

Part One: Hymn to Osiris Un-Nefer¹

A Hymn of Praise to Osiris Un-Nefer, the great god who dwells in Abtu, the king of eternity, the lord of everlastingness, who traverses millions of years in his existence.

You are the oldest son of the womb of Nut. You were begotten by Keb, the Erpat. You are the lord of the Urrt Crown. You are he whose White Crown is lofty. You are the King (Ati) of gods [and] men. You have gained possession of the sceptre of rule, and the whip, and the rank and dignity of your divine fathers. Your heart is expanded with joy, O you who are in the kingdom of the dead. Your son Horus is firmly placed on your throne. You have ascended your throne as the Lord of Tetu, and as the Heq who dwells in Abydos. You make the Two Lands to flourish through Truth-speaking, in the presence of him who is the Lord to the Uttermost Limit. You draw on that which has not yet come into being in your name of "Ta-her-sta-nef." You govern the Two Lands by Maat in your name of "Seker." Your power is widespread, you are he of whom the fear is great in your name of "Usar." Your existence endures for an infinite number of double henti periods in your name of "Un-Nefer."

Homage to you, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and Prince of Princes. You have ruled the Two Lands from the womb of the goddess Nut. You have governed the Lands of Akert. Your members are of silver-gold, your head is of lapis-lazuli, and the crown of your head is of turquoise. You are An of millions of years. Your body is all pervading, O Beautiful Face in Ta-tchesert. Grant you to me glory in heaven, and power upon earth, and truth-speaking in the Divine Underworld, and [the power to] sail down the river to Tetu in the form of a living Ba-soul, and [the power to] sail up the river to Abydos in the form of a Benu bird, and [the power to] pass in through and to pass out from, without obstruction, the doors of the lords of the Tuat. Let there be given unto me bread-cakes in the House of Refreshing, and sepulchral offerings of cakes and ale, and propitiatory offerings in Anu, and a permanent homestead in Sekhet-Aaru, with wheat and barley therein- to the Double of the Osiris, the scribe Ani.

¹ Language in these readings has been modernized. This first selection comes from Fordam's Ancient History Sourcebook (<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/ra-ani.asp>).

Part Two: The Dead Pharaoh Ascends to Heaven²

The so-called Pyramid Texts are religious texts inscribed on the interior walls of the pyramids of certain pharaohs of the fifth and sixth dynasties (Ca. 2425-2300 B.C.). The Pyramid Texts contain the oldest references to Egyptian cosmology and theology, but they are primarily concerned with the victorious passage of the dead pharaoh to his new, celestial abode.

Your two wings are spread out like a falcon with thick plumage, like the hawk seen in the evening traversing the sky (Pyr. 1048).

He flies who flies; this king Pepi flies away from you, you mortals. He is not of the earth, he is of the sky. . . . This king Pepi flies as a cloud to the sky, like a masthead bird; this king Pepi kisses the sky like a falcon, this king Pepi reaches the sky like Horizon-god (Harakhte) (Pyr. 890-1).

You ascend to the sky as a falcon, your feathers are (those of) geese (Pyr. 913).

King Unis goes to the sky, king Unis goes to the sky! On the wind! On the wind ! (Pyr. 309)-

Stairs to the sky are laid for him that he may ascend thereon to the sky (Pyr. 365).

King Unis ascends upon the ladder which his father Re (the Sun-god) made for him (Pyr. 390)

This king Pepi found the gods standing, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. They cast off their white sandals to the earth, they throw off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until your coming,' say they (Pyr. 1197).

"Re-Atum, this king comes to you, an Imperishable Spirit, Lord of the affairs of the place of the four pillars; Your son comes to you, this King comes to you. May you traverse the sky, being united in darkness, may you rise in the horizon in the place where it is well with you. (Text 217.152)

[The dead pharaoh boldly approaches the Sun god with the words:]

O Re, as for this which you said, O Re, "O for a son!" for you are royal, O Re, "he having a soul and being mighty and strong, active of arms and far-striding": here am I, o Re, I am your son, I am a soul, I am strong, I am mighty, active of arms and far-striding. (Text 866-68)

² <http://www.mircea-eliade.com/from-primitives-to-zen/166.html>; others adapted from The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts by R. O. Faulkner.

