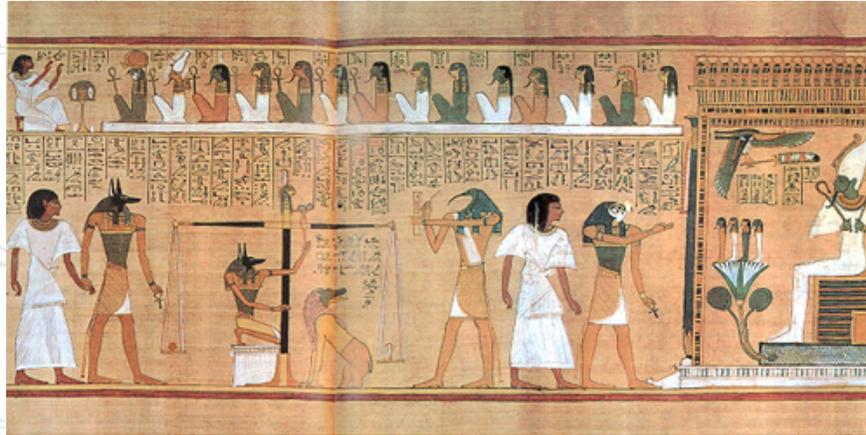


# THE ORIGIN OF THE SAVIOR-GOD: OSIRIS AND EGYPTIAN RELIGION



It all begins in the antiquity of Egypt. Herodotus, in his Persian War II, 14, and Diodorus Siculus, in Library of History, I, 10, both point out that civilization as known to them originated in the valley of the Nile; and did so because there the annual inundation of the great river with its rich deposits of silt made possible an abundant agriculture, which provided ample sustenance with little effort. Egyptian civilization antedates all other Eurasian cultures except the Sumerian; but just how old it is, no one can say with certainty. We know that the great pyramids were built during the Fourth Dynasty about 2700 B.C.; and that Nilotic civilization was then already hoary with age. The First Dynasty dates back at least to 3000. But there was a pre-dynastic culture stretching back, perhaps, to 8,000 B.C.E.

## EGYPTIAN RELIGION AND PREOCCUPATION WITH THE AFTER-LIFE

For some reason, the Egyptians believed in, and longed for, personal immortality in a manner unique among ancient peoples. Perhaps the comparative ease of life in the Valley; the long periods of physical inactivity when the inundations made the cities and villages into isolated islands; the endless generations which, following one upon another, made each human life an infinitesimal speck in the vast corridors of time; and the fearful frustration resulting from class exploitation and social inequality—all these may have helped to turn the minds of men from this world to a better one of unlimited duration. Whatever the cause, we know that the Egyptians longed for, and therefore believed in, a blessed immortality beyond the grave: and the desire for it became ever stronger as one millennium succeeded another.

**The Egyptians therefore invented an afterlife replete with rewards dependent upon ethical and sacramental considerations in this life many centuries before any similar concept appeared elsewhere.** The preparation for eternity became a vast industry requiring an elaborate priesthood and consuming a large proportion of all human energy. Cheops and Khafre, who built the two greatest pyramids, did so primarily in order to insure their own eternal triumph in the kingdom of Osiris. To build these required the labor of one hundred thousand men for sixty years and left the nation sullen and exhausted. And the bribe which drove these toilers on was the promise that they too might **hope for immortality in the Elysian Fields.** **The savior-god Osiris** was a creation of the ruling classes; but in time he became the supreme hope of an enslaved and tortured people, by them beloved more than wealth or freedom.

## THE PRE-OSIRIAN RELIGIOUS BELIEF SYSTEM

In the Egyptian theology preceding Osiris, **Tem or Ra was the God and Father** of all, the ungenerated original of the universe. He it was who laid the egg in the chaotic waters from which **he was himself reborn(born-again) or evolved**. We find a fairly detailed description of the creation in the Papyrus of Nesi Amsu, reproduced by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge ([Egyptian Ideas of The Future Life, I](#)).



## THE EMERGENCE OF ISIS AND OSIRIS

Tem, Shu, and Tefnut were worshipped by the primitive and dark-skinned aborigines some six or seven thousand years ago. But sometime before 3000 B. C., Egypt was invaded by a light-skinned race of Aryan-Sumerians who stormed out of Mesopotamia, conquered the natives, and the **Aryan-Sumerians engrafted new gods upon the older pantheon**. These newcomers possessed metal in place of stone tools and weapons and a much superior culture and economy. Osiris was undoubtedly an early ruler of theirs, whom they deified in order to establish their supremacy and who, during his progress, gradually absorbed the characteristics of various indigenous gods.

## THE PRIMITIVE OSIRIAN THEOLOGY

The revised theology of prehistoric Egypt may thus be summarized: in the beginning there was only darkness, chaos, and a watery waste; however, God, or Tem, was there, although as yet quiet; but since he willed at a given point to evolve life and develop order in the universe, he reproduced himself from an egg into Ra or the sun-god, which is the creative power immanent in all existence. Ra evolved from himself, first, a daughter **Maat, who is the principle of regularity or law in the cosmos; and, second, Thoth, who is the Word, or its creative agency**.

Ra thereupon produced from himself by masturbation (line 465 of the [Pyramid Text](#) of Pepi II, cir. 2500 B.C.) **the brother-sister divinities, Shu and Tefnut, who, in turn, gave birth to Seb or Keb, the earth-god, and to Nut, the sky-goddess, who became the wife of Ra. Tem, Ra, Thoth, Maat, Shu, Tefnut, Nut, and Keb—this was probably the Egyptian pantheon preceding the Sumerian conquest**. At this point, the invaders engrafted their own divinities upon the indigenous theology of the aborigines. They declared that **Nut, seduced by Keb, bore premature quintuplets: Osiris, Horus, Set, Isis, and Nephthys**.

## THE NEW CULTURE

Along with their religion, the Sumerians established also their superior culture: they controlled the flood waters of the Nile by constructing canals and by dividing the fields for agriculture, a science they had already mastered in the Tigris-Euphrates valley; they introduced a much more stable and civilized diet; they sowed grain and made it into bread; **they brewed ale from barley; they forbade promiscuous cannibalism**, [these events will be important later] especially the dismembering of the dead, who were now instead to be embalmed un-violated and buried in tombs built at great or considerable cost; they introduced a higher morality than was previously known; they practiced the arts of writing, brick-making, stone-cutting, and street paving; and **they lengthened the year from 360 to 365 days**. As these reforms could not be accomplished without supernatural sanction, they were [attributed to the divine Osiris; he became the original god-man incarnate](#).

How Osiris and his brothers and sisters could be human although both their parents were gods, the naturalistic priests of ancient Egypt seem never to have explained. But divine they were and yet human no less. The age of the skeptic had not yet dawned. Many today look at the "Elohim" of Genesis chapter two as the importance reference to these "descending ones" or "giants" which came to this earth and created "homo sapiens" from "homo erectus" and this explains the second of the two "creation" accounts of Genesis. For further study I recommend Z. Sitchin and his anthology, the [Earth Chronicles](#), which explains this dramatic creation.

## NECESSARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON OSIRIS...THE PATTERN FOR ALL OTHER GOD-MEN

**Of all savior-gods worshipped at the beginning of the Christian era, Osiris may have contributed more details to the evolving Christ figure than any other.** Already very old in Egypt, Osiris was identified with nearly every other Egyptian god and was on the way to **absorbing them all.** He had well over 200 divine names. He was called Lord of Lords, King of Kings, God of Gods. He was the Resurrection and the Life, the Good Shepherd, Eternity and Everlastingness, the god who "made men and women to be born again." Budge says, **"From first to last, Osiris was to the Egyptians the god-man who suffered, and died, and rose again, and reigned eternally in heaven. They believed that they would inherit eternal life, just as he had done."**

According to Egyptian scriptures, "As truly as Osiris lives, so truly shall his follower live; as truly as Osiris is not dead he shall die no more; as truly as Osiris is not annihilated he shall not be annihilated." Believers were "in Osiris," the equivalent of being "in Christ."

