

not be taken from him or turned against him in the hall of judgement by any of the denizens of the underworld. Spell 26 includes the words:

I shall have power in my heart, I shall have power in my arms,  
I shall have power in my legs, I shall have power to do whatever  
I desire; my *ba* and my corpse shall not be restrained at the portals  
of the West when I go in or out in peace.

Further magical protection was provided in the tomb via heart amulets and the heart scarab inscribed with appropriate spells from the *Book of the Dead*. Besides ensuring continuity from the living to the resurrected person, the importance of the heart was further manifested in the judgement of the deceased before Osiris, an episode described in detail in spells 30B and 125 of the *Book of*

5. Painted wooden pectoral depicting a woman named Mehytkhati in a posture associated with ritual purification. Between her hands she protects her heart, retention of which was regarded as essential if the deceased was to enter the afterlife. 19th Dynasty, about 1250 BC. From Thebes. 10×7.5 cm.



*the Dead*. Here the symbolic weighing of the heart in the balance against the image of *maat* (the cosmic order) was believed to determine the deceased's worthiness to be admitted into the afterlife (see below, p. 37).

### The ka

The most important of the non-physical aspects of man was the *ka*. This word, written with a hieroglyphic symbol representing a pair of upraised human arms, embodied a highly complex notion, which defies direct translation into a single English word or phrase. The nature of the *ka* was multi-faceted and, as the concept changed over time, the Egyptians' use of the term was not consistent.

The relationship of the *ka* with an individual had some of the character of that of a twin or 'double'. It came into existence at a person's birth and was sometimes depicted as an identical copy of the individual. Scenes of the mythological birth of the king show the god Khnum fashioning the child-king and the *ka* simultaneously on a potter's wheel. The *ka* was not a physical counterpart; it

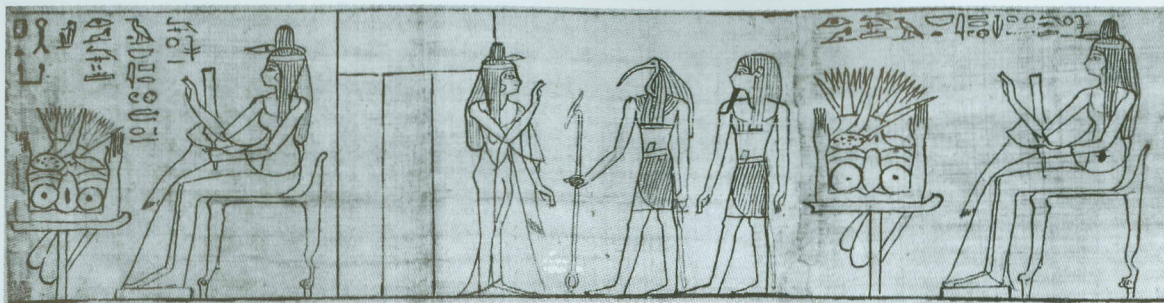
had no concrete form, and so it was given substance by representation in the form of a statue which served as its dwelling (see fig. 6). The *ka* also had connotations of reproduction. It is phonetically identical to a common word meaning 'bull', and forms an element of other words of related significance (including 'vagina' and 'to be pregnant'). Through its connection with male potency and the passage of seed from father to child at the moment of conception, the *ka* represented a continuous link with past generations. The Instruction of Ptahhotep expresses this idea in the words: 'He is your son. Your *ka* begot him'. Utterance 600 in the *Pyramid Texts* contains references to the creator god Atum implanting the *ka* within the gods and the king by embracing them. This notion may explain the hieroglyphic sign of the two upraised arms, which perhaps represents the embrace symbolising the contact between one generation and the next.

