



Light, Darkness and Shadow in ancient Egypt

May Ahmed Hosny

Faculty of tourism and hotel management, Helwan University

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Abstract

In ancient Egypt there were different natural elements which affected the various aspects of their life. As the ancient Egyptians were good observers of nature, they realized all the natural phenomena as well as the natural elements surrounding them and provided each with secular and religious significances. Among these elements were light, darkness which created the shadow and the image. These elements reflected a great role on the ancient Egyptians daily life, underworld and even their afterlife. The article will deal with the different words of light, darkness, and shadow. It will emphasize how the light dispelled the darkness in the daily life as well as the afterlife. Moreover, it will cover the shadow which was created from the merging between the light and darkness. All these elements affected the cycle of the life of the ancient Egyptians. Furthermore, they believed in the importance of the image to ensure resurrection and eternal life.

Light in ancient Egypt

Light for the ancient Egyptians had a divine function on account of its apotropaic power. For example, on the night of the New Year lights were lit in the temples. Additionally, Plutarch mentioned the presence of an eternal flame regarding the light which were always kept burning before the divine image. Moreover, light was symbol of purity and goodness for the fact that it drives away darkness and in turn scattered typhonic forces. For the ancient Egyptians, the Mythical battle between light and darkness reached its peak in the injury and destruction of the lunar eye (which simply indicated the waning of the full moon) the eye which was brought back and healed by god Thot. Therefore, the main task of god Thot (moon god) was to protect the light from darkness as he was also considered the representative of god Re as he accompanied the sun god on his daily journey and lit up the firmament at night as the moon. (Lurker, M., 1980, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p. 76). Consequently, light was not only important for the human beings, but it was also of great importance to all the living organisms.

Talking about the light drives us to deal with the different sources of light whether they were naturally created or artificially made. The fundamental natural source of light was the sun (solar disk), which was regarded by the ancient Egyptians as one of the main sources of life on earth affecting the human beings, animals and even every living creature daily. The ancient Egyptians soon deduced the essential role of the sun upon the different aspects of their life.

The sun was regarded as the main source of heat and light. Additionally, the appearance of the solar disk everyday with its light and heat had great influence on the development of architecture in ancient Egypt. The natural great amount of light provided by the sun made the Egyptians satisfied with small openings high on the side walls and only a door without the presence of any windows in the temples and therefore the main source of light and air were these openings or small holes dug near the roof together with the gates. (Clarke, S., & Engelbach, R., *Ancient Egyptian Masonry, the Building Craft*, oxford 1930, p. 170; Smith, E.B., *Egyptian Architecture as Cultural Expression*, London, 1938, p.6). Furthermore, sometimes the ancient Egyptians used to make clerestories which means building a part higher than all roofs and its walls full of windows to ensure the presence of light internally and this method is still used in modern architecture, famously known as lantern light which was an opening in the upper part of the roof whether it was with a square form, rectangular or circular in shape attached upon it colorful glass to obtain light and air (Abd el Wahid, A.M., *Technical dictionary, Architect and building construction*, Leipzig, 1976, p.243).

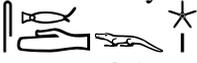
Light played a vital role in both secular and religious aspects of life, whether the light was obtained from Natural or artificial sources. For the ancient Egyptians the sun light specifically was essential in different religious beliefs. Light in general or fire was significant even for the deceased in his journey through the underworld.

However, the early Egyptians believed that the sun was fire. They had to conceive that the sun rises out the water without being extinguished to ensure its function which was providing heat and light. Therefore, they used to depict the sun rising from the primeval ocean known as Nun in a boat floating and sailing through the air during the daytime. Consequently, the daily victory upon darkness initiated the existence of human beings, the rejoicing of the different nations as well as resurrection of the dead souls and their happiness by their singing. This affirms that the sun god Re with its power, brilliance and actions in his voyages and adventures affected the entire universe divinities and mortals alike. (Armour, R.A., *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2006, p.41).

Words related to light

According to Faulkner, the sun light was called : “*shdw*” meaning illuminate as the sun god used to call himself the great illumination (Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Dictionary*, p.239), and sometimes, the ancient Egyptians used the star as determinative for this title. Additionally, they used the word : “*sw*” which means the sun or the windows, while the more familiar word for beams or glowing beams as it shines the shrine  /  / : “*shd*” which was mainly a description for the sun. Meanwhile, it was used for candle light or lamp light, but if this word comes with a determinative related to fire, it indicated creating light from fire and when it comes as plural, most probably it refers to the stars as they also share in creating light.