**Osiris' coming was announced by Three Wise Men:** the three stars Mintaka, Anilam, and Alnitak **in the belt of the constellation Orion,** which point directly to Osiris's star in the **east, Sirius (Sothis), significator of his birth.** **Angelic voices hailed the coming of the Universal Lord Osiris on this occasion** which marked the **rising of the Nile flood.** Oriental paths of the Osirian tradition may be traced in Tibet, where the **rising of the same star** in the east marks the annual festival of "setting free the waters of springs," as the Egyptian festival set free the **waters of the Nile.** Tibetans named the star Rishi-Agastya, after a holy king of "a very ancient time." **Ancient Hebrews called the same star Ephraim, or the Star of Jacob.** In Syrian, Arabian, and Persian astrology it was Messaeil—**the Messiah.**

**Certainly Osiris was a prototypical Messiah,** as well as a **devoured Host (in the form of a Eucharist).** His flesh was eaten in the form of communion cakes of wheat called the "plant of Truth." Osiris was Truth, and **those who ate him,** in the form of the **Osiris eucharist,** became Truth also, each of them another Osiris, a Son of God, a "Light-god, a dweller in the Light-god." Egyptians came to believe that no god except Osiris could bestow eternal life on mortals. **Osiris alone was the Savior,** Un-nefer, the "Good One." Under this title he was even canonized as a Christian saint.

**Answer for yourself:** Is this just coincidence or could the Jesus story found in the New Testament be a retelling of the Osiris myth?

Egyptians were much afraid of death's corruption awaiting them without the kindly intervention of Osiris: "When the soul hath departed, a man seeth corruption, and the bones of his body crumble away and become stinking things, and the members decay one after the other, the bones crumble into a helpless mass, and the flesh turneth into fetid liquid. Thus a man becometh a brother unto the decay which cometh upon him, and he turneth into a myriad of worms, and he becometh nothing but worms, and an end is made of him, and he perisheth in the sight of the god of day." But Osiris could prevent all this nastiness:

***Homage to thee, O my divine father Osiris, thou hast thy being with thy members. Thou didst not decay, thou didst not become worms, thou didst not diminish, thou didst not become corruption, thou didst not putrefy, and thou didst not turn into worms.... I shall not decay, and I shall not rot, I shall not putrefy, I shall not turn into worms, and I shall not see corruption before the eye of the god Shu. I shall have my being, I shall have my being; I shall live, I shall live; I shall germinate, I shall germinate, I shall germinate; I shall wake up in peace; I shall not putrefy, my intestines shall not perish; I shall not suffer injury; mine eye shall not decay; the form of my visage shall not disappear.... My body shall be established, and it shall neither be ruined nor be destroyed on this earth.***

## **THE INFLUENCE OF OSIRIS ON THE BIBLE**

The cult of Osiris contributed a number of ideas and phrases to the Bible.

The 23rd Psalm copied an Egyptian text appealing to Osiris the Good Shepherd to lead the deceased to the "green pastures" and "still waters" of the nefer-nefer land, to restore the soul to the body, and to give protection in the valley of the shadow of death (the Tuat).

The Lord's Prayer was prefigured by an Egyptian hymn to Osiris-Amen beginning:

*"O Amen, O Amen, who art in heaven."*

Amen was also invoked at the end of every prayer. That is why we say "Amen" today following our prayers.

**Answer for yourself:** How much of our traditional Christianity comes from Egypt and we not know it?

Jesus' words, found in John 12:24

*"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"*

were taken from an Osirian doctrine that a dying man is like a corn of wheat "which falls into the earth in order to draw from its bosom a new life." Jesus' words, recorded in John 14:2,

*"In my Father's house are many mansions"*

came from an Osirian text telling of numerous Arits ("Mansions") in the blessed land of Father Osiris. Stories about Osiris turned up in Christian legends. Jesus' healing of a nobleman's daughter was based on a tale of an Osirian priest who cured a princess. Worshippers of Osiris were promised that they would rule the spirit-souls (angels) in heaven, foreshadowing St. Paul's promise to his followers that they would rule even angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).



The bishop's crozier was the Osirian shepherd-crook. The Christian cross itself was a variant of the Egyptian ankh, symbolizing "the Life to Come." One significant difference between Osiris and Christ was that Osiris was restored to life not by his divine father but by his divine mother—who was also his bride, Isis. She put his dismembered body back together and raised him from the dead. Isis married Osiris and conceived Osiris' reincarnation, the Divine Child Horus who became Osiris again. This was the first immaculate conception!



She also took him to heaven where he reigned as Father Ra. Sometimes Ra was called Osiris' father, sometimes Osiris was called Ra's father, sometimes they were the same god, named Osiris--Ra. They were cyclically reincarnated as father-son and son-father, dwelling in the Mother as fetus, lover, corpse. Thus Osiris' cult centered on the theme of divine incest, apparent also in a Christianity that declared the Father and Son identical, and the Mother of God the same individual as God's bride. Osiris plainly expressed the archetypal wish for union with the mother, found in all men's religions. He was restored to life as the ithyphallic Min. Men, or Menu, "Moon-god," hailed as a Bull of lust, "the mummy with a long member," or "the Lord Who impregnates his Mother."

A symbol of Osiris's sacred marriage was the menat or "moon--charm." The Menat was a charm of Hathor, the Goddess



of the Sunrise. It was worn especially by women, for whom Hathor was a favorite. It served to protect the wearer and was also something of a love charm. Usually only the head of Hathor was depicted as the amulet. In hieroglyphics a phallus-shaped jar pouring fluid into a wider pot or vase, signifying sexual intercourse with a deity. The menat amulet was borne by nearly every Egyptian god; it was also a title of Isis. The same sexual image of the two vessels was found in the tombs and temples of Babylon and Assyria. The male water-jar represented the seminal spirit of the Savior in all the lands of the Middle East and Egypt. **In his processions, the god was preceded by a jar-bearer like the man with a jar of water who preceded Jesus in the Passover procession (Luke 22: 10).**

The Jews' Passover meal called Seder may have descended from the Egyptian Sed, the oldest festival of Osirian regeneration and fertility. At the Sed, Osiris's masculinity was erected in the form of the Djed column, originally a simple phallic obelisk, later a representation of Osiris's sacrum, the "sacred bone" so called because it was once regarded as the source of seminal fluid. The Djed Amulet has been interpreted many ways. One theory says it represents the tree trunk in which Isis hid the body of Osiris after Set had dismembered him. As Isis found each piece, she hid it in the tree trunk. She finally had all but one piece of his body except his penis which leads into another interpretation of the Djed. Isis made for the body of Osiris a wooden phallus to replace the missing piece. She had intercourse with Osiris and became pregnant with Horus. Perhaps the Djed Amulet is derived from that symbol. An early interpretation of the Djed Amulet implied it was placed in with the mummies in order to give their backbones strength. When Isis brought Osiris back to life, her first care was to make him "stand up," which meant restoration of his phallic spirit.



Primitive elements in Osirian myth show its extreme antiquity, dating back to Neolithic Egypt. Before re-conceiving Osiris, the Goddess apparently devoured him as she hovered over his corpse in the guise of the archaic Vulture-mother. Like similar images of devouring Kali, this points to an age predating even the discovery of fatherhood, when **reincarnations were believed to be brought about by cannibalism (in this instance pre-Eucharist...yet the eating of a god).** Indeed, Osiris may have begun as one of the numerous forms of Shiva, for his name came from Ausar or Asar, meaning "the Asian" just like the Aesir or "Asian" gods of northern Europe.

