

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 4 - Death and the Underworld
Lesson 3: The Magical Mysteries of Death

BY JOSEPHINE MCCARTHY

QVAREIA

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

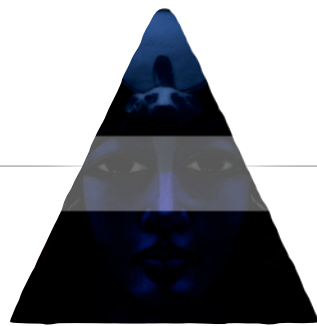
The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding – everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

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So remember - in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.

Yours,

Josephine McCarthy



QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 4 - Death and the Underworld

Lesson 3: The Magical Mysteries of Death

Now that you have a basic background idea of death, it is time for us to look a bit closer and find out about some of the deeper mysteries that surround death. As you will have seen from the Egyptian texts, constant rebirth was/is considered the lowest common denominator, not only in the Egyptian mysteries but also in the Buddhist mysteries.

You will find, as you expand your reading list further over the span of the course, that many of the ancient and not-so-ancient mysteries have the same core to them. That is because they are expressing what is there, not that they are copying or sharing.

The writings of the various versions of the mysteries around the world, particularly when it comes to the subject of death, usually have two layers to them: one for the everyday person and one for the initiates/priests/magicians. The one that is aimed at the common man (a switched off person) tends to be simplistic, moralistic, and full of threats. A deeper layer of such writings also hides profound aspects of the mysteries that someone who is both switched on and has knowledge of the mysteries (through direct experience, not academia) will spot and can learn from.

It is the common moralistic writings that tend to become popular and well-known to the various populations, and many of our world religions are based upon those moral writings and stories. Initiates of the mysteries often

reject those writings or dogmatic systems in search of something else: an initiate knows in their very depths that there is ‘more.’ And there is. But it is wise to understand that the outer writings aimed at the common man serve a multi-fold purpose: first to ensure some societal boundaries, but also to bridge the common man from being switched off to being switched on. They either get it at a deeper level, or they stay switched off and follow the shallow moral code slavishly.

This is important for magicians to understand as, for an adept working in the depths of death and dying, knowing that bridging aspect helps the magician to work with the dying person in their ‘reality’ and not the reality of the initiate. If a religion connects a person to a sense of Divinity, to a sense that even slightly approaches balance, then it is a religion that is serving that person. If the religion locks down the dying person (overly dogmatic), then there is nothing that the magician can do to change that—all you can do is to hold the space.

Before we go on to look at the deeper mysteries, let’s first look at religious dogma and how it affects the passage of the soul through death.

Religion versus the Mysteries

Most religions have a version of heaven and hell, of judgement, of helpers, and of the angel of death. In the past, before more advanced education was the norm, this gave a switched off person a compass of behaviour that was easy to understand and follow. But most religions in their everyday sense have degenerated to the point that they simply express as manipulation and encourage the devolving of personal responsibility, along with having a ‘God’ who is humanesque and parent-like. A person within a religion learns to manipulate the system for their own ends, and devolves responsibility for themselves to a ‘higher power.’

For example, if a person wants something, they will pray to a saint, to God, or to a religious symbol. The mantra of ‘it’s God’s will,’ or doing something ‘in Gods name,’ or blaming God when things go wrong, are all degenerations and serve to switch the person off even further. The summary of all religions is: be good and you get to have an easy life after death; be bad and

you will burn. And if you say sorry at the end, or pay enough money into a religion, you will be saved. Within that unbalanced dogmatic view, there are fragments of cause and effect, and of the mysteries themselves, but they are so far buried as to make them almost unreachable.

For people who gain a good education, and who tend to be thinkers, they look at this pattern, they see how silly, empty, and degenerate it is, and they walk away from it. Some eventually delve into the mysteries, but most do not. This is the human melting pot that the magician confronts when they work in death.

So why did it get like that? Human nature. Working within the depths of the mysteries is hard work indeed. Very few people are drawn to such work, and even fewer are able or willing to withstand the hard work. So let us have an overview of the death mysteries, and as we go through it you will start to see the roots of certain dogmas and beliefs, see how they have developed out of context, and how they have developed in a degenerate, manipulative way.

At this point it is pertinent to point out that that however much an adept learns about these mysteries, there will always be aspects of them that we cannot understand, grasp, or even find. What we have as magicians and mystics is a small section of understanding; nothing more.

The Death Mysteries

First I will briefly outline the steps within the mysteries that deal with death, and then we will look in more depth at key aspects of them. Bear in mind that the imagery in these steps is how the living, conscious mind perceives energy dynamics: on the side of the dead person, the imagery is more a matter of processing energy, emotion, power, and balance. The deeper into death the deceased goes, the less they perceive in terms of imagery and the more they perceive in terms of energy responses. The images are our interface for recognition and understanding.

THE STEPS OF THE PROCESS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The first step of a person when they step onto the threshold of death is to begin the process of disconnection from their body, and their spirit stays in ‘our world’ for a brief time. We have already looked at this. Suffice to say, this is the stage where the newly dead can influence the physical world and reach out to the living. However, for most people this period is fairly brief.

The vast majority of the newly dead begin their ‘descent into the underworld’ fairly quickly, often at or just after funerals. In life, we perceive this as ‘down’; in religion it is often termed as ‘hell,’ and subsequently fills many with fear or the more adventurous with curiosity. We will look in depth at the underworld and the abyss in the next lesson.