The role of the *ka* in funerary beliefs is well attested. Most important is its association with the 'life force' of the individual. It was of course understood that food and drink were essential to life, and the *ka* was intimately connected with sustenance. A



6. Wooden statue representing the *ka* of King Awibra Hor, from his tomb at Dahshur. The life-size figure, originally painted and gilded, stands within a shrine and is identified as the ruler's *ka* by the upraised-arms hieroglyph attached to the top of the head. 13th Dynasty, about 1750 BC. H. 170 cm.

fundamental connection between *ka* and food and agriculture is apparent from semantic evidence, since the sound *ka* formed an element of several related words, including 'food' or 'sustenance', 'crops' and 'to plough'. During life, an individual could feed himself, but after death it was no longer possible for the body to receive nourishment. It was by feeding the *ka* that the individual was kept alive. Fulfilling this crucial need was the most important role of the *ka* in the afterlife, for it was the principal mode of existence through which the deceased received nourishment. Tomb inscriptions regularly state that the funerary offerings were 'for the *ka*' of the deceased (see fig. 7). The *ka* could leave the body in the burial chamber, passing into the tomb chapel, where offerings were



7. Nestanebisheru before an offering table in the shape of the *ka* hieroglyph. The chief importance of the *ka* in the cult of the dead lay in the fact that it was the state of existence in which the deceased received sustenance. Food offerings were regularly described as being 'for the *ka*'; here the form of the offering table reflects this. Early 22nd Dynasty, about 930 BC. From the 'Royal Cache' at Deir el-Bahri, Thebes. H. 52 cm.

presented. The *ka* required a physical form to inhabit after death and for this reason the corpse was mummified. To receive nourishment, however, the *ka* needed to leave the body and move to the offering-place. Here, a statue was provided, in which the *ka* resided during the important nourishing process. Statues could be set up in temples as well as in the tomb to enable the person represented to receive a share of the offerings made to the gods. This nourishment did not of course take place in any concrete sense – the *ka* was believed to absorb the life-giving power of food, and this sufficed to keep the individual alive. The *ka* was thus essential for survival in the next world and in order to reach the transfigured state and enter the afterlife the deceased needed to be reunited with his *ka*, which separated from the body at death. Hence the dead were often referred to as 'those who have gone to their *kas*', while the tomb was termed the 'house of the *ka*'.

### The *ba*

The concept of the *ba* (like that of the *ka*) was complex and diverse, and the use of the term changed through time and according to whether it was applied to gods, to the king or to non-royal individuals. As described in texts of the Old Kingdom, the *ba* of a god or of the king encompassed the powers of that entity. It was the vehicle by which they were manifested as individuals, and hence the word is sometimes translated as 'personality' – though this is not an altogether satisfactory interpretation, since even an inanimate thing such as a town or a door had its own *ba*. In these early texts, and in later inscriptions of a non-funerary character, a god or a place could have two or more *bau* (pl.), which embodied the totality of the divine powers or deities associated with them.

But it is in funerary literature from the Middle Kingdom onwards that the concept of the *ba* in relation to the ordinary mortal is most clearly developed. In these texts each individual has his own *ba*-spirit, personified as one of the modes in which he continues to exist after death. Although not a physical being, the *ba* was credited with many human characteristics. It was able to eat, drink, speak and move. The capacity for free and unrestricted movement was in fact the single most important characteristic which the *ba* possessed; it was the means by which the dead were empowered to leave the tomb and to travel. Depictions of the *ba* in tomb-paintings, and on papyri and coffins begin in the New Kingdom

and continue to the Roman Period. Doubtless on account of its association with mobility, the form chosen for the representation of the *ba* was that of a bird with a human head, and often with human hands and arms as well (see figs 8–10).

The behaviour of the *ba* is described in many mortuary texts of the New Kingdom and later periods. These sources emphasise its ability to separate from the body at death. While the corpse remained inert in the tomb (which was frequently equated with the netherworld), the *ba* was able to fly away to visit the world of the living, or ascend to the sky to travel with the sun god in his barque. Vignettes from the *Book of the Dead* show the *ba* perched on the façade of the



8. Section of the *Book of the Dead* papyrus of the scribe Any. On the left, Any and his wife Tutu are shown playing the board-game *sener* in the afterlife. To the right they appear again in the form of their *ba*-spirits perched on the façade of the tomb. 19th Dynasty, about 1270 BC. From Thebes. H. 42 cm.

