

## **A Basic, then more thorough Explanation**

*August 5, 2006 (Edited April 8, 2007)*

*By Joan Lansberry*

### ***One Setian's Path...***

I first discovered my path a little over three years ago, while exploring various mysteries of life. In this search, I came to a website which tantalized me with possibilities of how life could be lived, and how it could be lived better.

I am a Setian, one who harkens to the call of Set. Once honored in Ancient Egyptian times, the god Set speaks in modern times. Not as a Kemeticist, who seeks to do as the ancients would have done, but like them I invoke and evoke the gods and goddesses to my world, this present age. Some may say the reconstructionist path is merely the animation of old mummies, but I do not think that is so. I think for them, if it is to become vital, the gods are awakened to answer modern concerns and their religion becomes more than dusty dogma.

There must be a balance. Those modernists who seem to simply borrow the names of ancient deities with little or no research into how the old Priesthood saw their deity also lack a vitality. Their efforts are superficial and can attain no depth.

Not only that, as a Setian, there is something more. As I seek my own sovereignty and my own divinity through the magical/spiritual process of **Xeper**, there is more than a quiet life of humble service. (Not to say that 'kings do not serve', but there is not the emphasis on bowing of knee and following sacred texts 'to the letter'.)

In ancient myths Set is the one who tests the future King through challenges, and certainly that is one of Set's tasks today. The young Horus, before he became Ra-Harakhty the young King, is challenged by Set through various contendings. Thusly, he learns the necessary strength. And so today, those who would become sovereign must learn their own strength.

I quote from an author who explains the basic position of today's pagan outlook: "When it comes to specifying the values particular to paganism, people have generally listed features such as these: an eminently aristocratic conception of the human individual; an ethics founded on honor ("shame" rather than "sin"); an heroic attitude toward life's challenges; the exaltation and sacralization of the world, beauty, the body, strength, health; the rejection of any "worlds beyond"; the inseparability of morality and aesthetics; and so on. From this perspective, the highest value is undoubtedly not a form of "justice" whose purpose is essentially interpreted as flattening the social order in the name of equality, but everything that can allow a man to surpass himself. (*From On Being a Pagan, Chapter "False Contrasts", p. 21*)" - Alain de Benoist

***"Surpassing himself"***, this is indeed the process of Xeper:

## XEPERA XEPER XEPERU:

***"I Have Come Into Being, and by the Process of my Coming Into Being, the Process of Coming Into Being is Established."***

This becomes a self-sustaining system, for once the wheels start going in a certain direction, that mobilizes further process in that direction. One scientific principle is that an object in motion tends to remain in motion. Not only so in the physical world, it is also so with our mental and emotional evolution, as well.

All of my philosophical and spiritual concepts are constantly growing and changing as I study and learn. This is but part of the larger evolution I seek in my life at large, knowing that using my will, this can become a conscious process, and therefore more self-directed. So I 'Seek the Mysteries', ever trying to increase my understanding, seeing the interlocking influences between all aspects, and it is a continually enriching process.

*A slightly more in depth explanation...*

### **My Present Understanding**

*August 3, 2005 (edited April 8, 2007)*

My understanding is always undergoing evolution, and so is apt to change. Here it is as it exists now.