About 4000 years ago, Osiris' cult was established at Abydos, where he was called Osiris Khenti-Amenti, Lord of Death or Lord of the Westerners, meaning those who had "gone west" into death's sunset land. **He was incarnate in a succession of sacred kings who seem to have served as sacrificial victims.** Their bodies were divided up and distributed to different parts of the country to assist fertility—as in Norway, up to the 9th century, where kings' bodies used to be quartered and sent to the four provinces for burial, so each locality would have royal flesh to assist the crops. **As Christian churches used to be founded on spurious relics of apostles and saints, so Egyptian temples were founded on bits of Osiris' body.**

Like the head of Orpheus on Lesbos, the head of Osiris was preserved in the temple at Abydos to serve as an oracle, providing much of the Egyptians' detailed knowledge of the after-world. The shrine had a sacred well called Peq or Pega, the original home of the Pega-nymphs who guarded the oracular well of Pirene in Corinth. Like Christians seeking burial in consecrated ground by a church, wealthy Egyptians bought burial space near the Osirian temple, so as to share the god's resurrection. Abydos therefore became the center of a great necropolis. The faithful claimed on their epitaphs that "I have become a divine being by the side of the birthchamber of Osiris; I am brought forth with him, I renew my youth."

When human sacrifices were replaced by animals, Osiris obligingly incarnated himself in a variety of beasts, notably the Apis bull who ascended to glory, **carrying away the sins of all Egypt as he died in atonement. Osiris-Apis later became the composite deity Serapis, monotheistic god of Alexandria for six centuries. Let us not forget that at Alexandria the Essenes would be heavily influenced by such residual religious beliefs and this would carry over in their conversion to the Jesus Movement later.**

**There were several Osirian trinities. One consisted of Osiris the father, Isis the mother, and Horus the son.**



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Another was Ra the father, Osiris the son on earth, and Horus the son rising in heaven. Another was ( 1 ) Ptah, "Opener of the Way," a phallic consort of the Virgin and the opener of her matrix; (2) Seker, representing the male spent, dead, and hidden within the female tomb-womb; and (3) Osiris, newly incarnate as the Min-phallus and standing for **resurrection**.

The sacred lunar numbers seven, fourteen, and twenty-eight were prominent in Osiris' cult. The lunar cycle of twenty-eight days corresponded to his descent into the underworld and ascent to heaven: fourteen days each way, or fourteen steps on his mystic Ladder. Buddha's ladder of descent to earth and return to heaven also had fourteen steps. Like Buddha and Osiris, the Tibetan sage is still supposed to pass fourteen days in the after-world before encountering enlightenment in the form of "the mandala of the animal-headed deities," reminiscent of the Egyptian gods. **We are beginning to see how even Osiris influenced Buddhism.** Some of these deities were named Heruka, a possible cognate of Osiris the sun, Heru-Harakhti.

Like Hindu sacred dramas, the cycle of Osirian drama seems to have been keyed to the menstrual cycle of the Goddess, incarnate in the priestess who bore the title of Divine Mother. In the month of Athyr (Hathor), Egyptian women made clay phalli as images of Osiris and threw them into the **Nile when it "turned to blood" in flood time.** This custom recalled the Oriental conviction that the Goddess must be menstruating at the time of her sacred marriage to the dying god. Later accounts explained Osirian lunar numbers by saying he was 28 years old at the time of his passion, or else that it took place in the 28th year of his reign on earth.

As Lord of Death, Osiris was sometimes identified with the Great Serpent of the underworld, and sometimes painted in the same serpentine form, bent around so his toes touched his head. In Ptolemaic times the whole underworld became Osiris's province, its seven halls collectively called the House of Osiris.

Between 1450 and 1400 B.C.E. the Osirian mystery-cult took form, with hundreds of verbal formulae for **making the worshipper become an Osiris.** He would be born of Isis and nursed by Nephthys. He would ride across the sky "side by side with the gods of the stars." He would be as virile as Osiris-Menu: "My palm tree (penis) standeth upright and is like Menu.... Therefore the Phallus of Ra, which is the head of Osiris, shall not be swallowed up." When he was in heaven, the gods themselves would bring offerings to him.

The Osirian Mysteries taught words of power for bringing about these desirable effects. Such words of power were "keys" to heaven, to be concealed from non-initiates as "a great mystery." The Saite Recension said with such keys, a soul could pass freely through the gates, gatekeepers, guardians, heralds, inspectors, and other spirits of the heavenly mansions, for he would know all their names.

*And the Majesty of Anpu shall say unto me, "Knowest thou the name of this door and canst thou tell it?" . . .  
And the Majesty of the god Anpu shall say unto me, "Knowest thou the name of the upper leaf, and the name of the lower leaf?" On receiving the proper answers, the Majesty of the god Anpu shall say, "Pass on, for thou hast knowledge, O Osiris."*

**Important for our study into the similarities of Christianity is the fact that during the first century B.C. the Osirian religion was established in all parts of the Roman Empire.** Its popularity declined in the end because it became too complicated for the average mind. Necessary "words of power" developed into lengthy catechisms of divine names of doorposts, lintels, bolts, panels, doorkeepers, spirits of the hour, thresholds, gods' right and left feet, etc. Egyptians invented even a memory-god to bring back the spells and holy names if they were stolen by a spirit of forgetfulness. The important ceremony of "Opening the Mouth" was performed to let the dead person speak charms and words of power freely. Still, the catechisms became too long and complex to be remembered.

**Budge remarks that the Egyptians believed in "the resurrection of the body in a changed and glorified form, which would live to all eternity in the company of the spirits and souls of the righteous in a kingdom ruled**

by a being who was of divine origin, but who had lived upon the earth, and had suffered a cruel death at the hands of his enemies, and had risen from the dead, and had become the God and king of the world which is beyond the grave... Although the Egyptians believed in all these things and proclaimed their belief with almost passionate earnestness, they seem never to have freed themselves from a hankering after amulets and talismans, and magical names, and words of power, and seem to have trusted in these to save their souls and bodies, both living and dead, with something of the same confidence which they placed in the death and resurrection of Osiris. A matter for surprise is that they seem to see nothing conflicting in such a mixture of magic and religion." It is a matter for even more surprise that a scholar of Budge's stature failed to see exactly the same mixture of magic and religion in Christianity; for indeed he could have been talking about Christians as well as Egyptians. To this day, simple Christian folk still display the same hankering after crucifixes and medals, agnus dei, incantations, invocations of holy names and other formulae, saints' relics, holy water, images, even rosaries which they copied from the Egyptians. Christian formulae of exorcism, baptisms extreme unction, absolution, etc., were words of power under different names.

The notion of resurrection through identification with a resurrected god (by eating his flesh in the form of a Eucharist) was in itself magical rather than religious—and this was the basis of the Christian salvation as taught by Paul—idea no less than for that of Osiris' votaries. Moreover it seems the concept of Christ was no less syncretic than the concept of Osiris. If anything, the older god had more right to claim an original system of worship—or of superstition, depending on one's point of view.

## THE TRIBAL TOTEM

Foreigners often noted with contempt and disgust the variety of animals worshipped in Egypt: the cow, the bull, the cat, the dog, the snake, the ibis, the hawk, etc. But these, understood correctly as symbols for the attributes of the One True God, is lost to most today unless they study a lot. Taken collectively they simply bear testimony to the antiquity of its religion. The same phenomenon has been found among Indians and other aborigines, concerning whom Lewis H. Morgan wrote his Ancient Society. There can be little doubt that all these animals were primitive clan-totems, worshipped at one time as ancestral spirits and absorbed by the Osirian cult to maintain the allegiance of the superstitious natives. And when any of these were slain and eaten, this was the literal sacrifice of a deity, by which his devotees absorbed his powers. This is one of the first recorded instances where men ate "gods" represented by animals and absorbed the gods powers.