It is at this stage of the underworld that the process of ‘awareness of self’ begins. In some death mysteries, this is depicted for us as the newly dead walking across a desert towards a river in the underworld, where some cross the river, some stay at the side of it and some attempt to avoid going deeper into death by immediately grabbing for a new life: unconscious reincarnation.

For those that do not immediately grab for new life during that walk, a deeper process triggers for the person which is the process of the ‘scales.’ The desert is the inner desert; or to be more precise, it is an aspect of that vast inner territory that adepts learn to operate within for lots of different reasons.

The triggering of the scales is sometimes depicted in mysteries as the opening of the book of judgement, or of facing judges, or a literal weighing of scales, or crossing a bridge over a river, or being confronted by demons with sharp pointy things. The outcome of this process defines what stage the spirit moves on to next: deeper into the underworld, back into life through rebirth, etc.

So far this all sounds very neat and tidy, and yet the reality is far more complex. For instance, spirits that are deeply disturbed can often be observed, while in the underworld, suddenly being absorbed into a deity, or becoming trapped in the sands of the desert. Some stay in the underworld, trapped, until they find manipulative ways to access the living, manifest world. Some descend deeper into the underworld and a few pass through the underworld and into the abyss.

For some who descend into the underworld, there comes a point where they emerge from the underworld out into the stars and go through a process of where they either choose web patterns of fate within the stars that they can step into, or they learn to navigate around those webs and complete the journey of the stars, which brings them back to a centre point. Reaching that centre point is one of the goals of an adept of the mysteries: it brings the spirit in direct face-to-face contact with a vast angelic being. This process is depicted in many different ways in the Mysteries, but the dynamic is the same.

From that centre point, the adept chooses either to move deeper into the depths of Divinity (depicted as heaven, which is a total degeneration of the idea), to stay in the inner worlds in gnosis and in service, or to step into life in full gnosis in service, or to step into the underworld. For the adept, all of these options are conscious decisions that have specific reasons attached to them. The key point being that nothing is moved towards from impulse, desire, fear, or any other emotive or manipulative reason.

So in a moment we will look at these key steps in detail from the view of a magician. Most of those keys can be read about in various mystery texts around the world, but few who look at them intellectually actually understand what it is they are looking at as they browse through these texts.

Just before we get to those keys, let's look at why it often goes so badly wrong for people, or why they cannot access the keys properly as they traverse through death. The understanding of these problems will help you to understand the keys better.

The majority of people who travel through death as a spirit either approach it blindly (no religious map), or in dogmatic ignorance (the dogmatic map), or with a focus on manipulation (using spells/magic to dodge the guardians). All of these approaches fail and can sometimes result in intense suffering for the spirit (not the suffering of hell's damnation, but the suffering of being stuck and not knowing a way out).

If the spirit approaches death blindly (no religious map), then the deeper instinct of that spirit leads the way. The success or failure of that approach largely depends on the balance of the person in life. If the spirit approaches death through religious dogma, the spirit quickly learns that such dogmas are for the large part meaningless in this realm (as you will see when we get to the keys). For the manipulator, this is often the spirit of a per-

son who followed a magical path, either through ritual magic, tribal magic, or folk magic. They sometimes get a bit further in and then are confronted by the degeneracy of their action. That confrontation is often aggressive for the spirit and deeply counterproductive: they get stuck with no way forward and no way back, and potentially have a nasty-looking being with sharp knives following them around.

When people make these mistakes, sometimes the process of death itself unfolds them, and the deeper aspect of their spirit emerges and propels them forward. However if that deeper aspect is very unbalanced, then the spirit experiences many difficulties that could have been avoided. The one point to remember in all of this, before we reach the keys, is that there is no moralistic or punishment/reward dynamic involved: the process of death is one of finding (or not) balance. That balance is an energy harmonic that allows the consciousness to flow freely and to interact with its environment in a conscious way.

So let us look a bit closer at some of the key aspects of death, and the mysteries of death. Through that understanding, not only can you help yourself, you can also help others.

THE DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD

The descent into the underworld is a purely natural action that creates separation between the dead person and the land of the living. The whole process and understanding of the underworld is pretty involved, hence it has its own lesson (coming next). This natural impulse is sometimes mirrored by the living in the action of burying the dead.

We call it descent because in our living world view, density, age, and the layers of the past are ‘down’ deep in the land. This is mirrored in the inner landscape of the desert, as we see the past as being down in the sands, and the future as being up in the stars. As the body decays and becomes part of the dirt and rock of the earth, the spirit too, on its initial journey, moves into this vast processing system. For the spirit it is less a sense of ‘down’ and more a sense of ‘forward.’

This stepping away from life triggers a deep inner response, and that response is the first major key of the mysteries. A major part of the learning process within the ancient mysteries was geared towards preparing the

spirit at a very deep level, while in life, to respond appropriately to this response.

In the early development of most mysteries, that in-life preparation was about changing first the individual's behaviour, and then their knowledge and understanding. That deep shift over a lifetime enabled the spirit to move through the death process with ease, and in a conscious, active way. As the mysteries began to degenerate for one reason or another depending on the culture, that process of deeply shifting over a lifetime turned into the rote learning of a series of spells to dodge the process, and finally a series of dogmatic threats, scary stories, and hints of great 'rewards.' Both of these degenerations resulted (and still result) in spirits having great difficulty in death.