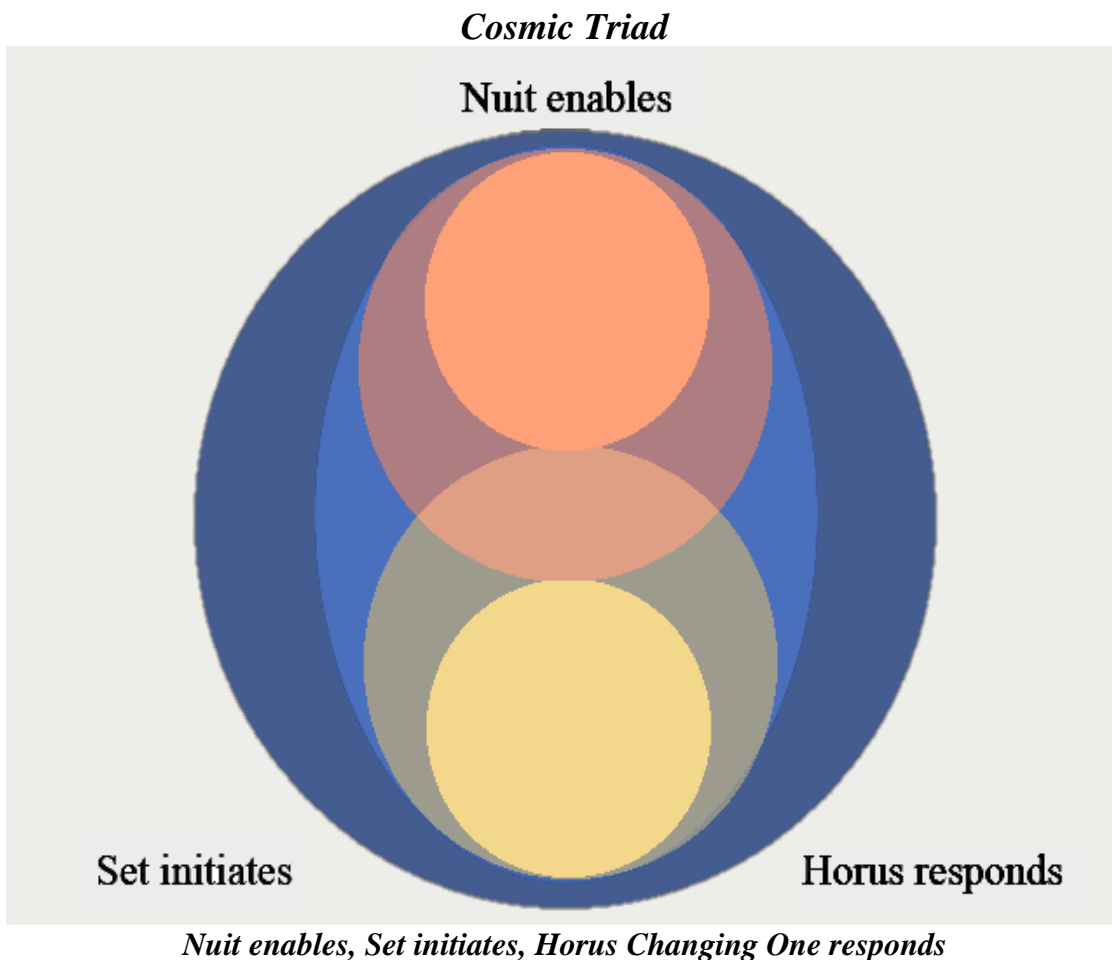
#### ***Horus Changing One***



*Set, off stage, "HORUS! You used to be my brother and now you're my NEPHEW?"*

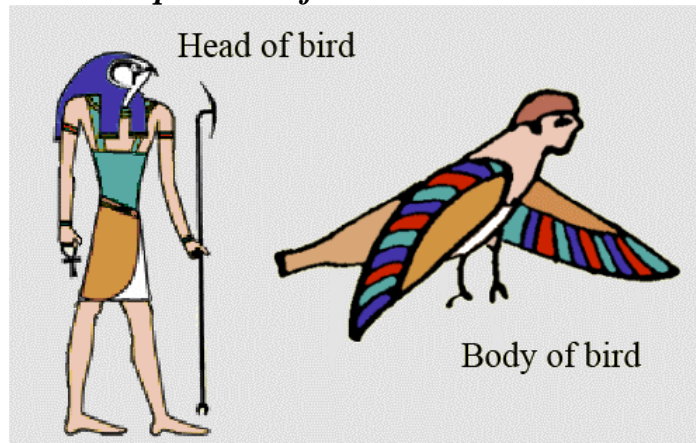
Yes, the ancient mythology is just that weird, '**Horus the Elder**' and '**Horus the Younger**'. I've got my own weird understanding of all this. It's subject to change, but right now I'm viewing the divine complex thusly. **Nuit**, the 'Mother of the Gods', infinite space and ground of our being, and **Set**, the one Great of Strength, the Power that energizes everything. He may be a shape shifter and change his face, but never his **ROLE**. He through interaction with **Nuit**, brought about **Horus Changing One**. Right now I'm seeing Horus as an entity who manifests in a myriad of forms and roles, as needed to fulfill Ma'at (order, balance, cosmic equilibrium). Then it gets even more complex as that which is divine within us humans enters the dynamic cosmic balance. One of those faces Horus wears might be your own!