## THE PRE-EMINENCE OF OSIRIS

Over a period exceeding three thousand years, some half a billion Egyptians lived and died in devotion to Osiris; he was the beloved god of the people; and they had no conceivable hope higher than that they might in death become one with him in blissful immortality. They would become like their god in their death by becoming "one" with him ["in Osiris," or "in Christ"] and this was accomplished ritually by partaking of the Osirian Eucharist where the devotee shared in the immortality of Osiris; an immortal God following his resurrection. We call this same ceremony the "mass today."

We possess a remarkable series of Egyptian tomb and papyri inscriptions written over a period of several thousand years and known as The Book of the Dead. These are funerary formulas addressed almost exclusively to Osiris; they were to be learned by a man when living or inscribed on his coffin so that when dead he might enter the blessed abodes. Although none of them tell the story of the god, all assume a minute knowledge of him. Osiris was venerated by all Egyptians and was at least as familiar to them as is Jesus Christ to the Christian world.

## THE RELIGION OF OSIRIS AND HIS MYSTERY CULT

### SECRECY AND INITIATION

**Only those initiated into the Osirian cult could know its doctrines or ceremonies: for these were "an exceedingly great mystery . . . in the handwriting of the god himself.... And these things shall be done secretly" (in the rubric accompanying Ch. CXXXVIIa of The Book Of The Dead).**

**Like the Egyptians, the Greeks, who copied their rituals, declared it a sacrilege to reveal the rites or doctrines of their mysteries.** Herodotus tells us, II 3, that what the Egyptian priests "told me concerning their religion, it is not my intention to repeat." Plutarch says that he must "leave undisturbed what may not be told" (Isis and Osiris, 35). Pausanias declares: "as I was intending . . . to narrate all things appertaining to . . . the Eleusinians, a vision in the night checked me: but what it is lawful for me to write for everybody, to this will I turn" (Description Of Greece, I, 14). Once, when the Athenians believed that Aeschylus had revealed the Eleusinian ritual in a play, the audience stormed the stage, threatening to rend the dramatist limb from limb. It is therefore with some difficulty that we reconstruct these esoteric rites.

## THE OSIRIAN MYTH

The Osirian myth itself, however, is fully told in Plutarch (Isis and Osiris, 12-20); and this account, reinforced and elaborated by Diodorus Siculus (Library of History, I, 11-27), runs briefly as follows:

The sun-god Ra detected his wife Nut embracing Seb, the earth-god. He therefore decreed that her illegitimate offspring could not be born on any day of the year. Thoth, however, came to her aid; for, playing at draughts with the moon, he won from her a seventy-second portion of each day. By this means, five intercalated days were added to the year, effecting a much-needed reform in the calendar. The year had previously consisted of 360 days, but this wide disparity between the solar and the calendar year was constantly creating a wide divergence between the seasons; although the Osirian reform still left a disparity between the calendar and the solar year of about six hours, the seasons now receded much less rapidly; their retrogression created what is known as the Sothic year, consisting of one thousand four hundred and sixty-one solar years, after which the sun again coincided with the season.

By winning the five additional days, Thoth rescued Nut and her offspring, because on these the curse of Ra was ineffectual; and she gave birth to five children, one on each of the intercalated days. On the first, which became the List day of the year, **Osiris was born; on the second, Horus; on the third, Set; on the fourth, Isis; and on the fifth, Nephthys. Osiris married Isis; and Set Nephthys, while Horus became the celibate and intellectual scribe. All were born of earth and heaven, and in them commingled the qualities of both.** They were therefore equipped not only to understand but also to solve the problems of suffering humanity.

**Osiris was crowned king of Egypt** in his twenty-eighth year; according to another version he ruled during twenty eight years. It is obvious that this number relates to the days of the lunar cycle. It was said that he established the people in settled communities, taught them the arts of war and peace, and **prohibited the practice of cannibalism**, especially the eating of dead relatives, which, up to this time, had been common practice. Above all, he was credited with **conferring upon his people the culture of wheat and barley and thereby transforming them from virtual cannibals into cereal-eating, civilized men and women (pre-Eucharist rite)**, who developed respect for each other and who came in time to abhor the eating of their parents and other relatives.

**But Osiris was not content to confer his benefits upon Egypt alone. He therefore journeyed over the inhabited world to civilize all nations and peoples.** Diodorus emphasized that he carried with him men and women highly skilled in music and dancing who taught these arts to less cultured peoples. It was necessary for him to kill and dismember the barbarian king Lycurgus, as well as others who resisted his reforms. In due time, he returned to Egypt, laden with gifts.

In his absence, Isis had governed Egypt justly and equitably; but the evil Set, who was violently in love with her, had been making illicit advances to her, which she had rejected. Set is depicted as the great serpent, and the Greeks called him Typhon; he symbolized the powers of darkness, storms, and all disturbances of nature. Jealous of Osiris because of the honors heaped upon him, Set conspired with seventy-two others to encompass his destruction. This indicates that Set was the leader of the old and now counter-revolutionary priesthood, who, proclaiming their 360-day year, attempted to

overthrow the new dynasty and its reformed calendar.

Having measured Osiris, Set built a coffin in which he induced his brother to lie down; instantly he and his coconspirators clamped the lid shut and welded it tight with molten lead, so that Osiris died of suffocation. They threw the coffer into the Nile, on which it floated out to sea and then across the Mediterranean until it came to rest at Byblus. This indicates a generic relationship between Egypt and Syria, which has been established. For excavations carried out at Byblus (modern Jebeil) in 1922 prove that in the third millennium B. C., this city was a magnificent Egyptian colony which approximated the religion and culture of the motherland. It has also been established that any floating object thrown into the Nile will eventually be carried to this port. Lastly, this city became in time the center of the great Adonis cult.

Now in imminent danger of her life, Isis fled into the delta swamps, where she gave birth to the younger Horus. But Set pursued, and killed the child; but the ever-beneficent Thoth instructed her in the use of magic and medicine, which enabled her **to restore the child to life**. Leaving the infant to be reared at Buto, she set out to find **the body of her husband, which she finally discovered at Byblus encased in a pine tree (body on a tree)** and which, after various adventures, she brought to Egypt. But Set tore the corpse into fourteen parts (some accounts say sixteen) and buried them, one in each of the provinces of Egypt.

Isis thereupon began her celebrated search for the **broken body**; and whenever she found a portion, she pieced it together with others until she was able to reconstruct the whole. The male member (penis) alone she could not recover, because Set had thrown it into the Nile, where it had been eaten by the Oxyrhynchus (pike), which therefore became **a sacred fish**. Isis made images of the missing member out of balsam wood, and erected them as objects of adoration in all the temples. She also constructed wax figures of Osiris, gave one to the priests of each district, saying **that they alone possessed the true god**. Another account states that each temple received the portion of Osiris which was found in that province and which therefore became its sacred relic. The principal temples were established at Abydos, in Upper, and at Busiris, in Lower, Egypt, where the head and backbone (set) had been recovered. In addition, Isis generously provided that the priests should receive one third of the produce from the land, promised them munificent yields of grain, and exempted them from all taxation (Diodorus I, 73).