My father ascends to the sky among the gods who are in the sky; he stands at the Great Polar Region and learns the speech of the sun-folk.

Re finds you on the banks of the sky as a waterway-traveller who is in the sky: 'Welcome, O you who have arrived', say the gods.' He sets his hand on you at the zenith of the sky; 'Welcome, O you who know your place, say the Nine Deities.'³

Be pure; occupy your seat in the Bark of Re, row over the sky and mount up to the distant ones; row with the Imperishable Stars, navigate with the Unwearying Stars, receive the freight of the Night-ship. (513.1168-72)

³ A group of related deities, including Osiris, Isis, and Set.

Part Three: Akenaten and the Hymn to Aten

Akhenaten is speaking to the Sun God, Aten, telling him how great he (the Sun God) is.

You appear beautifully on the horizon of heaven, You living Aten, the beginning of life! When You are risen on the eastern horizon, You have filled every land with Your beauty. You are gracious, great, glistening, and high over every land; Your rays encompass the lands to the limit of all that You have made: As You are Re, You reach to the end of them;

(You) subdue them (for) Your beloved son. Though You are far away, Your rays are on earth; though You are in their faces, no one knows Your going.

At daybreak, when You arise on the horizon, When You shine as the Aten by day, You drive away the darkness and give Your rays. The Two Lands are in festivity every day, Awake and standing upon (their) feet, For You have raised them up. Washing their bodies, taking (their) clothing, Their arms are (raised) in praise at Your appearance. All the world, they do their work.

All beasts are content with their pasturage; Trees and plants are flourishing. The birds which fly from their nests, Their wings are (stretched out) in praise to Your *ka*. All beasts spring upon (their) feet. Whatever flies and alights, They live when You have risen (for) them. The ships are sailing north and south as well, For every way is open at Your appearance. The fish in the river dare before Your face; Your rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

Creator of seed in women, You who make fluid into man, Who maintain the son in the womb of his mother, Who soothes him with that which stills his weeping, You nurse (even) in the womb, Who gives breath to sustain all that he has made! When he descends from the womb to breathe On the day when he is born, You open his mouth completely, You supply his necessities. When the chick in the egg speaks within the shell, You give him breath within it to maintain him. When You have made him his fulfillment within the egg, to break it, He comes forth from the egg to speak at his completed (time); He walks upon his legs when he comes forth from it.

How manifold it is, what You have made! They are hidden from the face (of man). O sole god, like whom there is no other! You did create the world according to Your desire, While You were alone: All men, cattle, and wild beasts, Whatever is on earth, going upon (its) feet, And what is on high, flying with its wings.

The countries of Syria and Nubia, the land of Egypt, You set every man in his place, You supply their necessities: Everyone has his food, and his time of life is reckoned. Their tongues are separate in speech, And their natures as well; Their skins are distinguished, As You distinguish the foreign peoples. You make a Nile in the underworld, You bring forth as You desire To maintain the

people (of Egypt) According as You made them for Yourself, The lord of all of them, wearying (himself) with them, The lord of every land, rising for them, The Aten of the day, great of majesty.

All distant foreign countries, You make their life (also), For You have set a Nile in heaven, That it may descend for them and make waves upon the mountains, Like the great green sea, To water their fields in their towns. How effective they are, Your plans, O lord of eternity! The Nile in heaven, it is for the foreign peoples And for the beasts of every desert that go upon (their) feet; (While the true) Nile comes from the underworld for Egypt..

You are in my hearing, And there is no other that knows you Save Your son Nefer-kheperu-Re Wa-en-Re, For You have made him well-versed in Your plans and in Your strength.

The world came into being by Your hand, According as You have made them. When You have risen they live, When You set they die. You are lifetime Your own self, For one lives (only) through you. Eyes are (fixed) on beauty until You set. All work is laid aside when You set in the west.

(But) when (You) rise (again), [Everything is] made to flourish for the king,... Since You did found the eareh And raise them up for Your son, Who came forth from Your body: the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, ... Ak-en-Aten, ... and the Chief Wife of the King ... Nefert-iti, living and youthful forever and ever.