*The sketch above is done from a statuette of Isis and Horus, 330–30 B.C.E.; Ptolemaic period, Egyptian faience; H. 6 3/4 in. (17 cm) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (The small picture of Set is from an original b&w drawing I did of Set, now colored.)*



Another thing I find curious:

### ***Depictions of Horus and the Ba***



*Horus has a bird head, the Ba (active part of the immortal Self) has a bird body.*

Is the ancient mythology suggesting a correspondence? Two halves of a possible whole as we join the cosmic dance with Set within the infinite space of Nuit?

The mythology varies in different times and places, depending on which god is most in favor. In the **Ennead**, the creation story has Set as brother to Osiris, Isis and Nephthys. So I'm pondering this 'Ennead', and wondering, "**Where's HORUS?**" It gets difficult because in different times and places, different gods are emphasized. I'm thinking, "Okay, we have SEB (aka GEB) 'creator of darkness' and Nuit (aka NUT) as parents, and the 'first one (princeps) of darkness, \_Set\_, but where is that 'first one of light'? A little reading, and it is revealed, "**Though worship of Ra was very widespread, his cult center was in Heliopolis, the home of the Ennead that he was thought to be the head of as Atum.**" Heliopolis means "City of the Sun", so this is showing the importance that was given to the light deity, in THIS REGION, "City of the Sun".

***"In later Egyptian dynastic times, Ra was subsumed into the god Horus, as Re-Horakhty."*** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ra>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horus>)

There is the Ennead creation myth, and also the **Ogdoad** creation myth. "**In the version of the Ogdoad creation myth used by the Thoth cult, Thoth created Ra-Horakhty, via an egg, and so was said to be the father of Neferhor,**" ('Beautiful, good Horus'). In the Ogdoad cosmogony myth, Thoth gave birth to Ra, Atum, Nefertum, and Khepri by laying an egg while in the form of an ibis, or later as a goose laying a golden egg.

So there you have it, the views of the Heliopolitans and the Hermopolitans. It depends on whatever time and region and who's in favor that becomes 'the original creator god'. It's not an 'exact' science.

I am a Setian, and in my intuitive understanding, which sees Set as the one of Power, he did not 'create the darkness', it was already there, and he arose from it. According to a

Pyramid text Thoth came forth from Seth, as a result of 'relations between Horus and Seth' (Seth, God of Confusion, page 39, by Te Velde.) *"As we have seen, Horus and Seth are not usually imagined as working together in concord. The two combatants bring forth the god of peace. He appears and places himself between the two gods, thereby interceding in the struggle..."*(Page 45)

So in my Setian understanding, it is Set first, the 'first one of darkness', full of power. From this power, light arises forth out of darkness, and Horus is born. They squabble, and necessity brings forth Thoth, the reconciler.

'As above, so below', there are further reasons to have the cosmology thusly. When I was at the Arizona Science Center, I learned the brain develops from back to front. (*Teenagers' brains are still developing.*) The frontal lobes of the cerebral cortex lie under the forehead, which has to do with planning, reasoning, movement, and some aspects of speech. This would indeed be the realm of Thoth.

Understanding the realm of consciousness is the heart and soul of all Egyptian thought. In *'Egyptian Mystics'*, Moustafa Gadalla explains, *"The main Egyptian mystical (Sufi) theme is the importance of consciousness, in integrating the inner faculties into comprehension through a gradual process. The Egyptian mystics refer to this process as using all organs of perception for a more comprehensive understanding."*(page 27) Power, vision and then reasoning co-ordination is the most logical evolution.