Furthermore, there were other words related to light such as,  “*sšd*” which means window (Wb. IV, p. 301,14f.; Gardiner, A., *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, Vol.II, Oxford 1947, p.212, no.242). It appeared in usage during the New Kingdom, the

determinatives of this word were the eye and the building, and the eye emphasizes the vision which can only be acquired by the light entering inside the building. Sometimes, the word  : “*sšd*” was written with the determinative of a star which was regarded as one of the natural sources of lighting during the night, to guide the people, however in this case it has a different meaning which was destruction. Additionally,

there was another word  /  “*ššš*” referring to the meaning of window or small opening allowing light to enter (Wb. I, p.359, 2), while the

word  : “*wsy*” means a hole in the wall as explained by Gardiner (Gardner, A., *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, p.213, no. 443) while Faulkner initiated that it can be translated as small window (Faulkner, R.O., *Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, p.68). Among the most important words used for the meaning of windows was

 : “*wyn*” which was used at the beginning to indicate light specifically sun light, then later it referred to the windows.

Sources of Light

Natural sources of light were mainly: *Sun, Moon, Stars, beams and rays* while the artificial sources for light were *Fire, flames, windows, opening or holes in the walls of the tombs and lamps*.

Concerning the light openings of the temples they were considered as mean of illumination in the Egyptian architecture whether in religious buildings as temples, shrines, chapels and even mortuary temples or in secular building as houses and palaces. The main purpose of these openings which were regarded as windows was to provide light and ventilation. During the Old Kingdom, specifically the 3rd dynasty the ancient Egyptians started an innovation which was making small openings in the upper part of the walls above the level of the other buildings as mentioned before they were known as “clerestories”. Additionally, these openings or windows were not usually decorated, except in few cases as for example the temple of goddess Hathor at Dendera these openings are decorated with sun rays to indicate and ensure the main function of these openings which was to provide light or illumination by allowing the sun rays to enter and clarify everything inside the temple. (Clarke, R., & Engelbach, R., p.170). Consequently, the only way for light inside the buildings whether they were houses, palaces, temples, or even military fortress was the existence of these windows on the upper part of the walls, the clerestories and the doors. Among the famous examples of these openings or windows was the military fortress of Tharu.

د.نزيه سليمان "التحصينات العسكرية في مصر القديمة (2015).

However, the lamps were considered as one of the most important sources for artificial light. During the New Kingdom, most of the lamps were made from stone vessels filled with oil, probably sesame or castor oil which was burned with a floating wick of linen. The most famous lamp with its elaborate decoration was the lamp of king Tutankhamen. Its decoration can be seen on the inner side, as if it was carved from the internal side, but actually, the scene was carved on the outer wall of a small vessel placed inside a larger translucent alabaster vessel. (James, T.G.H., *Tutankhamen, The Eternal Splendor of the Boy Pharaoh*, Cairo, 2001, p.307).

Light in Architecture

Light played an essential role upon choosing the kind of carving. For example, in the buildings which have no openings for light as the walls were almost completely covered

with different carvings and scenes, they divided them into two categories: Ba relief (high relief) which was depicted usually on the inner walls that were not exposed to direct light as it will be clear even in the low dense of light and it will provide a great effect on the people as they appear in high relief. However, the sunk relief was used mainly on the walls which were exposed to the direct light of the sun, from one side as a kind of preservation and from the other side to allow the shadow and light to play a great role and effect together in order to create more beauty to the scenes. (Mark, J., Ancient Egyptian architect, 2016, p. 2).

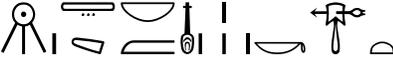
Religious Significance of light

One has to admit that the creation of light was from darkness, as the whole world had been a primeval ocean all in darkness, then appeared the hill and then a creator god emerged, and it differs from one creation myth to the other. According to all the creation theology, the hill emerged from the primeval ocean and the light emerged from the darkness. The ancient Egyptians believed that the world comprises 3 main elements: known in the ancient Egyptian language as “*t3*”: land or earth, “*pt*”: sky and the “*dw3t*” netherworld (Hornung, E., Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, N.Y., 1996, p. 199).