The first trigger response from the inner world for the spirit in the death process is known by a number of names, the most common one being Judgement.

Many spirits do not get this far (to judgement), as many rush impulsively back to life before ever properly entering the death process. But in this lesson we are focusing on those who do manage to step forward and onto the deeper mysteries.

THE RIVER AND JUDGEMENT

The River and Judgement are the first and most important keys, and of all of them, they are the ones most badly misunderstood and misinterpreted, both in religion and in the modern study of the mysteries and magic. On average, fewer spirits get to the judgement point in the death process; many dive straight back into the rebirth cycle in an unconscious, impulsive grab for life at any cost.

That is one of the reasons that many death mystery writings talk about the death mysteries in terms of 'not for the common man.' This is not a 'class' discrimination; it is merely an observation from adepts of the mysteries: many people do not even get to the door of the death mysteries.

The river stage of death is depicted in ancient texts, and can also be observed in vision, as people in a desert running towards a river and drinking great quantities of its waters. That is how we the living 'see' this process. From an inner point of view, what is happening is that a switched off person,

driven only by instinctive impulse for life, reaches out for an energy that will 'blind' the spirit from its memories, allowing it a 'clean slate' free from the pattern of the last life. This in turn enables the spirit to lunge forward unconsciously back into life, so that the cycle begins all over again.

Those who value life at any cost see this wiping of their slates as a boon, a great way to get back to where they want to be. Ghosts who cling to the material world and their past life/family/belongings, try hard to not be drawn to the river: once they have drunk and forgotten, they are cast back into a new life.

For those who have trodden the path of the mysteries in some form or other, such unconscious lunging blindly back into life is seen as an undesirable action that will lead to more blindness and less advancement into being one's true self. This first step is written about in virtually all mysteries in the form of the warning: do not drink of the river of oblivion.

*Men, driven on by thirst, run about like a snared hare;
let therefore the mendicant drive out thirst,
by striving after passionlessness (not driven by
emotions or impulse) for himself.
—Ch 24, Dhammapada*

The initiate learns first to be aware of their deeper impulses in life, and then to turn those impulses into a conscious act of choice. Through developing that conscious ability in life, it becomes second nature in death. The adept or mystic reaches this first threshold and makes a conscious choice that is not dictated by desire or emotion.

If the adept chooses not to drink of the river, or not even to wash their face, they move forward deeper into the realm of the death aspect of the desert. This is where they reach the key of judgement, also known as the weighing of the scales. The choice of the spirit to step into judgement is a conscious one, and is a decision made by a mystical or adept spirit who wishes to progress deeper into the Divine Mysteries that can only be reached through the passage of death. It is a decision that involves a great deal of danger for the spirit, and is a choice that is not taken lightly: hence the training in life.

If a spirit does not feel ready, or knows that they are not ready to move forward into judgement, as they still have work to do on themselves and in

the world around them, they will not drink of the river: they may wash their face in order to rid themselves of the memory of their physical image, which if left may pull them backwards rather than forwards. The adept would then step into the next life, while still retaining a deep memory of what they learned.

Those who feel they are ready forge forward towards Judgement. Those who feel they have enough magical skill to manipulate their way through the process will also, foolishly, step forward.

A wise adept/mystic knows what submitting to the judgement of the scales entails: potential annihilation is the worst case scenario (second death). An unwise adept or mystic will try to manipulate their way through this process, only to be potentially caught by the guardians beyond the threshold. The spirit that decides it is ready for judgement makes a clear decision and then steps forward. This is depicted in the Greco-Roman mysteries as the bridge across the river (the bridge is a being of the scales not an actual bridge).

THE KEY OF THE SCALES

This is the major step, the major filter that decides where and how the spirit of the dead person moves forward in their journey. In Egyptian texts this is depicted as the scales of Ma'at weighing the heart of the dead person. To the Egyptians, the heart was the seat of the soul/spirit and is shown as being placed upon the scales of Ma'at and weighed against the white feather of Ma'at. If the heart weighs less than or equal to the feather of Ma'at, the guardians will part and allow the dead person to begin their deep journey through the inner processes of death and renewal.

So what is it that is being weighed? This concept is where a lot of degeneration of wisdom has happened in religion and the mysteries over time.

In most of today's religion, and also in some magic, what is perceived as being judged/weighed is the life deeds of the individual in relation to the morals and cultural norms of a particular society. Sometimes those morals/norms cross paths with balance, but most often they do not.

There is also a 'get out' clause in many religions nowadays, that if you 'confess', or pay money to a shrine, or go on holy war, etc., then you will be judged lightly. That is not the case.

These get out clauses developed within religious systems as a method of control and manipulation. So people feel they can behave badly and then make up for it: it plays to the wish of people to have their cake and eat it.

For the magician, the process of balancing the scales is a lifetime of evolution and development. We are driven by our hormones, by our bodies, by our relationships, and by society, and each of these things gives us both difficulties to overcome and also excuses (it was not my fault). As a magician progresses, it becomes less about struggling to ‘behave’ in a certain way, and more about coming to know yourself, taking responsibility for yourself and your own actions, and realising that development of the spirit is all about ‘the buck starts and ends with you.’