But getting back to the very beginning, as I said, at present, I am understanding First Mystery to be NUT (aka Nuit):



In October of 1997 I found this poem in a book about the Goddess. It originally was discovered on a mummy of Soutywes, no. 2611m. c. 1100BC in Egypt. It caught my eye and heart:

O my mother Nut,  
stretch your wings over me.  
Let me become like the imperishable  
stars,  
like the indefatigable stars.  
May Nut extend her arms over me  
and her name of

'She who extends her arms'  
chases away the shadows  
and makes the light shine  
everywhere.

O Great Being who is in the world of  
the Dead,  
At whose feet is Eternity.  
In whose hand is the always,  
Come to me,  
O great divine beloved Soul,  
who is in the mysterious abyss,  
Come to me.

Indeed the call of the Mystery entranced me reading this. It implies 'she who encompasses all'. Later, I learned the ancient Egyptians regarded Nut (*or Nuit, Nuith*) as 'the Mother of the Gods'.

But it is not just the ancient Egyptians who have been entranced by her charms. Crowley, (*never mind his 'weird' stuff*) had these lovely words about her:

IT IS WRITTEN in The Book of the Law:

"Every man and every woman is a Star.

"It is Our Lady of the Stars that speaketh to thee, O thou that art a star, a member of the Body of Nuith! Listen, for thine ears become dulled to the mean noises of the earth; the infinite silence of the Stars woos thee with subtile musick.

Behold her bending down above thee, a flame of blue, all-touching, all-penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth, and her lithe body arched for love, and her soft feet not hurting the little flowers, and think that all thy grossness shall presently fall from thee as thou leapest to her embrace, caught up into her love as a dewdrop into the kisses of the sunrise...."

I love the image of each of us a radiant star within her velvet darkness.

To me she seems to be "*the Absolute conscious of itself*", as one researcher into Egyptian matters, John Anthony West, describes. Not a creative element in herself, she nevertheless enables all creation to happen.

To me, she seems to say:

I am present, past and future,  
I am One, I am All,  
I am the Matrix  
which holds each element.  
(hurt not the stars)...

...

I do not create,  
within me the creations happen.  
I am the matrix.  
You all are the unfoldings.  
Set is first principle,  
the first to break through of the womb...

...

The secrets are bursting forth  
from the seamless universe...  
No beginnings and endings,  
one thing flows into another,  
no present, past, future,  
just the Matrix.

The Matrix will consume all,  
if you let her.  
You of Set do not let this happen.  
Bright stars you are in my Matrix.

As I read and learn, I've discovered:

"One of the most frequently employed epithets of Seth is "**Son of Nut**", it is so widely known that it can be used without any further addition as an equivalent of the name Seth." (TeVelde, Seth, God of Confusion, page 28)

Set (aka Seth, Sutekh, Suti, Setesh, Seth, Setekh, Sutekh, Setech, Sutech, [yes, the God of many names!]) was called by the ancients "Great of Strength", "Great-in-magic", "Mighty One of the Two-Fold Strength".



The very respected source of National Geographic, via a booklet on the Treasures Of Egypt, describes SET as the God of Thunder And Lightning.

NASA has a thorough primer (<http://thunder.msfc.nasa.gov/primer/>) on the nature of lightning. Benjamin Franklin, during the second half of the 18th century, was the first to prove the electrical nature of lightning. Later, others discovered ways to measure lightning currents. Briefly explained, "Lightning, then, is an electrical discharge between positive and negative regions of a thunderstorm."

Lightning earns the awe it produces, for each year, it "is responsible for the deaths of a hundred or so people, injuries to several hundred more, and millions of dollars in property damage, in the United States alone."

Small wonder, then, that this electrical property is only attributed to the most Powerful of deities.

When I was nineteen, I had an experience which changed my view of things. Standing under the stars, an immense sense of awe entered me as I looked at those stars and knew a Great Power had gone into their making. I sensed it was electrical in nature and that we could 'plug into it'. Thus, when I read of Set years later, I knew then this was the face the ancients gave this Force.