Concerning the underworld there was a great conflict as some scholars believed that it represents the dawn or the light of the dawn, the early rising light in the underworld. According to Hornung, “*dw3t*” in the Pyramid texts was indicating either eastern sky or the underworld. However, Barta initiated that “*dw3t*” was representing the place from where the sun rises. Consequently, they all admitted that the main sources of life should combine, and they were basically air, water and light to allow the cycle of life to be created. Therefore, the daily life cycle depended mainly on the rising and setting of the sun as a main source of light which was one of the essential elements. Finally, it was concluded that the ancient Egyptians believed that Netherworld was the place where the sun sets as if the light will disappear upon the earth and will be hidden in the underworld to light the caves of the underworld, also to ensure that the hidden light will be recharged with heat, power and energy to be able to be reborn again, therefore, allowing the deceased to renew his youth to be reborn again in the afterlife after being resurrected. (Hornung, E., Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, N.Y., 1996, p. 200). Therefore, light is life, even the deceased in the dark realm passes through the sun god. The new kingdom religious books always state how whenever the sun god rays and his creative word reach, sealed doors spring open, darkness is banished, and the deceased rise up to announce his resurrection.

According to the religious books specifically “Book of what is in the underworld” (“*imy dw3t*”), in the last part of the 3rd hour, the divinities of the underworld direct their speech to god Re mentioning: “*Your soul and your power appear and leads you through the darkness. Your soul resides in the sky, and land (earth) is the residence of your body*”. While in the solar theology the hymns were addressed to the creator sun god by telling him: “*The sky carry your soul which is high above all its light.*”

Consequently, the underworld for the ancient Egyptians was the place where the sun with its light disappears and hides till the light returns again to spread its light in the

darkness. Furthermore, goddess Nut was responsible for the creation of the sun and the moon, as they both emerge from the sky. Additionally, in the short hymn of god Aten which appeared in the tomb of Ay, the spell mentioned: : : “*wbn.(n)k m pt r shd t3 nb m nfrw .k (m) stwt.k*”: “*You shined in the sky to light the whole earth with your beauty and rays*”. (Sandman Textes from the time of Akhenaton, Bae8, Bruxelles 1938, p.40). According to Mariam Lichtheim, it can be also translated as: “*When you dawn their eyes observe you, As your rays light the whole earth*” (Lichtheim, M., Ancient Egyptian Literature, vol. II, California, 1997, p.91). This emphasizes how Akhenaton’s artists devised the image of the sun disk with the extended rays, ending with human hands holding the “*nh*” sign of life. Therefore, light signifies life, as he provides the world with the breath of life as it clarifies light as the bearer of the breath of life.(Hornung, E., Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt, N.Y., 1996, p. 200).In one of the versions of the creation myths, there was a myth mentioning the appearance of a lotus flower in the primeval ocean and the petals opened to reveal the sun god Re who lightened the world creating the universe. For this reason, most of the kings wished to be represented emerging from the lotus flower as the famous bust of King Tutankhamen. (James, T.G.H., The Eternal Splendor of the Boy Pharaoh, 2007, p. 133).

As the moon was one of the sources of light therefore, Khonso as a moon god had a great association with light. His main form was as a human being in a mummy form, bearing the moon’s disc and a crescent upon his head. In allusion to god Horus, khonso sometimes, was represented having a falcon head with the moon disc surmounting the moon crescent imitating the sun disc. Consequently, he had a great connection with the moon and the sun the main sources of light. (Wilkinson, R.H., The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, London, 2007, p. 30).

Sources of light for the deceased

1.The Sun: God Re, the sun god was the main source of natural light, as the ancient Egyptians believed. The sun lights the world during daytime, and it will light the underworld during the nighttime, therefore the journey of the sun during the nighttime was from west to east. Additionally, it is also worth mentioning that the soul of the deceased king goes together with the texts from south to north as if following the flood from south to north. (Allen, P.J., Ancient Egyptian Pyramid texts, 12.) According to Allen, the pyramid texts in Unas pyramid go through three stages, from west to east then to north across the “*dw3t*” which is the darkness world, moving towards the eastern side where the light will start to emerge and therefore the deceased ensure his

resurrection in the afterlife like the sun god. The word  “*i3hw*” appeared giving the meaning of light then the deceased king was described as “*k3 i3hw*” which means the “*bull with light*” or maybe it was an indication for the removal of energy so the light refers here to the energy.