tomb (see fig. 8), and some funerary stelae of the Late Period have a small *ba* figure attached to the top. During these absences from the tomb the *ba* could feed itself, but each night it had to return to the corpse in order to be reunited with its physical 'base' or 'anchor'. Without this periodic contact the deceased would perish. Several spells in the *Book of the Dead* are concerned with the relationship between the *ba* and the corpse, in particular spell 89, 'for letting a *ba* rejoin its corpse in the realm of the dead', which addresses the gods with the words: 'The sacred barque will be joyful and the Great God will proceed in peace when you allow this *ba* of mine to ascend vindicated to the gods . . . May it see my corpse, may it rest on my mummy, which will never be destroyed or perish.' The vignette of this spell shows the *ba* hovering above the mummy, with which it is about to merge (see fig. 10). The papyrus of Nebqed in the Louvre contains a

9. Wooden *shabti* figure representing the deceased holding the *ba* in his hand. 18th Dynasty, about 1300 BC. Provenance unknown. H. 30.3 cm.



10. The *ba*, depicted as a human-headed bird, rejoins the corpse in the tomb. Vignette from spell 89 of the *Book of the Dead* in the papyrus of the scribe Nakht, late 18th Dynasty, about 1300 BC. From Thebes. H. 35.5 cm.



unique scene in which the *ba* is depicted flying down the shaft of the tomb to the burial chamber in which lies the mummy. This union of *ba* and corpse produced resurrection, just as the uniting of the sun god and Osiris in the underworld each night (see below, p. 29) rejuvenated both gods. On account of this doctrine, it was essential that the corpse should be transformed through mummification into an eternal, perfect body which could be reunited with the *ba*.

### *The name and the shadow*

The preservation of the name (*ren*) was also very important to the survival of death. The name was not simply a means of identifying the owner; it was, just as much as the body, heart, *ba* or *ka*, an essential aspect of his individuality, a medium through which his existence was manifested, distinguishing one person from the multitude. The concept of the name's holding the essence of the being is familiar from many ancient societies besides that of Egypt, and is reflected in the late story in which the goddess Isis obtains influence over the sun god Ra by discovering his secret name. Most ancient Egyptian names embodied a meaning which was believed to have a direct relationship with its owner's wellbeing. Many express the protection or favour of a god or goddess, such as Amenhotep ('Amun is content'). One penalty for the most serious crimes was to have one's name changed from one of good omen to one which would bring misfortune: there are several examples of this practice in the records of the trials of persons implicated in the harem conspiracy against Ramesses III (c. 1184–1153 BC), where, for example, the name Ramose ('Ra is the one who gave birth to me') is replaced by 'Ramesdsu ('Ra is the one who hates him').

Since the name was so closely linked with the prosperity of the bearer, survival of death was linked to remembrance of the name. It was necessary for it to be pronounced in the context of the offering ritual (see pp. 94 and 192–3), in order to provide nourishment for the dead. Failing that, funerary texts appealed to anyone who might visit the tomb in future years to pronounce the appropriate formula so as to supply offerings for the dead person; thus, as long as the name was remembered, the dead would continue to live. Many texts emphasise the importance of remembrance as a means of survival after death. The *Instruction of Papyrus Insinger*, a wisdom text of the Graeco-Roman Period, contains the line: 'The renewal of life for the dead is leaving his name on earth behind him.' The Egyptians therefore took great care to ensure that the names of the dead were preserved. They were inscribed prominently on the public parts of the tomb structure, such as the doorways, façade, stelae and funerary cones, and also on coffins, sarcophagi and other objects which were to be sealed up in the burial chamber or storerooms within the tomb. Although these things were not intended to be seen again after the burial, the very presence of the written name on the objects would ensure the owner's survival. The preparation and equipping of a tomb for one's parents, a mark of filial piety, was often recorded as having been done 'in order that his/her name might live'.

Particularly important was the association between the name and the repre-