Isis breathed her own life into the nostrils of Osiris; and with the help of Thoth, and of Horus, who opened his mouth and gave him his eye to eat, she accomplished **the resurrection of Osiris to a second and eternal life; and thus he became the first-fruits of them that slept, the first among humanity ever to rise from the dead**. Upon rising from his bier, he instructed his son Horus in the arts of war and adjured him to revenge the foul deed done by Set. **Thereupon Osiris departed to the world of the immortals in Khenti-Amenti (Elysian Fields like our Heaven), where he became judge of the dead and the ruler of the blessed**.

In the meantime, Set had usurped the throne of Egypt; and when Horus claimed it, the wicked uncle accused Horus of illegitimacy and Isis of adultery. There was a trial before the gods, who determined that Isis was virtuous and that Horus was lawfully conceived and therefore entitled to the succession. **A terrific battle now ensued between Set and Horus, who subdued his evil uncle and bound him in chains, himself sustaining a bruised heel. Finally, Horus crushed the serpent's head (see Genesis 3:15), and ruled Egypt happily for the remainder of his life. After a trial before the gods in Khenti-Amenti (Elysian Fields), annihilation by fire was inflicted upon Set, the diabolical Adversary [devil] (Hymn to Ra in the Papyrus of Nekht). The illusion and similarity of many of these events and the Christ story of the New Testament are amazing.**

## THE GROWTH OF HORUS AND ISIS

During the ages when The Book of the Dead was written, a definite development took place. **Horus (a precursor to Jesus)** gradually assumed expanded powers, and **was identified with his father**. The cultists began to identify themselves with Horus also; **and with his growth came also a vast expansion in the worship of Isis (precursor to Mary)**. She it was who established the civil law while Osiris was traveling over the world; she taught men to **transform the golden grain of**

**Osiris into the bread of life;** when Horus was slain, she gave him life again; she revived and made possible the **resurrection of Osiris;** and she established his worship throughout Egypt. **In short, without Isis there would have been no Horus, no resurrection, no mystery, and no hope of an after-life.** She became the universal and infinite benefactress of humanity, the eternal protective mother, the queen of earth and heaven. Images of her and her son were sacred objects in every Egyptian household, resembling the Madonna and the Christ-child, both in appearance and in the veneration they elicited.

## **SYMBOLISM IN THE OSIRIAN MYTH**

The dynamic power of the Isis-Osiris myth lay in the fact that **these deities symbolized abundant life and natural vitality in all their aspects: astronomical, sexual (discussed above), and most of all agricultural.** **The sun was often identified with Osiris and the moon with Isis** (Diodorus I, 11). We know that at the time when the Osiris-cult was established, **the dog-star appeared in the East just before sunrise in the month of June, which was also the time the Nile began to overflow.** Osiris is called "the great one of Abydos . . . **the morning star** which appears in the eastern part of heaven" (The Pyramid Text of Pepi, I). The Egyptians sometimes called it Sothis, the star of Isis, who was the goddess of love, and life, and motherhood, mourning for her departed lover and awakening him again to life. Isis was a dynastic reconstitution of the older Hathor, the goddess of love, identified with the cow. The dog-star was also the "star of Osiris" (Plutarch, Isis and Osiris, 52) or Sirius, as it is still known. **Thus, Isis and Osiris were the heavenly powers which regulated the seasons, caused the Nile to inundate the fields, and made the grain to grow.**

**We find that Osiris is also identified with the bull and Isis with the cow.** Plutarch tells us that in Memphis **the bull of "Apis is kept, being the image of the soul of Osiris."** At Sakkara, sacred, living bulls were worshipped for centuries and at death were buried in the Serapaeum in regal splendor, as if they were gods indeed. These animals may have been considered sacred because of their economic value; we believe, however, that this veneration depended even more upon astronomical symbolism. For when the cult was first fully established, some five thousand years ago, the precession of the equinoxes during the zodiacal year, which equals some twenty six thousand solar revolutions and is known also as the Great or Platonic year, had reached the point at which **the sun passes through Taurus, or the Sign of the Bull, at the summer solstice, when the Nile begins to overflow. This is terribly important for us to recognize as this was the salvation of the Egyptians which culminated in the overflow of the Nile and the fertilization and watering of the land that produced their food. Salvation came from Heaven and the influence of the stars; thus the importance of Taurus and the sun as connected to "salvation." The cow and the bull, therefore, were the animals identified with Isis and Osiris; they were believed to bring the inundation of the Nile and were consequently sacred and worshipped as gods. About four thousand years ago, this precession had so altered the position of the zodiac that the sun passed through the Ram at the summer solstice (precession of the equinoxes); and then this animal, or the lamb, gradually became sacred (Lamb of God), although the change was neither immediate nor everywhere uniform. The "bull/Taurus" was not replaced by "lamb/Aires." This is the major problem few see in the Old Testament that produced a terrific upheaval in Egyptian religion and precipitated the Exodus with Akhenaton (Moses who was supportive of changing the worship of Egypt from "bull" to "lamb" worship. The followers of Akhenaton came out of Egypt in the Exodus under the sign of the lamb [Aires replacing Taurus in the precession of the equinox] only to return in their hearts to making a golden calf/bull at Mount Sinai which angered Moses/Akhenaton (THINK)!**

It was for this reason that in the old temple at Memphis, **Osiris is represented as a bull (Taurus);** but in the later temples at Busiri, and Philae, **he is depicted as a Ram (Aires),** which is there called the soul of **Osiris incarnate** (Budge, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection II, p. 15). **The altered position of the zodiac is also reflected in the Jewish scriptures, in which we find that the calf and the bull of Genesis are eventually replaced by the lamb. And still later, when the sun had passed into Pisces, the fish became the sacred symbol of the Christians and is found everywhere inscribed in the Roman catacombs where they buried their dead.**

Isis and Osiris were also the deities of generation; without them there could be no children and the human race would become extinct. We have seen that Isis set up an image of her husband's phallus in all the temples of Egypt; and we know that its worship was a characteristic not only of the Osirian cult but of others directly derived from it, as the Dionysian in

Greece. Osiris, we are told, "is the Lord of the Phallus and the ravisher of women" (The Book of the Dead, CLXVIII, 15). Isis became not only the symbol of motherhood, but also goddess of childbirth. Osiris gave men the power to impregnate, and Isis gave women the power to conceive and bear new life.

**But the most important symbolism of the Isis-Osiris concept was agricultural:** "When the Nile begins to rise, the Egyptians have a tradition that it is the tears of Isis which make the river rise and irrigate the fields" (Pausanias X, 32). Ancient writers knew that **the dismembered body of Osiris buried in all the provinces of Egypt symbolized the grain which had been sown; and that his death and resurrection were symbols of the death and rebirth of the wheat and the barley [first harvest of the spring/first fruits]**. In countless representations of Osiris, we see the grain sprouting from his body: and in thousands of funerary inscriptions we are told that the sacred bread is the body of the god. At the annual Osirian celebrations, **images of the god were made of wheat paste and eaten as a holy sacrament (eucharist)**. And even as Osiris was the grain which was planted, died, and sprang to life again, **so Isis symbolized the earth mother who received it and in whom it was nurtured**.

*John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (KJV)*

"They regard both the cow and the earth as the image of Isis" (Isis and Osiris, 39).

## EGYPTIAN DOCTRINES CONCERNING THE SOUL

**The hope of every Egyptian was to achieve immortality by being transformed into an Osiris and to obtain "a homestead forever in Sekhet-Aru" (the Elysian Fields) "with wheat and barley therefore (Hymn to Osiris, Un-nefer)**.