2.The Moon Light: As the ancient Egyptians were good observers of nature so they deduced that the main sources of light and illumination were the sun and the moon. Consequently, they compared the moon light with the night sun, and they considered the sun and the moon as the eyes of Re and therefore the eyes of Horus, as Re provided him

with his eyes in one of the legends. Therefore, the right was the sun and left eye was the moon. (Kaper, O.E., "Myths: Lunar Cycle", Oxford Encyclopedia II, p.480-481). Additionally, Thot or "*dhwtj*" was regarded as source of light for the underworld. Although the moon was not mentioned frequently in the books of the underworld, it had a great role in lighting the world together with the sun and they shared the resurrection. Moreover, the moon was considered to be the shining sun of the night. Consequently, the phases of the moon were regarded as symbol of life and death, alluding the death and resurrection of Osiris. Additionally, there was a connection between the waning of the moon and the fourteen dismantled pieces of Osiris. Osiris was not the only god related to the moon, but there were other divinities who were regarded as moon deities, such as Thot, Khonso and Iah. All of them were depicted with the moon and the crescent upon their heads. (Lurker, M., 1980, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p. 82).

3.The Wdjat Eyes: For the ancient Egyptians one eye was the sun and the other was the moon so, one was indicating the morning while the other was representing the night. Therefore, these eyes mainly symbolize the vision of the creator god to be able to know and see all the matters of the human beings and to provide them with the light they need. This creator god was called "*nb pt st t3wy m irt.f*": "*Lord of the sky lights the earth with the light of his eyes*". Consequently, this admits the relation between the sun god Re and the Wadjet eyes. Moreover, there was a close connection between the Wadjet eyes which provides light symbolizing the renewal of life and the offerings which indicates the life as well. However, there was another role for these eyes which was the permanent protection of the deceased and god Osiris, as these eyes burns the enemies and destroys them with its emerging fire. Additionally, it lightens the way in front of the deceased in his journey through the underworld. The wadjet eyes was always described as the great illuminated magical eyes which provided its power to god Osiris to ensure his victory over his enemies and it's also considered to be the main feature which allowed Horus to revenge for his father. According to the coffin texts, the eyes of Horus was created from the fire of the sun and this confirms the close relation between it and the sun god and identifies the light of the eyes of Horus to be originally emitted from the Sun god Re. As the moon was the eye of the Falcon god Horus, it was mainly denoted as the left eye of Horus. Therefore, the waxing and waning of the moon provided a great significance to the myth of the struggle between Horus and Seth, as representatives of light and darkness. (Lurker, M., 1980, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p. 82)

Expulsion of Darkness by light

The expulsion of the darkness was the main role of the sun god as everyday darkness was expelled by the shining sun. Darkness used to occupy all night starting from the sun setting and ending by the first light of the sun which was the beginning of the dawn. Moreover, the light of the sun was considered renewal of life as it allowed all life aspects to be revived every day, putting an end to the darkness of the night. Additionally, the light of the sun provides the creation world with great power to be able to expel darkness and provides the universe with the great revival force.

Furthermore, the Pyramid texts spell 1449a stated:



“i^c ti n N m rn.k n R^c ḥsr . k ḥ3ti pt”

"Ascend to me in your name, Re to remove the darkness of the sky."

While on one of the Ostraca exhibited in the Egyptian Museum the text mentioned:



“itn nfr sšp m3wy dr kkw sm3w”

"O Beautiful Sun which glorify its shine and remove darkness"(Erman, A. Gebete eines ungerecht Verfolgten und andere Ostraka aus den konigsgrabern, ZAS 38, 1900, p.19.). All these were evidence that the light was responsible of kicking out and ensuring the removal of darkness.

Kingdom of Darkness

The concept of death for the ancient Egyptians was related to the sun setting as by the disappearance of the sun, darkness fills the earth spreading everywhere. Therefore, darkness was mainly regarded as symbol of death as it allowed the transfer of the deceased to the underworld which was considered to be the place of the kingdom of darkness. For this reason, they have chosen the western horizon for considering it the main domain of death. Consequently, it can be deduced that when the sun sets in the western horizon, it will automatically reside there during the long hours of the night until it was reborn again the next morning. This phenomenon indicated that death was just an intermediate stage till rebirth or resurrection and as the king was the son of god Re so, by going to the west, it symbolizes his death and settlement in his tomb till the afterlife. Furthermore, the ancient Egyptians believed that the western side signifies sleeping in deep darkness on earth. They divided the universe into 3 main places:

1. Sky: the residence of the different divinities.
2. Earth: where the human being dwell.
3. Underworld: the residential placement of the dead bodies.