By oneself the evil is one, by oneself one suffers: by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another.—Chapter 12, Dhammapada

We have already looked into this process in a previous lesson, so I do not need to go over it again. That process slowly changes how we live, how we act, and how we treat everything around us, and it is that adjustment in how we exist as human beings, how our deeper responses change, that is weighed. It is not about actions or lack of actions; it is the deepest part of us, how we are on a day-to-day basis, both consciously and unconsciously, that is placed on the scales. How the scales react defines what then happens to the spirit.

As an aside, there is a stunning example of a deep mystery of adept service that is found in Old Kingdom Egypt, a dynamic that began to fall apart by the time to kingship had reached king Unas. The dynamic was this: the king was also a priest (sacred kingship), and the king worked deeply in mystical magic to take on the role of scapegoat and ‘heart upon the scales’ for the nation and the land. While the king worked with total balance (Ma’at) for the good of the land and the people, and kept himself balanced, the nation and the land would all collectively enjoy the benefits of the king’s balance.

This takes us back to the Sword of Damocles hovering over the head of the king. The king had to tread a very thin line of self and behaviour, constantly striving to be in balance, to be self aware and in harmony with the land. By doing this, he took on the burden of the spirits of the people, and

the whole nation and land benefitted from this kingship of Ma'at. In return, the king enjoyed the help and assistance of all the deities.

At the end of his life, he would be placed before the scales: it was not a choice the king had. By taking on that role, he submitted to the lesser judgement in life which would ensure that upon death, he or she would be immediately placed before the scales to finish the job.

This worked well for a few generations of kingship, but soon human nature reared its ugly head and we got to a king who thought he could dodge his way around it. The moment the king steps off that very thin line, the sword falls, the connection to the land and people is cut, the deities withdraw their support, and chaos ensues. We see this pattern over and over again in Egyptian history, with successive kings trying to re-establish that balance. But every time human nature crept in, or the rules of Ma'at were manipulated, the sword would fall once more and the nation would be plunged into war, famine, etc.

If you read the following clip of text from the Dhammapada in the context of Ma'at and not morals, you begin to see the dynamic within this text: All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. It demonstrates so clearly that the thought, the first impulse, that only you know, is the root of the balance or imbalance of the spirit. The action follows the thought and creates a good or bad effect. Modern religions judge upon effects; the mysteries realise that the judgement is upon the spirit itself, and that is founded in the thought impulse.

This theme of sacred kingship, and the failure or success of the sacred king, is found repeatedly in Egyptian and also Biblical texts. It is also probably at the root of the role of Jesus as the saviour of mankind: he takes on the suffering of the people, acts in balance, and descends into the underworld in order to release those in suffering.

It is also very possible that it is this dynamic that is behind the tales of Solomon the king. The more you look at Biblical text, and the ancient texts and stories from the Near and Middle East, the more you begin to see this role in action.

The other and very important ancient aspect of the mysteries that the sacred kingship shows us as magicians is the most forgotten one: as adepts we are all potentially those ‘sacred kings and queens.’ In Egypt this was ritualised and formalised, but it is in fact a natural magical dynamic that does not need one to be a king or a queen to practise—and nor does it make one a king or a queen.

It is a dynamic that wherever there is a person (usually an adept, priest/priestess or a mystic) who is fully immersed in Ma’at and lives within the narrow boundary of Ma’at, so too will you find a land or part of a land (where the person lives) that is healthy and balanced, or is moving towards balance. How you are affects everything around you. The energetic frequency that you generate by living within that dynamic affects the Divinity within substance all around you: that frequency triggers rebalance and regeneration actions in whatever way it needs to express in order to bring balance.

THE SECOND DEATH

If the scales tip against the spirit being weighed, it is cast aside and torn apart, or is hacked at. This all sounds very final and not very pleasant, but it is the risk that the adept or mystic takes. The scales are a major step, so to speak, of the spirit, which is why so many in death choose not to invoke it, but rather choose to step back into life without the potential benefits that the scales can bring.

The second death, where the spirit is totally composted, is something I have little understanding of, and is possibly connected to the idea of the soul first being cocooned and then bound into the underworld, something we will look at in lesson eight. The closest I have seen, apart from the ‘cocoon’ which may have been what I was observing and didn’t realise, was something I saw in vision when working deep in the desert. I wrote it into a chapter in my novel ‘The Last Scabbard.’

I had requested and triggered judgement in life (the lesser judgement, a bit like an exam pre-run) as part of my role as an exorcist. I did not do it lightly, but I realised that my work was taking me into very deep and dangerous waters, so I needed to make a decision: either stop that work, or surrender to judgement. I needed to surrender to judgement as the work I was do-

ing in service as an exorcist was at a critical point and I could not just drop my responsibilities, but to continue working without a scales assessment would put my life in danger: by submitting to the lesser judgement and surviving, the adept then enjoys greater support and help from the deities.

So I triggered the process and stood before the vast being that ‘weighs the scales.’ As I stood there, I realised another spirit was standing at the side of me. I had no clue who or what it was, and was prevented from looking at the spirit. A ‘sword’ came out of nowhere and sliced into the spirit next to me, and the spirit vanished. I started to get a bit worried, and then the sword came down on me. It hit me in the shoulder very hard, and I fell out of the vision.