Everything I've experienced since then has confirmed this understanding. Great is the Power of Set, fierce, and often feared by the ancients. A true vision of what is necessary for creation senses the immensity of that power. This, then, is the power of Set. It can be abused. If you stick your finger into a light socket, you will be sorry. But consider Electricity, the scientific force which makes lightning possible. This is a force which can be used for beneficial or harmful purposes. Left to the random chaos of the thunderstorm, destruction may result. Channeled, via ultimately through the skill of the human mind, all sorts of benefits are accrued. Imagine if you will, the world before electricity was discovered. Few want to return to that cold ( or hot, without air conditioning), dark world without all the mechanical devices which bring both ease and pleasure.

Another version of, "Set's name originally meant "cutter" or "isolator" -- he is a personification of the process of Initiation -- of Becoming more and more your own self," explains Uncle Setnakt (AKA Don Webb) in "The Black Beyond Black" ([http://www.xeper.org/pub/lib/lib\\_xeper.htm](http://www.xeper.org/pub/lib/lib_xeper.htm)).

There is another conclusion one can draw using the original meaning of Set's name. The Surgeon's knife is a 'cutter' and 'isolator', as she cuts away the diseased flesh. She brings life and healing to a patient who would otherwise die were such flesh not separated from him.

To apprehend the great unmanifest potential of Set is to have some idea of what we can achieve when we channel his energies. As Setians say "***Great Is The Might Of Set, Greater Still He Through Us!***"

And to what do I wish to turn all this power? Again, it is the ancient Egyptians who first had the concept:



**XEPER**

**"transformation - evolution - metamorphosis"**

These scarabs stand for a concept, represented by the Egyptian word Kheper, also spelled **Xeper** (using the Greek 'X' Chi for the first letter), and pronounced '*Kheffer*'.

I have attempted to show an evolution in the row of scarabs with the metamorphosis of color. The scarab is a tri- consonantal Egyptian hieroglyph for the KHEPER/XEPER concept.. In Egyptian, 'hieroglyph' means 'sacred writings. Glyph is 'symbol', and heiro is 'sacred'. Thus, XEPER acquires sacred significance as it is no ordinary word. It means 'becoming'. In English, 'becoming' has no sacred significance. But to the Egyptians and those of us today who hearken to their wisdom, it means the whole sphere of metamorphosis, transformation, evolution and growth in the spiritual realm, as well as the physical realm.

To those who understand, it has powerful magical implications:

**XEPERA XEPER XEPERU:**

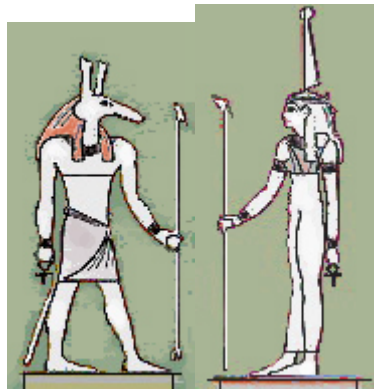
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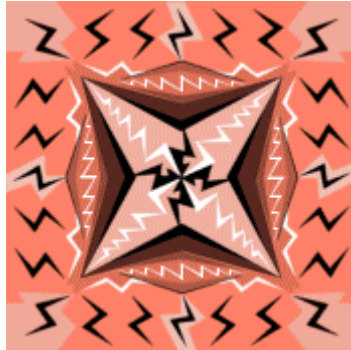
With conscious effort, we can discover and strengthen our inner divinity. I find archetypes, or 'ideals of perfection' which help me visualize those characteristics I wish to bring into being.

For instance, one archetype which I become is Ma'at, the Egyptian Goddess of Order and Balance. Invoking that power, I make the judgments of what is Truth, and create Order out of the raw Chaos.

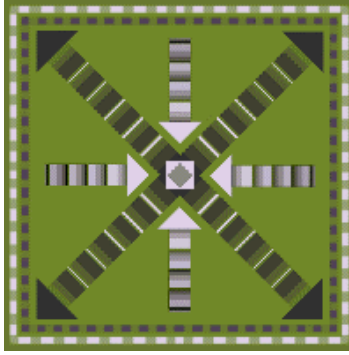


**SET, God of Thunder and Lightning, MA'AT, Goddess of Order and Balance**

**Raw POWER without ORDER is CHAOS . . .**



*Electricity in raw form is thunder and lightning*



*However, Electricity Ordered can do many magical things!*

But without POWER there is only NOTHING . . .