Therefore, the sky always enjoys light during daytime by the sun and during the nighttime by the moon and the stars, so it means that the sky was always lightened. However, the earth enjoys light and darkness, during the daytime having the shining light of the sun, while during nighttime provided with darkness. But for the underworld it was the kingdom of darkness and death. All this was clearly identified by various religious books which appeared during the New Kingdom. (Hornung, E., *Conceptions of Gods in Ancient Egypt*; Banies, J., *The one and the many* translated by, New York 1985, p.228-9). Additionally, the ancient Egyptians described the underworld as "ḥ kkw" which means great darkness.

Moreover, the underworld and the tomb were equated with each other and described as being the darkest place because no light can reach these places as the sun doesn't enter due to the absence of windows, doors or any openings to allow light. Not only the tomb but also, the sarcophagi were compared to the underworld as the three shared the darkness. This was the main reason of the great fear of the deceased from the power of darkness which was usually accompanied by weakness and death, as mentioned in the pyramid texts during the Old Kingdom, coffin texts during the Middle Kingdom and the various religious books dating to the New Kingdom.

Darkness

In the Ptolemaic texts, Kek was god of darkness together with his consort kekket. According to the creation Myths, the light which appeared upon the primeval ocean, then the hill or sometimes the appearance of the sun-child emerging from the lotus had to fight against the chaotic forces of the darkness that was considered as hostile to the gods and to life. Moreover, the control of the pharaohs, their sphere and influence stretched on the region of the primeval darkness as well. The new kingdom religious texts always emphasized that the enemy of Re Apophis dwelt in the darkness. For example, in the Book of what is in the underworld *"imy dw3t"* in the 10th hour it mentioned that the sun god encouraged his worriers and supporters by these words: *"May your arrows be swift, your spears and your bows strung that you may punish my enemies who dwelt in the darkness outside the horizon"*.

Furthermore, the demons of the Book of the caverns were always in eternal darkness as the texts stated that: *"They see not the rays of the Sun-god neither do they hear his voice, they are in total darkness"*.

Moreover, the main dwelling place of Osiris (god of death and underworld) was in the darkness which he wishes to overcome together with the blessed dead bodies and souls. (Lurker, M., 1980, The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt, p.45.).

The different methods for Overcoming Darkness

1. Wishes related to the Light

Consequently, the main aim for the deceased was to overcome darkness and see the beginning of the appearance of light. This wish of the deceased was initiated in the form of spells indicating the persistent request of the deceased for the ability of vision and removal of darkness to enable the deceased to manage his way through the deep darkness of the underworld and ensure his rebirth and resurrection in the eternal light.

Additionally, the deceased wished to accompany god Re in his bark by which he will be able to cross the underworld safely and therefore ensuring his resurrection, rebirth, as well as living again in the light of the sun and escaping from the darkness kingdom.

Furthermore, there was a great conception for the Sun light as a mean of transportation to allow the deceased to ascend to heaven and to ensure getting rid of darkness. According to the various religious texts as Pyramid texts, Coffin texts and the different religious books, there were several spells concerned with the concept of ascending to the sky (heaven). (Davies, W.M., The Ascension-Myth in the Pyramid texts in JNES 36, 1977, p. 166ff). Therefore, the main aim for any deceased was to ascend to the sky to enable him to join the Sun god in his boat and to join the stars specifically the imperishable star (Northern Star) *"spdt"*, because he believes that accompanying god Re in his bark or joining the Northern star will ensure passing safely through the journey of the underworld and consequently be resurrected and live the eternal afterlife. The concept of ascending to the sky to join Re or the imperishable star can be achieved through the rays of the sun which were considered to be a mean for transferring to heaven.

For example, Pyramid texts Spell 751 narrates:

Moreover, Book of the Dead dealt with the same concept in chapter 124 mentioning: *"I ascend to the sky, I am raised up upon the rays of the sun light."* Therefore, this

indicated that the rays of the light of the sun were regarded as ladders for approaching the sky or ascending upon it to the sky. Additionally, it must be noted that the pyramidion shape of the royal tombs reflects the religious significance between the pyramid shape and the light rays of the sun.