Looking back, years later, I began to wonder if the spirit that vanished had undergone a second death and had ceased to be. I also understand now why the sword hit my shoulder (and physically injured me). I was not really ready for judgement: I still have blind spots and unbalanced parts of myself that I have slowly become aware of, and I now know how much more work I have to do in order to lighten the spirit to that of a feather (huge mountain to climb). Putting myself up for judgement at that time was both necessary—and was also folly. It was one of those moments where you look back in time and think... moron...

But the process did speed along my self-reflection process, and since that day I have become more and more aware of what I need to do to work towards the greater judgement, if I truly want to opt out of the continuous cycle of life.

FOOLING THE SCALES

In ancient Egypt (yeah, them) as the civilisation developed and the temples gained more power, manipulations crept in. This manipulation can be seen very clearly in the Egyptian funeral texts (Papyrus of Ani) whereby spells abound that attempt to dodge, manipulate, bind, or lie to the guardians and the scales.

One spell in particular works upon the heart of the deceased spirit and forces it to lie or be silent on behalf of the dead person. When the heart is placed upon the scales, it is depicted in Egyptian texts that the spirit has to

undergo the forty two negative confessions: declarations of the heart that tells what sins they have not committed.

There are spells in the text which force the heart to lie in order not to be judged harshly. This is a degeneration in so many major ways: not only does it not work, but it shows just how badly this society had degenerated. It had gone from the sacred king upholding Ma'at for the whole of society, and in return having the help of the gods (and the help of the Pyramid texts to guide the king through death). The process was for the king and the occasional high priest/priestess only: not from class distinction, but from necessity.

To live a life of Ma'at and be immersed in the mysteries is a hard life indeed. Very few can be expected to live such a life, so in practical terms, it was left to the king and the occasional magical priest/priestess to live such a life for the good of all. As the society degenerated, two things happened. The vast magical power that flowed in harmony with Divinity and the land was cast aside (too much hard work), and a lesser, though still very powerful magic of manipulation, bargaining, and binding replaced it. This immediately caused an imbalance in the Ma'at of the land and the nation.

The second thing that happened, as a result of that magical degeneration, is that the rich aristocrats wanted their chance at passing by the scales and moving deep into harmony (heaven). So they paid priest magicians to work with artisans to paint the spells on the walls of their tombs, so that their spirits would have all the spells ready in order to dodge their fate and judgement. Of course it does not work, but hey, if a corrupt priesthood is offered enough money, they will tell you anything. I think also that the mysteries had begun to degenerate to a point whereby the priesthood believed such behaviour would work.

THE WALK OF THE KNIVES

Once the scales have been dealt with, the spirit begins its walk through the desert towards the Abyss and to Divinity beyond. If the spirit weighed badly, the blade would fall. If the spirit weighed a bit off but not enough for a second death, nor enough to pass deeper into the process, then the blade would cut into the spirit to disable, but not enough to destroy.

This is depicted in Egyptian funeral texts as demonic or underworld deities who carry long, sharp blades and cut into the spirit as it journeys through the desert. Some spirits are cut deeply and some are not.

When I was a young woman and working in vision in death, I would work within a landscape of desert, river, bridge over river, plains, mountain, and mists beyond. I worked with that visionary system for many years until I realised it was only a fraction of what was actually there.

The Bridge is the 'scales' (the bridge is a being, not a structure). When I was working in this vision and was learning about it as I pushed deeper and deeper into the vision, I noticed that many who crossed the bridge (and some did not cross, but vanished in the middle of it; second death?) and began walking towards the mountain had bits dropping off of them. At the time, and for years later, I thought they were just dropping their 'attachments' to the life they had just left behind. As the years went by, I realised that they were having their 'bits' sliced by the guardians. These were spirits preparing to climb the mountain who had gone through the scales, and what I was seeing was the result of that judgement: they were sustaining injuries that were triggering the process of Ma'at so that as they went forward (to life or whatever) they had these injuries not to punish, but to trigger an awareness and understanding of their imbalance that they then could work with.

It then dawned on me that as a young woman, I had done something terrible in ignorance and arrogance. When I worked in the death vision, I got it into my head that a major job was to assist people across the bridge so that they could go back into life. I noticed that multitudes of people simply sat at the side of the river and I became evangelical about hauling them over the bridge, sometimes kicking and screaming.

It was only in the last few years that I got to see and then realise a dynamic that I was interfering with: if a soul crosses the bridge under its own steam, when it is ready, it may or may not trigger the scales on the bridge depending on what that spirit is doing. Some pass over the bridge and continue without triggering the scales, and eventually go back into life. Some trigger the scales by themselves as they pass through this stage of death.

But by forcibly putting people on the bridge, or pushing them towards it, I was obviating their own natural process and also triggering the scales for every spirit I pushed onto the bridge. I do not know why it triggers the

scales if a soul is forced; only that it does. I was horrified when I was finally able to see this: the implications of my actions were far reaching indeed.

Which takes us back to the mystery wisdom: you are responsible for yourself. Everything starts and ends with you. Everyone has to walk their own path and take the consequences of their own path upon themselves. By forcing people over the bridge, I had interfered with that process: I was trying to sort everyone else out instead of minding my own business and sorting myself out.

The old maxim that people should not start mystery training until they have reached forty began to make more and more sense to me. Before that age we are too dumb, too full of hormones and everything else that goes with that (ego, emotion, impulse). And yet I have learned far more from my mistakes than I have learned from my successes. So it is a two-edged sword, really.