In order to understand the eschatology of the Egyptians, we need to know their metaphysical concepts concerning themselves. The physical body was called the Khat, which was the foundation also for immaterial reality. In this, or rather in the heart of this, dwelt the Ba, the heartsoul, which was considered **the essence of life, and the destruction of which meant annihilation**. Now this Ba projected its Khu, which was its double, a sort of shadow being or **spiritual duplicate**, and which could come or go, having a being separate from, if not independent of, its original. **At death, the Khu lived on**, required food and drink, could visit the tomb or go abroad, and starved when the funerary offerings ceased; and if it had not entered Elysium by this time, it was reduced to eating human excrement, and, on this diet, withered into nothingness.

The Khat and the Ba, therefore, were always ephemeral. **It was the Khu, only, a kind of celestial body, which possessed the potential of immortality. In order that a human being might be transformed into an Osiris and live eternally, it was necessary that this be endowed with incorruption; and this could be done only by uniting it to its Sahu, which was its spiritual essence. This is the very basis for Paul's theology of the glorified body upon resurrection.**

## REASONS FOR MUMMIFICATION

And this brings us to the question of why the Egyptians made such an industry of embalming and mummifying their dead. In the first place, this was necessary because Isis, Horus, and Thoth had **embalmed and swathed the body of Osiris before his resurrection; and in all things it was necessary, in order to become an Osiris, to duplicate his experiences**. Before his cult was established, the dead had been eaten, and their dismembered bones cast helter-skelter about the tombs. But the new priesthood taught that **immortality was impossible unless the deceased entered the after-life with his Khat inviolate. It was therefore imperative that the body be preserved intact** so that, as a result of the magical incantations and ceremonies to be performed over it by properly qualified priests, the Sahu might germinate from it. If such corruption were only avoided, the Khu could be united with the Sahu; and if this, a new and wholly spiritual entity, was victorious in its trial before Osiris, it would attain blessed immortality. **Without preserving the Khat through mummification, then, there could be no immortality**. The practice continued well into the period of Christianity and was

only abolished about 350 A.D. when Antony and Athanasius assured their followers that at the resurrection Christ would give them celestial bodies even if the earthly ones had been consumed by worms.

## PREREQUISITES FOR ENTRY INTO SEKHET-AARU...THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

It was no small achievement to become an Osiris. The requirements to become as Osiris are:

1. A man or woman must first be initiated into the exclusive cult of the god
2. He must be clean of hand and pure of heart
3. His essence must needs already have been transmuted into divinity by eating and drinking the sacred Eucharist
4. The deceased must be properly embalmed
5. He had to be vindicated at a public trial before the funeral ceremonies could be performed
6. Unless all his creditors were satisfied, he could not be buried
7. The effectual incantations had to be recited by the official priests.

## THE HALL OF JUDGMENT

Once all these requirements were met, however, the deceased was to be ferried without delay across the Great Lake and into the Hall of Maat. Egyptian funerary literature teems with references to what the aspiring Osiris might there expect. One of the most important documents dealing with the subject is the judgment scene from the Papyrus of Ani, composed during the XVIIIth Dynasty, about '550 B. C., in which we see the royal scribe Ani and his wife Thuthu approaching the great scales and Anubis weighing the heart of the suppliant against the feather of Maat. When it is found perfect, Thoth announces the result to the gods, who declare: "Osiris, the scribe Ani victorious, is holy and righteous.... It shall not be allowed to the devourer Amemet to prevail over him. **Meat-offerings and entrance into the presence of the God Osiris shall be granted unto him, together with a homestead (mansions) for ever in Sekhet-hetepu (Heaven).**"

At the side of Thoth is seated the great monster Amemet or Apep, with crocodile-head, forebody lion-shaped, and with the rear of a hippopotamus ready to devour the heart and the heart-soul of those who are damned. But, as the Osiris Ani has emerged victorious from the weighing of the heart, by the records of Thoth, and by the consent of the company of the great gods, he is conducted into the august and awful presence of Osiris himself, seated on his throne, grasping the scepter, flail, and slave hook, wearing the tall white crown. His body is still encased as a mummy, and behind him stand Nephthys, who advises him, **and the beloved Isis, who makes constant intercession for the deceased.**

*Heb 7:25 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (KJV)*

Horus leads Ani before the throne, where he sinks to his knees; whereupon Horus, **acting as mediator**, prevails upon his father to admit the suppliant to his blessed realm. With this, the judgment is complete; and the victorious Osiris Ani enters the Elysian Fields.

*1 Tim 2:5 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (KJV)*

The celebrated Chapter CXXVII of The Book of the Dead is an elaboration of the judgment scene just described. It consists of three parts: first, the addresses to Osiris by the scribe Osiris-Ani and by the Overseer of the Seal, Nu, triumphant; second, the well-known Negative Confession by the scribe Nebseni; and, third, the final address by Nu to the gods.

When Nu first enters the great hall, he does homage to the "Great God"; thence he proceeds to the hall of Maat, where he must face the gods of the forty-two Egyptian names. Since each of these is the avenger of a particular sin or crime, he must declare his innocence to all of them. The Negative Confession, therefore, consists of forty-two articles summarizing Egyptian ethics about 1600 B.C.: the deceased has not committed robbery, violence, theft, or murder; has not lied,

deceived, cut measures, or purloined what belongs to God; has not slandered anyone, wasted the land, killed any sacred animals, pried into holy secrets, given way to wrath or terrified anyone; has never been guilty of adultery or sodomy; has not been deaf to the truth, stirred up strife, or caused any one to weep; has never abused anyone or judged hastily; has never scorned the god of the Kiev or been irreverent to God; has never cursed the king, used too many words, made his voice haughty, been insolent, fouled the water, or increased his wealth unjustly.

The judgment before Osiris was not, to be a mere formality. Osiris could search out the secret places of the heart, **and before him no one could be perfect or even sufficient in his own right. Every aspirant to "Osiris-ship" knew that if the Law of Maat were strictly enforced, he could never enter the blessed abodes. Were it not for the advice of Nephthys, the intercession of Isis, the advocacy of Thoth, the mediation of Horus, and the mercy of Osiris himself, no one could see salvation.** Nu therefore exclaims: "Do ye away with my evil deeds, and put ye away my sin which deserved stripes on earth, and destroy ye any evil whatsoever that belongeth unto me" (The Book of the Dead, CXXVI).

In the third portion of Chapter CXXV, the suppliant elaborates his declaration of social morality: "bring ye not forward my wickedness . . . [for] I have given bread to the hungry man, and water to the thirsty man, and apparel to the naked man, and a boat to the shipwrecked mariner. I have made holy offerings to the gods.... Be ye then my deliverers, be ye then my protectors.... I am clean of mouth and clean of hands; therefore, let it be said unto me.... 'Come in peace; come in peace.'" For thousands of years, the initiates of the pagan mysteries were to repeat: "I am clean of hand and pure of heart."

## ANNIHILATION

**In the Osirian eschatology, there was no waiting for judgment, no hell, no torture for the damned. The heart of the condemned was eaten by the great monster Apep or Amemet and thereby his heartsoul ceased to be; his body was then annihilated in the Lake of Fire** (The Book of the Dead, LXXI; XVII; and XIX).

## THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

Those who emerged triumphant from the judgment were admitted to the Elysian Fields, which are depicted as a land teeming with grain, wherein the blessed shall dwell forever in peace and abundance. The scribe Nu declares: "the gates which are in Sekhem are opened unto me, and fields are awarded unto me, together with those of my flesh and bone" (The Book of the Dead, XCVIII). The Osirian expected to be reunited with his family in the after-life and to rule over his servants as on earth.

Nebseni summarizes the aspirations of every ancient Egyptian: "May I become a Khu in Sekhet-Aaru, may I eat therein, may I reap therein, may I fight therein, may I make love therein, may my words be mighty therein, may I never be in a state of servitude therein, but may I be in authority therein."