2. Eliminating the enemies of the Light

As the sun was the main natural source of light so, the darkness was considered the principle enemy. The ancient Egyptians believed that during nighttime, the Sun god passes through a great battle in the underworld against the main enemy who was Apophis (the serpent god). This battle initiated that all the deceased bodies and souls should help in destroying the enemies, dangers and demons which may attack the Sun god during his journey through the underworld, additionally preventing the evilness of Apophis to ensure that it will not disturb the sun trip during night time or daytime. Finally, it can be concluded that the principle enemies of the sun god were Apophis the most dangerous and Seth the main enemy of Osiris and Horus. (Fraden, J., *On the Origin of the Notion of Evil in Ancient Egypt*, GM179, 2000, p.11). Apophis was called in the ancient Egyptian language “ꜥꜥ”: meaning “Enemy of the Sun god” (Wb. I, 167, 15). The night journey of Re through the underworld depicts Re in his evening boat accompanied by strong, wise and fair gods of whom he was the strongest and his enemies were always trying to destroy him. The main enemies who disturbed and attacked the sun were collectively Sebau, a legion of devils, but the most dangerous was Apophis. The attack of Apophis was regarded as an attack on stability, as well as being an attack on the light of the world, therefore its defeat was a necessity. Originally, Apophis was considered to be the darkness that surrounded Nun, however he was personifying the darkest part of the night and Re must defeat it to be able to rise once again the next morning. As Re was the sun god, he was attacked by Apophis in the form of mists, eclipses and other natural phenomena that hid the light of the sun. Re counterattacked Apophis with the darts of his sunbeams and sent his scorpions to sting the huge serpent, but at the moment of greatest danger he leaves the boat and took the form of a cat to cut off the head of the serpent. Then, he bounded Apophis on chains, stabbed him with spears, cut and dismembered him with red-hot knives and finally, roasted and consumed by fire. Therefore, the pink glow which appeared in the sky at the evening was attributed to the blood that flowed from the wounded and defeated Apophis, to allow the sun god to rise again in the sky. The next morning Re rises up in the sky announcing to the whole world his victories over, the powers of darkness. So, he sailed again through heaven on his daily voyage. Consequently, his rebirth gave new hope to those depending on his light and warmth. Therefore, light is confirmed to be the emblem for light and rebirth.

3. Joining the Boat of the sun god to ensure renewal of light

The deceased main aim was to join Re in his boat while crossing the journey of the underworld to ensure his eternal life in the presence of the sun light during daytime as well as during the night journey. To be able to join Re in his boat, the deceased had to be identified as follower of Re as mentioned in Book of the Dead chapter 66, and chapter 136 which mentioned: “*Open for me the way to the boat to appear upon his disk and shine with his rays.*” (Allen, *Book of the Dead*, 112; CT. vol. VII, 267b).

Furthermore, in the Pyramid texts the deceased wanted to be identified with “Sai” the watcher who accompanies Re in his boat during both journeys to enable him to enjoy the light of the sun god eternally. So, this indicated that the main aim of the deceased was not just to join or accompany Re in his sacred bark during his journeys, but also to be the watcher and guide for Re specially during the hours of the night. For example, in the Book of what is in the underworld “*imy dw3t*” specifically in the 2nd hour of the night the deceased king was guiding the sun god as well as, accompanying him during nighttime. (Roulin, G., *le livre de la Nuit*, ObO 147, 1996, 82).

4. Defeating darkness by Sun beams (rays) as leader to heaven the sky

According to the Ascension-Myth in the Pyramid texts, this ascension to the sky was one of the great aims for the deceased as when he ascends to the sky, he will be able to join god Re in his sacred bark, so he will enjoy his light as well as the light of the imperishable stars to emphasize and ensure his eternal life and resurrection. (Davies, W.M., *The Ascension-Myth in the Pyramid Texts*, in TNES 36, 1977, 166). It is notable that the sun rays were the most significant evidence for the power of Re and it descends to the earth to provide it with light and heat. Furthermore, the sun rays were considered as ladders used by the deceased king to ascend to the sky, which allows the deceased to be resurrected and reach heaven, where he will be eternal. (Frankfort, H. and Wilson, A., Jacobson, Th., *Before Philosophy, The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, Chicago, 1949, 21-22).

Shadow and its relation to light

For the ancient Egyptian the human being comprises mainly two main elements: Physical and Spiritual. One of the major components of the physical elements is the

shadow which is known in the ancient Egyptian language as  : “*šwt*”. The word “*šwt*” not only have the literary meaning of shade or shadow, but also had other indications as being an effective part of the human being and therefore, part of the human himself (Meeks, D., *Anee Lexicographique, Egypte Ancienne*, Vol. 2, Paris, 1980-1982, p.143), as well as being the shadow of the deceased and the shadow of the god, in the underworld. Moreover, the shadow was clearly connected with death

especially in the expression of  : “*m šw.wt*” : meaning “living on the shadow” or “swallowing the shadow” (Wb. IV, 433) it indicates that it will be swallowed, that’s why one of the forty-two judges of the last judgment were given this name to indicate the role of this divinity in the underworld in the Coffin Texts Spell

335. (C.T. IV sp.335). Furthermore, the expression of  : “*šw.t ntr*”: meaning the shape of the god or the holy shape or form as explained by Faulkner, while Haning translated it as the shadow of the god or the statue of the god flanking the gates.

