a small amount of knowledge that permeated the ancient Egyptian culture and could be dedicated to its own series.

The nb-r-Dr then created other primeval beings with his bA spirit. The ancient Egyptians had knowledge of several spirits that formed a living being.

Unfortunately, there is no actual textual evidence from ancient Egypt as to the true meaning of the bA spirit. It was often depicted in funerary literature as a bird with a human head overseeing the judgement of the dead in the hall of mAaty or dual justice. The bA bird made its physical appearance as small statues beginning in the 28<sup>th</sup> dynasty in the Persian period, c. 404-399 BCE. The bA bird in hieroglyphic form is the saddle-billed stork, and it attested since the predynastic era. The first attempt to explain the bA spirit comes from Greek historians like Herodotus and Horapollo, who equated it with the psyche, or all the elements of the conscious and unconscious mind. However, more modern Egyptologist tend to agree that the bA spirit transcends the concept of the psyche and is an interconnected but separate spirit that encompasses the divine spirit that was also a superhuman manifestation of the dead. With only one exception in the Old Kingdom in the mastaba of Hermeru that refers to the bAw or spirits of the dead, until the New Kingdom, only gods and Pharaohs had a bA. It was the democratization of the afterlife that led to nobles and later common people were attributed to have this divine spirit after death.

The nb-r-Dr then creates primeval beings from the nnw as an Inert One. Nnw, sometimes called Nu or Nwn is a compound of the words n – meaning ‘not’, and nw – meaning waters. This refers to the primeval flood of what does not yet exist. The nnw is equated mythically to the flood waters of the Nile, by which the nutrient rich silt is flooded over the farmlands during the inundation season of Axt.

He creates as an the inert one or nny, is one that is dead, who lays dreaming in the nnw. The ancient Egyptians equated sleep with death, due to breathing and heart rate dropping to its lowest when in a REM dream state. During this time, a person dreaming can visit the dwAt netherworld, in a place called the niwt wan, the unique city, where the living and the dead can interact.

The nb-r-Dr then considers his Eye and planned in his Eye to create another being. The Eye of Ra or irt ra, is usually considered a god in its own right. In this context, it is the physical ball of the sun.

ra describes the creation of Sw and tfnt. In an act of masturbation, he inseminates his own mouth, and he thus spits them out as the nTrw gods. He repeats these words, as they are especially important in the creation of sky and sky moisture.

the Eye of Ra then followed his creation in the Primeval waters, past the serpents. There are many serpents that are known to exist by the ancient Egyptians. Two serpents are in the context of the nnw. One is nHbw-kAw, meaning who harnesses the kA spirits, is a primeval deity usually depicted as a snake with arms and legs, or anthropomorphic human with the head of a snake. His power source is the seven cobras he swallowed. The other, anx-nTrw – or Ankh-Neteru – life of the gods, is found in the inscriptions describing the imy dwAt, commonly known as Amduat. Found in New Kingdom tombs and known by the ancient Egyptians as the texts of the Secret Chamber, it reveals what is in the nether dream world they called the

dwa't. It is a place that the gods and the dead live, and it is also where the living can visit while dreaming. the dwAt is also where the sun god ra travels at night. anx-nTrw is a serpent that ra in his night boat enters through its tail and exits its mouth, transforming into ra-xpr or khepra at dawn. The inscriptions of the secret chamber read This great god ra in this image journeyed along through this City by means of the imAxyw - faithful servants of this hidden image anx nTrw. His deities draw him along by a cord, and he entered into his tail and cometh forth from his mouth, and cometh to the birth under the form of ra- xpr, and the deities who are in his boat do likewise. The nb-r-Dr after replacing and soothing his eye, the Glorious one, he and his children form the great psDt – or Ennead, nine nTrw deities that were worshipped at iwnw or Heliopolis. Many nTrw were named Horus, the falcon or falcon headed deity. Horus of the foremost facing eyes refer to a sky deity that is seen when both the sun and moon are visible in the sky, forming his eyes. The nb-r-Dr then brings his historica to the thesis of the seven formulae for the destruction of App.

App, or more commonly Apophis, is a Primeval serpent being whose coils are the source of uncreation, that void that was the most feared by ancient Egyptians. By the Roman period, the name of App was interpreted as “who was spat out” and alludes to the mythic origin being spat out by the nTrt deity Neith. Any and all depictions and texts attributed to the uncreation being are of him being destroyed, cut up, stabbed, or otherwise defeated, though the battle is constant. Just before dawn, before the night boat of ra can cross into the seen world, App appears to swallow the source of life into its coils. At the prow of the boat of ra stands stS, or Seth, with spear in hand it smites the uncreated with his spear down App's gullet, as depicted on the papyrus of Her Weben, Dynasty 21, currently at the Cairo museum.

App is then consigned to be imprisoned in the arms of Akr, a Primeval earth deity to stands between the seen and the unseen world, the convergence of the Eastern and Western Horizons. Akr is either depicted as the foreparts of two lions, facing away from the horizon at the center, or two human heads in the same position. He is a prominent figure in the dwAt netherworld, as the night boat of ra travels along his back in his nightly journey from west to east.

Ra commands App is felled for his isft character. isft, also called isfet, is diametrically opposed to mAat, rightness. As mAat is the cosmic balance of the dualverse of the seen and unseen world, truth, and justice, isft is imbalance, deceit, injustice, and all that is wrong. Unlike modern ideas of good and evil being balanced in the world, the ancient Egyptians believed that isft was a mistake made by the nTrw, and constantly fight against it. While some chaos and confusion is considered part of mAat, as without challenge there would be no growth, isft is outside of mAat and will destroy its sacred balance.

We then hear of the Dt - body and kA – double spirit. The Dt, also Xt, and popularly known as khet, is our living body, the living organism with all its systems, organs, and tissues. At death, it becomes inert in eternal sleep. the kA is the life force of a living being, given to them by a deity. At death, the kA leaves the Dt, and the dead person must reconnect with the kA at the judgement before Osiris at the hall of two mAat. The kA rejoins the Dt after the appropriate funerary rituals have been performed on the Dt and the dead is justified. While never actually depicted, the hieroglyph for kA is two upraised arms that are connected at right angles. In the final stanza of the spell, the Glorious Eye consumes his bA, his Dt, his Swyt – shadow, and his HkA. In ancient Egyptian knowledge, a being's Swyt or shadow has its own power and an important component of the being. It was related to the Eye of Ra, as it was the place where its light does not shine.