When a great personage died, his wives and servants, as well as captured enemy slaves, were executed and buried with him, so that they might serve him eternally. And so the happy Khu, made eternal by union with his Sahu, expected to continue during countless millenniums, sowing and reaping, eating the bread and drinking the ale of Osiris, occupying relatively the same material and economic status as on earth.

## EXTENSION OF THE OSIRIAN HOPE

During the early dynasties, those who might hope for happy immortality with Osiris must have been limited to the royal family, certain important officials, and members of the priesthood. But as time went on, democracy increased in religion; and Herodotus describes three methods of embalmings one to suit every purse. Twenty-five hundred years after Cheops and Khafre, a small piece of papyrus, which was to be placed in the coffin and on which were inscribed a few words from The Book of the Dead, promised the same stupendous result as the pharaohs hoped to achieve by the building of the great pyramids. We find, for example, the following rubric: "If this chapter be known by the deceased on earth, or if it be done

in writing upon his coffin, he shall come forth by day . . . in peace into Sekhet-Aaru . . . there shall he flourish as he did upon earth. . . for millions of years" (After Ch. LXXII, The Book of the Dead, Papyrus of Nebsemi).

## IDENTIFICATION WITH OSIRIS

**We have noted that every Khu seeking admission to Sekhet-Aaru called himself Osiris (as Christians called after Christ).** Obviously all Egyptians who cherished the hope of resurrection and immortality believed themselves already transformed into the divine and immortal essence of their god. The Osiris Nu declares explicitly, "I am Osiris" (The Book of the Dead, CXVII). Being an Osiris, Ani expects a resurrection like that of the god, and therefore addresses himself as follows: "O thou . . . whose limbs cannot move, like unto those of Osiris! Let not thy limbs be without movement; let them not suffer corruption; let them not pass away; let them not decay; and let them be fashioned for me as if I were myself Osiris" (Ibid., XLV). The same aspirant continues: "The mighty Khu (Osiris) taketh possession of me . . . Behold, I am the god who is lord of the Tuat" (underworld) (Ibid., X). And again: "I am the Great One, son of the Great One.... The head of Osiris was not taken from him, let not the head of Osiris Ani be taken from him. I have knit myself together; I have made myself whole and complete; I have renewed my youth; I am Osiris, the lord of eternity" (Ibid., XLIII).

## PUBLIC RITUAL OF OSIRIS

Pagan authors wrote extensively concerning the "gloomy, solemn, and mournful sacrifices" of Osiris (Isis and Osiris, 69). Plutarch tells us that **the great mystery-festival**, celebrated in two phases, began at Abydos on the 17th of Athyr, which is our 13th of November. **This date commemorated the death of the god; and its significance is found in the fact that it was the very day on which the grain was placed in the ground. The death of the grain and the death of the god were one and the same: the cereal was identified with the god who came from heaven; he was the bread by which man lives. The resurrection of the god symbolized the rebirth of the grain.**

*John 6:33 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.  
(KJV)*

The first phase of the festival consisted of a public drama, depicting the murder and dismemberment of Osiris, the search for and the finding of his body by Isis, his triumphal return as the resurrected god, and the battle in which Horus defeated Set, all presented by skilled actors as literal history; and this was a principal means of recruiting the membership. Julius Firmicus Maternus, a Latin Christian writer of the fourth century, declared: "In the sanctuaries of Osiris, his murder and dismemberment are annually commemorated with . . . great lamentations. His worshipers . . . beat their breasts and gash their shoulders. . . When . . . they pretend that the mutilated remains of the god have been found and rejoined . . . they turn from mourning to rejoicing."

They "say that the grain is the seed of Osiris, that Isis is the earth, and that Typhon is heat" (De Errore Profanorem).

We know that at all the temples of Osiris his Passion was re-enacted at his annual festivals. On a stele at Abydos erected in the XIIth Dynasty by one I-KherNefert, a priest of Osiris during the reign of Usertsen III (Pharaoh Sesostris), about 1875 B. C., we find a description of the principal scenes in the Osiris mystery-drama. I-Kher-Nefert himself played the key role of Horus. In the first scene, Osiris is treacherously slain, and no one knows what has become of his body; thereupon all the onlookers weep, rend their hair, and beat their breasts. Isis and Nephthys recover the remnants, reconstitute the body, and return it to the temple. The next scene, in which Thoth, Horus, and Isis accomplish the revivification, undoubtedly occurs within the sacred precincts, and is therefore not witnessed by the populace. However, **in due course the resurrected Osiris emerges at the head of his train; at this glorious consummation, the anguish and sorrow of the people are turned into uncontrollable rejoicing.** Horus thereupon places his father in the solar boat so that he may, since he has already been born a second time, proceed as a living god into the eternal regions. This was the great "coming forth by day" of which we read so often in The Book of the Dead. The climax of the play was the great battle in which Horus defeated Set and which is described so vividly by Herodotus (History, II, 63).

## ESOTERIC RITUAL OF OSIRIS

Such was the public portion of the Osirian celebration. The esoteric phase consisted of ceremonials performed by the priests within the temples and witnessed only by the initiates. We learn something of these from various sources and are therefore able to reconstruct them. After saying that the festival of Osiris began on the 17th of Athyr, Plutarch continues: "On the nineteenth . . . the priests bring forth the sacred chest containing a small golden coffer, into which they pour some potable water . . . and a great shout arises from the company for joy that Osiris is found (or resurrected). Then they knead some fertile soil with the water . . . and fashion therefrom a crescent-shaped figure, which they clothe and adorn, thus indicating that they regard these gods as the substance of Earth and Water" (Isis and Osiris, 39).

This summarizes the resurrection-ceremonial mentioned in the stele of I-Kher-Nefert. Fortunately, in the Osirian temple at Denderah, an inscription reveals what these secret rituals were. Its first section deals with the making of models of each of the sixteen pieces into which Set hacked the body of Osiris. Each model was made of wheat paste, and sent to the town where that portion of Osiris had been found by Isis.

The second section describes the making of a figure of Osiris at Mendes. Wheat and paste were placed in a trough on the day of Osiris' murder, which was also that on which the grain was planted; and on this mixture water was poured for several days. A few days later, the contents of the trough were kneaded into a mold which was made into a figure of Osiris, taken to the temple, and buried. Other sections describe the process as carried on in other temples.

The fifth section describes how molds were made from the wood of a red tree in the form of the sixteen dismembered portions of Osiris; cakes of divine bread were then made from each mold, placed in a silver chest, and set near the head of the god. These are the mysterious and sacred cakes which are also "the inward parts of Osiris"; and these are the rites to which Plutarch refers when he says: "I pass over the cutting of the wood . . . and the libations that are offered, for the reason that many of their secret rites are involved therein" (Isis and Osiris, 21). This section also describes the Field of Osiris, adjacent to the temple, in which the grains, used in the sacred cakes, were grown. This sacramental food, which to the Osirian was literally the body of his god, could grow only in that holy field.

The sixth section describes the mysteries as practiced in the temple of Isis at Mendes. On the first day of the Festival of Ploughing, the goddess appeared in her shrine, where she was stripped naked. Paste made from the grain was placed in her bed and moistened with water. All this symbolized the great processes by which the human race is generated and food germinated from the earth. Osiris was the seed which fecundated Mother-Isis, who symbolized also the earth itself.