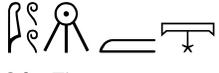
Additionally, the linking of the shadow with one of the famous feasts known as: 

 : “*šw.t hb 3.t*”: “The great feast of the shadow of the god”. Additionally, they used the expression of:  : *šw.t mwt mt.t* : meaning “The shadow of the deceased” (Wb. IV, 433).

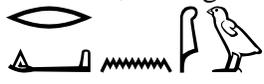
According to the prophecy of Neferti, the shadow was considered as a physical entity and had a great relation with light as it was stated that: “No one will distinguish his shadow in the absence of the sunlight. But the term “šw” was not only referring to the shadow of the individuals, but also the shade of the cast, trees, buildings or any object. For example, in the stela of Tuthmosis IV which is erected between the paws of the sphinx, he mentioned that he slept in the shade of the head of the sphinx at noon. This indicates that the term was used as metaphor for protection, as it provides shade and protection from the god to the king. Therefore, it was noticeable that the shadow represented the physical component of its owner besides the separate mode of existence. Furthermore, the images of the gods on the walls of the temples were called god’s shadow and even the temple itself was considered as the shadow of the deity.

However, the human being shadow was usually referred to in the funerary texts dealing with the afterlife. As in the coffin texts the shadow was usually combining with the existence of the soul or spirit known as “ba”, they both appeared as two parts of a single entity. Therefore, they stated: “*go, my ba and my shadow, that you (singular) may see the sun*”. But sometimes, they referred to the Ba to eat and drink, while the shadow of the Ba represented the spiritual element. So, it can be deduced from other texts in the coffin texts that the Ba and the shadow had distinct entities, but both associated with the body, consequently, it is stated that the ba is on the earth while the shadow is in an inaccessible place. Additionally, the coffin texts included that the deceased said: “*My ba belongs to my body, my shadow belongs to its arm*”. This proves that the ancient Egyptians believed that the shadow used to return to the mummy at night. Furthermore, the coffin texts stated: “*My ba and my shadow going on their feet to the place where (the deceased) is*”. In some of the religious texts of the pyramid texts and coffin texts they describe the deceased’s consumption of god’s bas while the shadow remain with their owners, so this indicates the close relationship between the shadow and the body rather than the relationship between the ba an the body (Redford, D.B., The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, vol. 3 p.277-278).

During the Middle kingdom the word : “šw” meant the light opposite to the shadow indicating either the sun light or the moon light (Wb. IV, 430, 6; Meeks, I.P., 365,77,41,21), as well as becoming one of the titles of god Khonso (moon god), while

the expression: : “šw m grḥ” was used to indicate the light of the night.(Wb. IV, 430, 7).

However, during the New Kingdom especially in the Theban texts, it was mentioned as:

: “rdi n šw” meaning exposed to the sun light expressing the sitting in the sun light. (Wb. IV, 430, 7, 12), while in the Amarna texts it was stated in

expressing: : “šw nty m itn”:the sun light which lies in the solar disk (Wb. IV, 431,9-10).

During the New Kingdom the black shadow of the deceased appears often while departing from the tomb accompanying the soul bird (ba). According to the Book of the Dead chapter 92, the texts started by the idea that the soul might go out with the shadow. Consequently, the shadow became a symbolic word for protection especially in

the hot lands as it provides protection from the sun god. The ancient Egyptian texts even mentioned that the king had a divine shade protecting him and moving with him. Additionally, the shadow of Re was regarded as a term for the holy places of Sun god and it was mainly at Amarna. (Lurker, M., *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, 1980, p.110). Moreover, Grapow and Bonnet stated that there are four images for the shadow (Grapow, H., *Die Bildlichen Ausdrücke des Ägyptischen*, Leipzig, 1924, p.293; Bonnet, H., *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1952, p. 675).

1. The protection from the heat (shade or shelter).
2. The Quick movement without any sound.
3. The Darkness (anything dark).
4. The Identical creature of the human being.