THE FACE OF THE ANGEL

Once the spirit has crossed the plains of the desert and overcome many challenges (in the Greek mysteries that is depicted as a mountain that must be climbed), it comes face to face with a vast angelic being whose face shines with the light of Divine Being. That is to say, an angelic being that is a direct mediator of the powers of creation and destruction: the angel of glory.

This encounter is a deep mystical version of ‘looking in the mirror.’ The spirit is given a brief look at Divine Being and also of their true self at a soul level. This enables the soul to make a choice, and it is this choice that adepts of the Mysteries strive for, and thus work hard to learn the powers of the scales in life and death. You see, life is not the be-all and end-all, or the ‘true existence’; it is more like going to the gym to get strong and fit.

Those who have been through this process once or more, remember it at a deep level and strive in life not only to repair and renew the ‘cuts’ they received, but also to pass on guidance (but not help) to others in order to point the way. We see this throughout history as magicians, mystics, priests/priestesses who spend their life pointing the way through texts and teachings. Or they simply write/paint or express their experience so that others may have a step upon the road.

The experience of looking into the face of the vast angelic being triggers a deeper understanding of their eternal self and what it is they need to do. Once they have settled on what they need to do, the angel opens up a vista of options that would facilitate that process.

THE VISTA

The opening of the vista, in magical terms, is something that happens when the spirit is shown a variety of options that are open and accessible to them in order to do whatever it is they need to achieve. This could be a life or series of lives, and often the spirit is shown a variety of lives. Or it could be passing into the inner worlds (inner temples, for example) in order to work as an inner contact; it could be rest in the arms of a deity power that holds the spirit in sleep for a while; it could be service in the underworld; or it could be, if the spirit did not sustain injury from the blades and is therefore complete, the option of the 'ladder of angels,' which takes the spirit into a deep, Divine state of balance and union (going home).

The choice is for the spirit to make, and as soon as that decision is made, all other options close off and the spirit falls into the option that they reached for. If the option was life, the angel withdraws and the spirit falls into life.

This action is a much higher and vastly more powerful dynamic of the one that you learned a little about in the last module, when you stood in the centre of the web of lives/fate and looked around that web for hotspots or lives. This is the same mechanism, but at an infinitely more powerful level.

What fascinates me is that I have often come across this mechanism in action not only in deep vision, but in people who remember this process at a deep level. They will dream it, taste it, feel it: a deep part of them remembers, but the everyday consciousness tries to suppress the memory (for good reason). As the person gets older, and I have come across this not only in priests/priestesses or adepts, but also in seemingly everyday folks: they slowly remember more and more fragments of the event. Of course there are always the silly people who read about events like this and then loudly declare that they remember in total, that their spirit was the spirit of Cleopatra/Jesus/Buddha/whatever, and that they were sent back on the

earth to be a messiah (what, another one??). Those you can discount as just being nuts.

I remember a conversation with one person, who wasn't magical or religious but was a deeply profound human, after they had surgery (which can sometimes trigger deep memories). About a month after the surgery he had a vivid dream that not only was powerful, exhausting and terrifying; it also 'woke him up' and changed his life forever.

He dreamed of standing before a vast, shining face, and beyond the face was a parade of many lives. He was missing a foot and a hand (action of the blades?), and felt a total failure. But the angel smiled and nodded towards the parade of lives. He looked, and saw a life that pulled at him deeply. He fell towards it and woke up with a bump. There was nothing untoward in the dream, but it shook him to the core: his spirit recognised and remembered.

He came to me to chat, as he was still shaken days later and could not understand why. I told him about the death mysteries process and when we came to the opening of the vista, his face lit up. He said he remembered, and he also remembered what it was he needed to do to feel complete: and off he went. He left his job and travelled half way round the world to go work on the top of a mountain with a tribal community. He never told me what it was that he 'needed to do,' and as I moved around we slowly lost contact.

This act of remembering also brings me to another aspect of the death mysteries, and that is reincarnation. So let's have a look at the many twists and turns that are relevant to the mysteries.

Reincarnation

Reincarnation is something that happens either unconsciously or consciously. I do not mean that in a sense of remembering past lives, but in a sense of whether it was by conscious choice of the spirit (at the vista) or whether it was an unconscious impulsive grabbing for life.

The unconscious reincarnation is something that virtually everyone has an idea about, but the conscious action of reincarnation is not so widely known. It has come to the public's attention in the last few decades through

the actions of one particular spirit who chooses conscious reincarnation: the Dalai Lama. Whether or not we think his actions have been of use is irrelevant—the fact remains that here is a soul that chooses to come back and live within the same pattern over and over. My personal opinion is that such action is degenerate and counterproductive for so many reasons, regardless of the good intent of the spirit. And as I write this lesson, the Dalai Lama has announced that he (or the line of consciousness that flows through him) will possibly not be coming back. Wise choice.

Many in the modern day world get very hung up on reincarnation and devolve into a fantasy world of past lives—this is just silly. It does not matter who or what you were in another life; what you do, how you evolve, and how you move forward in this life is what is important. Memories are truly fleeting, and can serve only to weigh us down.

One thing that has become apparent to me over the years is that sometimes spirits choose consciously to come into life to rebalance themselves by serving in a life that triggers a rebalancing for a wider group of people or a nation. Sometimes these lives they step into are not pleasant, or they step into a fate role that will result in them being a hated person. I came across this purely by accident many years ago. I was teaching a group different tarot techniques, and we were looking at deeply unpopular political figures.