We see therefore that the publicly performed passion-play depicted the earthly career of Osiris; but the secret rites consisted of solemn ceremonies symbolizing the transfiguration of the grain into Osiris and of Osiris into the grain; and all this was climaxed by the eating of the sacramental god, the Eucharist by which the celebrants were transformed, in their persuasion, into replicas of their god-man. In the New Testament, the earliest evidence for the Eucharist rite is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, where Paul proclaims his version of the Eucharist tradition, ending with what appears to be the Aramaic formula of the Didache Eucharist:

*1.Cor.11:23 " For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, " This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ( 1.Cor.11:23-24, Gk. N.T. UBS. 3rd ed.1990)*

## THE OSIRIAN SACRAMENT...FORERUNNER OF THE CHRISTIAN EUCHARIST

We noted earlier in this article some of the ethical and ceremonial prerequisites for becoming an Osiris. But none of these could avail at all without the miraculous power contained in the divine Eucharist: there was power, there was power in the flesh and the blood of Osiris. He was the grain; and the bread made from it was the

**sacred food, the barley ale (i.e., wine) brewed from it the divine drink, literally believed to be the body and the blood of the god (transubstantiation in the Catholic Church).** Since the ancient Nilotics believed that human beings become whatever they eat, this Osirian sacrament was believed able to make them celestial and immortal.

**The doctrine of the Eucharist has its ultimate roots in prehistoric cannibalism: it was universally believed among savages that by eating other human beings or gods, their virtues and powers would be absorbed by the eaters.** Such cannibalism, common among African tribes until very recently and still practiced among the most primitive, had this primary objective. Melville describes the same sacerdotal rite among the south sea islanders (Cf. Typee, XXXI).

One of the oldest of the Pyramid Texts is that of Unas from the VIth Dynasty, cir. 2500 B. C. This is of great importance because it shows that the original ideology of Egypt had commingled with the Osirian concepts. Although he is ultimately given high place in heaven by order of Osiris, Unas is represented as being at first an enemy of the gods and his ancestors, whom he hunts, lassoes, kills, cooks, and eats so that their powers and attributes may become his own. It is obvious that at the time this was written, the eating of parents and gods was considered a most laudable ceremonial; and it emphasizes how difficult it must have been for the Osirian priesthood to stamp out the older cannibalism: "The Akeru gods tremble, the Kenemu whirl, when they see Unas a risen Soul, in the form of a god who lives upon his fathers and feeds upon his mothers.... He eats men, he feeds on the gods . . . he cooks them in his fiery cauldrons. He eats their words of power, he swallows their spirits. . . What he finds on his path, he eats eagerly.... He eats the wisdom of every god, his period of life is eternity. . .

Their soul is in his body, their spirits are within him." Having partaken of this dynamic sacrament, Unas becomes an Osiris and is admitted to the company of the gods. A parallel passage is found in the Pyramid Text of Pepi II, who, it is said, "seizeth those who are in the following of Set . . . he breaketh their heads, he cutteth off their haunches, he teareth out their intestines, he diggeth out their hearts, he drinketh copiously of their blood!" (Line, 531 ff.).

Although crude, savage, and grotesque, this was the core of an overwhelming concept. **The conviction that it was possible for humanity to achieve immortality by eating the body and drinking the blood of a god or of an immortal god-man who had died that mortals might have abundant and everlasting life, became a dominating obsession in the ancient world. This same idea, as held by the Essenes, is the reason why the Passover is changed at the last supper and made into an "eat my body and drink my blood" dinner! The Pagan roots are evident to anyone who knows history and a little comparative religion.**

The cult of Osiris forbade the older cannibalism, but did not proscribe the dismemberment and eating of enemies; and it certainly practiced the bloody sacrifice of captives and the sacramental rending and eating of the sacred bovine, which symbolized Osiris (The Book of the Dead, CLXXXI).

**The moral elevation of the Osirian cult lay in its identification of bread with the flesh of its god and of barley ale with his blood. The partaker of this Eucharist could now achieve a mystical transformation and become an Osiris by living on wheat and barley bread during his lifetime, by drinking and eating the sacred ale and cakes during the annual mysteries, and by enjoying the same sacred fare in Sekhet-Aaru once his Khu had joined his Sahu in the next world. By this simple metaphysical transposition, the bloody sacrament became symbolic, but no less effective. For Osiris was, to his believers, literally and with complete reality, the divine seed which came down from heaven and was reborn from the earth that men might have life and have it more abundantly; and all who ate of that bread might live forever, for it was the flesh of the god, which he gave for the life of humanity. Whosoever ate the flesh and drank the blood of Osiris had eternal life; for he would be resurrected beyond the grave. Whosoever ate that flesh and drank that blood dwelt in Osiris and Osiris dwelt in him. Paul calls this same event being "in Christ."**

**Answer for yourself: Did you notice the exact similarity with the Gospel of John, chapter 6? Did Jesus really say those things or has words been put into his mouth by the Essene-Christian Church to further their sect's doctrines?**

**This was the divine mystery which was given to the world by Egypt and which spread throughout the Mediterranean area in various cults; this concept originated only once, but it proliferated in all directions and became the dynamic force in every mystery-cult.**

**It was solely by means of this sacramental food that the corruptible of the deceased could be clothed with incorruption.**

***1 Cor 15:42 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: (KJV)***

This idea appears again and again in infinite variety. The scribe Nebseni implores: "And there in the celestial mansions of heaven which my divine father Tem bath established, let my hands lay hold upon the wheat and the barley which shall be given unto me therein in abundant measure." This was the celestial Eucharist without which the Sahu itself, the spiritual body, could not germinate from the mummy. Nu corroborates this fact by stating: "I am established, and the divine Sekhethetep is before me, I have eaten therein, I have become a spirit therein, I have abundance therein." Again he declares; "I am the divine soul of Ra . . . which is god. . . I am the divine food which is not corrupted." Nu identifies himself with Osiris and with Ra, who is called the divine, that is, the sacramental food. As we know, Horus was also frequently identified with his father; and we read: "Horus is both the divine food and the sacrifice." We read that the bread and the ale of Osiris make the eater immortal, (The Book of the Dead, 40) an idea which is frequently elaborated. The Osirian "shall eat of that wheat and barley, and his limbs shall be nourished therewith, and his body shall become like unto the bodies of the gods" (The Book of the Dead, XCIX).

That the sacramental food which gave immortality was a very ancient concept we learn from the Pyramid Text of Teta, which dates from about, 2600 B. C. and which embodies ideas far more ancient still. We read here that the Osiris Teta "receives" thy bread which decayeth not, and thy beer which perisheth not." In the Text of Pepi I we read: "All the gods give thee their flesh and their blood.... Thou shalt not die." In the Text of Pepi II, the aspirant prays for "thy bread of eternity, and thy beer of everlastingness (Line 390).

## **THE GOD-MAN....OSIRIS**

**Such was the great godman Osiris: human, like us, and thus able to take upon himself all our sorrow, but also divine, and therefore able to confer divinity upon us. He brought the divine bread from heaven for mankind; he taught justice and practiced mercy; he died, was buried, and rose from the grave; he gave to all who became members of his mystical body his flesh to eat and his blood to drink so that this divine sacrament might then transfigure them into celestial gods; he went before to prepare mansions for his initiates in Elysium; and he was to be the just and merciful judge before whom men and women must appear beyond the grave.**

## **THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OSIRIAN CULT**

The Osiris-worship continued with little modification on the island of Philae in the Upper Nile for several centuries into our era and sacrifices of human enemies were performed there regularly as late as the sixth century. The edict of Theodosius that all pagan temples be destroyed and their worshipers forced to accept Christianity about 380 was there ignored. About 550, however, Justinian dispatched to Philae General Narses, who destroyed the great Osirian temples and sanctuaries, threw the priests into prison, and carried away the sacred images to Constantinople.

***Thus died the cult of Osiris. But the soteriology [salvation] which was its central feature had already assumed various forms which had long since proliferated far and wide in the ancient world. And as Christians we follow in the footsteps of Osiris in Jesus' name and never know the origins for such religions beliefs.***



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