Image in Ancient Egypt

Concerning Painting and Sculpture they were very significant for the ancient Egyptians in respect of magic to the extent that they called the sculpture *“he who causes to live”* and his work was described by *“to give birth”*. Therefore, the images were not merely lifelike copies, but they were inspiring life and preserving the existence of the person depicted for an endless life, in case the mummy was decayed or destroyed so the Ka can find a refuge in any image of complete resemblance to himself. Additionally, the Ka can return in the statues which were regarded as image for the deceased. Therefore, the tomb paintings were mainly serving the perpetuation of the deceased property into eternity. Moreover, the divine images were considered as real as they described them by saying: *“His soul is in heaven, his body is in the west land of the dead, Necropolis, but his image is in his cult center”*. However, for Osiris they mentioned: *“He comes as a spirit... he sees his sanctuary, he sees his secret from painting in its place, his figure carved into the wall, then he enters his secret form and alights upon his image”* (Lurker, M., 1980, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p.69). Consequently, the image may be an identification for the person himself as the double or sole companion (ka), as well as expressing the identity of the gods (Morenz, S., *Egyptian Religion*, Cornell, 1996, p.106-108).

Conclusions

Finally, one can deduce that the concept of life and resurrection was emphasized through emitting the sun rays to release light for the whole world then, the darkness which reflects the death of the solar disk and then its resurrection revealing the eternal life. For the ancient Egyptians they believed that the concept of resurrection was mainly based on the sun rays which travel to the underworld during nighttime to provide the mummies with eternal life or the afterlife.

According to the ancient Egyptian texts and scenes whether secular or religious the deceased had to face two main fates either being guilty or being righteous and therefore, the underworld was divided into two main circles:

Firstly, Light circle: where the righteous person enjoys the light of the god and lives in the eternal light focused and centralized by the sun god Re and Osiris aiming mainly to release himself from the darkness bounds as well as conquering and defeating evilness

and darkness the main enemies of the light. Additionally, the righteous enjoy the eternal life under the light of the god ensuring the presence of the deceased in the light circle.

Secondly, Darkness circle: where the guilty person exists as they enter the primeval darkness region. One cannot skip the fact that darkness had two main images, one beneficial for the righteous for a limited time till the rebirth and resurrection, while the second image was representing chaos and disorder for the guilty people as it was reflecting their punishment region. The second image of darkness was mainly revealing the enemies of Osiris who were mentioned in Book of the gates as the guilty enemies of Osiris. Referring to the Coffin Texts specifically the dangers of the underworld and the punishment they appeared for the first time in the religious books of the New Kingdom especially Book of the Gates, Book of the Earth, Book of the Caves or Caverns, for the main concept of these books it was to destroy both the enemies of Re and the enemies of Osiris.

The contrast between light and darkness created good and evil, black and white, death and life everything that was contradicting each other. Consequently, light and darkness combined together to create and reveal the image and shadow.

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الضوء والظلام والظل في مصر القديمة

مي حسني

قسم الإرشاد السياحي، كليو السياحة وإدارة الفنادق، جامعة حلوان

الملخص

في مصر القديمة كانت هناك عناصر طبيعية مختلفة أثرت في مختلف جوانب حياة المصريين القدماء. ونظرًا لأنهم كانوا مراقبون جيدين للطبيعة، فقد أدركوا جميع الظواهر الطبيعية بالإضافة إلى العناصر الطبيعية المحيطة بهم وزودوا كل منها بدلالات علمانية ودينية. من بين هذه العناصر كان الضوء والظلام اللذان خلقا الظل والصورة. ولعبت هذه العناصر دورًا كبيرًا في حياة المصريين القدماء اليومية وفي العالم السفلي وحتى في حياتهم الآخرة. المقال سيتناول الكلمات المختلفة للنور والظلام والظل، وسوف يؤكد كيف بدد النور والظلام في الحياة اليومية وكذلك الآخرة. بالإضافة إلى تناول الظل الذي نشأ من اندماج النور والظلام كل هذه العناصر التي أثرت على دورة حياة قدماء المصريين. هذا بالإضافة إلى أنهم آمنوا بأهمية الصورة لضمان البعث والحياة الأبدية. المقالة توضح عناصر الضوء الطبيعية وأهميتها بالنسبة للمصري القديم في النواحي الدينية والديناوية وتركز على أهمية الضوء في حياة المصري القديم. كما أظهرت المقالة العلاقة بين الضوء والظلام وكيفية إظهار الظل. وأوضحت أهمية التصوير والتماثيل لدى المصري القديم.

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الكلمات المفتاحية

الضوء؛ الظلام؛
الشمس؛ الظل؛
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