Once we had looked at their current situation, we then looked at their whole life pattern, and finally at their deeper spirit. One particularly nasty politician (still living, so I will not name him) who has caused immense suffering through his warmongering caught my attention. His outer life showed a story of destruction. His deeper self showed a profound soul in service. I was deeply shocked.

Once the class was over, I delved deeper into investigating this. Sure enough, this vile warmonger had a great and balanced spirit, and had consciously chosen to step into the fate pattern of destruction in order to bring balance and change: he was a soul in Divine service. Subsequently I came across more of these people, and it really changed how I viewed people in general. I did not wholly trust my results, so I asked other adepts to look as well, without telling them what to look for; just to check out the deeper spirits of a group of people. They came back with the same results, and the same sense of astonishment.

Sometimes it takes destruction to bring regeneration, and the key players in that destruction, often reviled, are sometimes (not always) profound spirits who stood at the vista and agreed to take on the burden of such a life in order to bring balance to themselves and everything around them. Divine service indeed. To knowingly step into a life pattern that brings intense suffering and destruction to others, to be hated and reviled, is a sacrifice indeed.

Rather than write reams on reincarnation, which is not really necessary, there a documentary on YouTube which I strongly suggest you should watch. The link to it is in the practical work section. It is a documentary of the work of a clinical psychologist in Australia who has dedicated his life to researching this phenomena. It is not a silly New Age film; rather it is the practical results of a large clinical psychology research programme. It was so shocking and outstanding that this documentary was banned from many TV stations around the world by film censors under pressure from the church, who felt that it challenged things just a bit too much.

Summary

Because the main body of this lesson is about the first steps of learning about these mysteries and this is an apprentice section, there will be no visionary work attached to this lesson—it is far too dangerous for you to wander off into these deeper mysteries. But knowing about them is important for your progression, even at this early stage of training. That knowing triggers deep changes within you that will surface in your more advanced work, and at that point it will be time to delve a little deeper in a practical sense.

In the meantime, you can explore for yourself through research. I will not set you specific research tasks for this lesson; it is up to you to decide how much more you wish to look into this. If you do wish to research, then look at depictions of funeral imagery in ancient texts, and go back over the ones you have already looked at. You may well spot more things now you know a bit more of the mystery. Also look at visionary paintings by past mystical painters, and wall paintings in various temples.

Practical Work

OBSERVING

Watch the following documentary on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9IZFw6qIX4>

FINDING

By now you should have your scales and they should be somewhere in the west part of your house or working room. Now it is time to find the feather. This is not something you can buy, or go to someone who keeps birds and get one: you have to come across it yourself, out in nature.

Over the next couple of weeks, go out for walks (in nature if possible) and as you walk, mull over in your mind the concept of the scales, the judgement, the passage of the spirit through death, and how the way you live potentially affects that process. As you walk and think, keep an eye out for a white feather. It must be pure white, and must be either on the ground already or falling down to you in the air. It cannot have been placed somewhere by human hands.

When you find it, place it upon your scales. Do not place it in the cup of the scales (the trigger of judgement) but place it at the top of one arm of the scales (where the chain of the cup and the arm of the scales meet—thread it into the chain). By placing it there and not in the cup, it serves as an indicator that you are beginning to walk within the death mysteries and are striving to learn and evolve, but you are not yet asking for judgement in life, nor are you ready yet to have judgement in life or death. Once it is there, just leave it there. Always keep your scales where they cannot be knocked or tampered with. They are slowly magically becoming an exteriorisation of your evolution of Ma’at, of balance, and of your ‘harvest.’

Over your years of magic, you will energetically bond more and more with the scales, and you will work with them magically as an adept. Should

they ever become damaged, simply repair them and put them back where they belong.

Don't move onto the next lesson until you have found your feather. It seems like such a simple thing, but there is a powerful magical action behind this, and having the feather you are given by the land fixed to your scales before you go in vision deeper into the underworld (next lesson) is very important.

READING

1. Read the following passage below (Aeneid extract from Chapter 6) which is about the death mysteries. Read it a few times so that some of its more hidden meanings can come to light in your mind. It is the Greco-Roman version of a part of the death mystery.

2. Revisit the vision of Ayr the Armenian from Plato's Republic—you should have recently read it. Read the section about the passage of souls flowing down to the land and underworld, and others flowing up into the stars. This passage of souls is the spirit in conscious choosing where it needs to be next. It is not the spirits of the switched off, but the spirits of the switched on as they choose the next place from the vista and go to where they need to be.

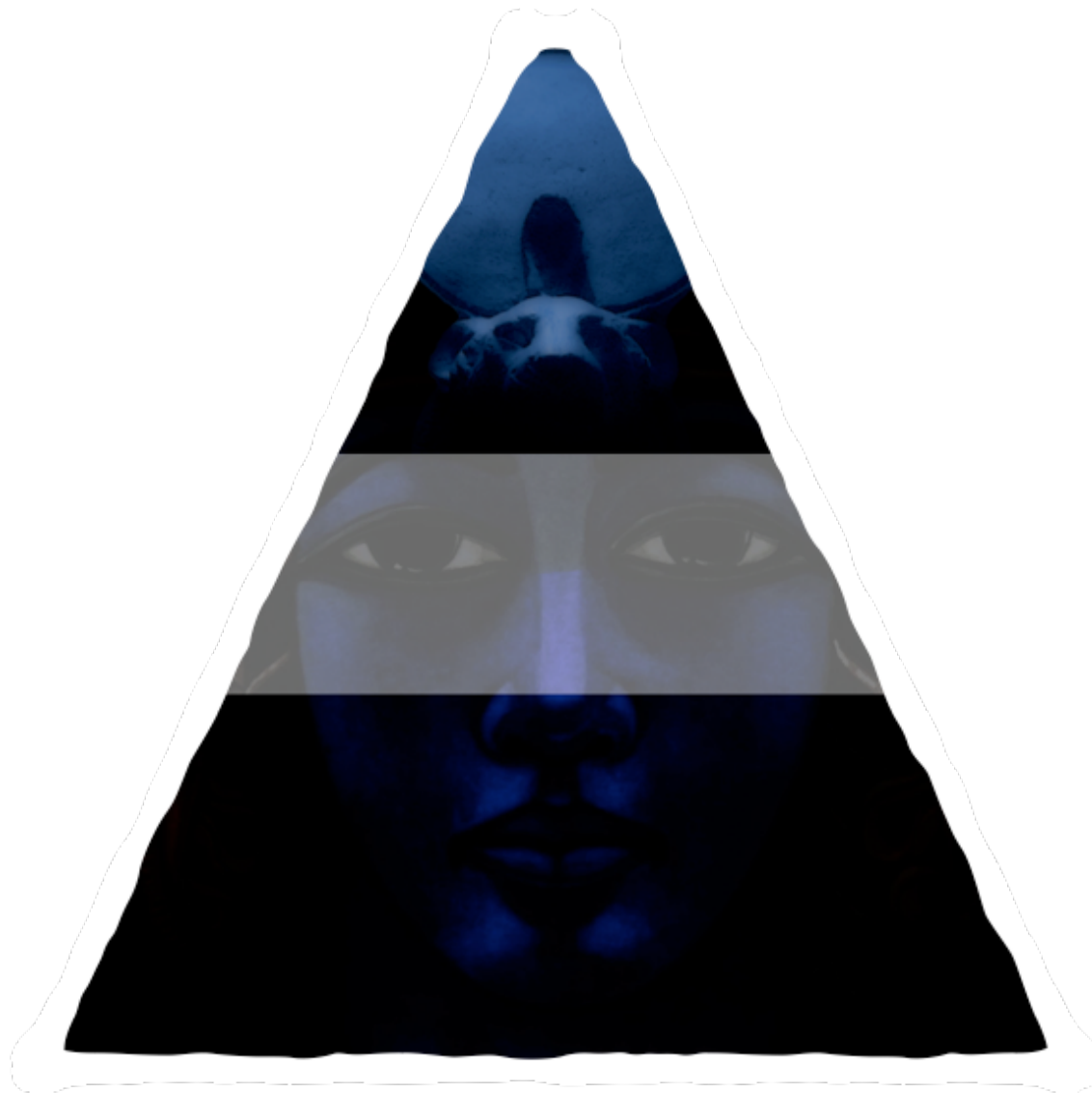
Extract Chapter Six The Aeneid – Virgil

*And, just before the confines of the wood,
The gliding Lethe leads her silent flood.
About the boughs an airy nation flew,
Thick as the humming bees, that hunt the golden dew;
In summer's heat on tops of lilies feed,
And creep within their bells, to suck the balmy seed:
The winged army roams the fields around;
The rivers and the rocks remurmur to the sound.
Aeneas wond'ring stood, then ask'd the cause
Which to the stream the crowding people draws.
Then thus the sire: "The souls that throng the flood
Are those to whom, by fate, are other bodies ow'd:
In Lethe's lake they long oblivion taste,
Of future life secure, forgetful of the past.
Long has my soul desir'd this time and place,
To set before your sight your glorious race,
That this presaging joy may fire your mind
To seek the shores by destiny design'd."-
"O father, can it be, that souls sublime
Return to visit our terrestrial clime,
And that the gen'rous mind, releas'd by death,
Can covet lazy limbs and mortal breath?"
Anchises then, in order, thus begun
To clear those wonders to his godlike son:
"Know, first, that heav'n, and earth's compacted frame,
And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
And both the radiant lights, one common soul
Inspires and feeds, and animates the whole.
This active mind, infus'd thro' all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.
Hence men and beasts the breath of life obtain,
And birds of air, and monsters of the main.
Th' ethereal vigor is in all the same,*

*And every soul is fill'd with equal flame;
As much as earthy limbs, and gross allay
Of mortal members, subject to decay,
Blunt not the beams of heav'n and edge of day.
From this coarse mixture of terrestrial parts,
Desire and fear by turns possess their hearts,
And grief, and joy; nor can the groveling mind,
In the dark dungeon of the limbs confin'd,
Assert the native skies, or own its heav'nly kind:
Nor death itself can wholly wash their stains;
But long-contracted filth ev'n in the soul remains.
The relics of inveterate vice they wear,
And spots of sin obscene in ev'ry face appear.
For this are various penances enjoin'd;
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.
All have their manes, and those manes bear:
The few, so cleans'd, to these abodes repair,
And breathe, in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.*

QVAREIA

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