

The Role of Myth in the Emergence of Eye as a Symbol for the Ancient Egyptian

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ABSTRACT : The eye played a part in the hieroglyphic language when it appeared as one of the signs or symbols that expressed the activities and actions related to them, such as vision, attention, observation, etc. So, it was chosen as a mythical symbol due to its importance as an organ of the human body and as a main focus of the conflict between Horus and Seth. The eye was called "Alwchaat", the left eye of the God of Horus, which he lost in his eternal struggle with his maleficent enemy, Set. Its completion indicates health and strength. It is a graphic translation for Egyptian ancient Math in which it is regarded as an arithmetic equivalent for the parts of the even one. It was used in amulets and necklaces for protecting and preserving in which it was in the form of the cobra snake, which protects from harm on the forehead of the god, and it is one of the most common and strangest symbols in Egyptian art.

1. INTRODUCTION

The deep contemplation and continuous research in the components of the arts of Egyptian civilizations, and the rich legacy left indicates the expressive ability of the Egyptian artist and understanding of nature. The charm and beauty it carries aroused feeling and inner feeling and prompted him to formulate it symbolically. The vast desert that the Nile River (Habi) cuts through is flowing, the wide sky with horizons in which the warm rays of the sun alternate during the day, the light of the moon shining at night, and the succession of the four seasons of the year made him an attentive meditator who always searches for the basic essence of things. So, he waits and analyzes the phenomena and beings. This nature has the first effect on forming his beliefs.

The effect of nature on the formation of Egyptian beliefs

The art in Egypt was fresh to the people who adhered to ideals that they believed in, in addition to the nature which gave it to them. It is a green land and a river that divides it and gathers them around it, in addition to a desert surrounds them and a sea from the north and another from the east, and nature made him feel safe with and settle in. So, it was a fertile ground for his imagination to unleash his imagination, where he would create symbolic forms that translate and interpret the meaning of the universe and embody spiritual meanings and emotional expressions. That nature had the first effect on forming and shaping his beliefs. Thus, he believed in supreme holy powers that he was comfortable with and was sure of facing them.

Among the phenomena of nature that aroused his astonishment and increased his anticipation, and led him to believe in the existence of (the eye of God) and paved the way for the emergence of the symbol of the eye strongly in his myths, are the two phenomena of the eclipse of the sun and the moon. Within the eclipse

phenomenon happening twice a year where the sky looks dark in day and stars appear too to the extent that the moon appears as a completely black disk surrounded by light, representing the pupil of the eye, and brightening colored lines radiate from it forming an iris of the eye. So, it looks exactly like an eye staring at you from the sky. As Figure 1 shows, as for what happens at night from the phenomenon of a lunar eclipse when the moon is full, the moon does not appear dark, but rather faded in a waxy image, as if it were a glowing copper disk, as if it were an infected red eye. The merging of the lunar eclipse phenomenon with the phases of the moon that passes through it during the lunar month played a role in the genesis of the myth of the lunar eclipse to interpret it, which is a symbolic sign as if he was wounded during the bloody conflict between Horus and his uncle Seth.

It is explained when the moon enters the new moon phase reaching to the full moon phase, because the eye heals when the moon grows and becomes complete by Thoth or Isis in some myths. It seems that this conflict is renewed every month (Cherny, 1996, p. 48) where it has become a belief through myths that "Horus acquired the moon in his left eye and the sun in his right eye, and he hovered over the earth as if he were a falcon at the tip of his wings at the end of the earth boundaries" (Tijo, 2004, p. 241). The ancient Egyptians sought contact with supernatural forces and thought that the best way to do that is to choose a specific and visible axis in which the attributes and epithets that express these sacred powers could be gathered. (Tijo, 2004, p. 241) (Cherny, 1996, p. 48). These interpretations began with symbolic interpretations of myths in primitive arts followed by an evolution in those symbolic forms in ancient Egyptian art. The ancient Egyptian used art to serve the faith, pointed out by the Greek historian (Herodotus). "The Egyptians are more pious than all other people and are all concerned with sacred rituals ... they preceded the people of the world to hold public holidays and great processions, whereof the Greeks learned from them. " (Cherny, 1996, p. E)

First: the concept of myth

The term "Myth" is used to denote a group of religious symbols that are distinguished from the vocabulary of symbolic behavior, such as cults, rituals and their places, and the events of the myth and its themes are supernatural and unfamiliar which were diagnosed by Gods and human heroes who perform unusual actions differing from the laymen's actions (Abdel-Qader, 1986, pp. 5-6)

Myths in Arabic denote falsehood where myths are conversations that have no order. The singular is a myth ...the word "asatier" indicates in Arabic also "acquainted with", and "He brought us myths" ...

It is said: He writes out what has no basis, that is, he composes (Ibn Manzur, 1955, line item). It is also said so-and-so attractively conversed so-and-so if he decorated and embellished gossip, and those gossip are myths. (Ibn Manzur, 1955, line item) (Ibn Zakaria, 1368 AH, p. 73). They also said about the myth, "a piece of hadith and hadiths." (Al-Zubaidi, 1966, pp. 266-267). It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an "And when Our revelations are recited to them, they say, "We have heard. Had we wanted, we could have said the like of this; these are nothing but myths of the ancients." (Al-anfal. 31). The word "asatier" refers to their myths about speech (Wagdy, 1971, p. 128), where the pronunciation has a close relationship with the meaning of the myth in the original Greek. The Greek word (Mythos) is the same of (Myth) indicating the spoken thing. Accordingly, the myth at its beginning meant the spoken word before concerned with the stories and deeds of the gods (Zaki, 1975, pp. 56-57) (Ibrahim, 1979, p. 6)

As for mythology, it is the science of studying myths and superstitions (El-Khoury, 1990, pp. 1-4) The word consists of two parts, the first taken from the Greek word (Mytho), indicating a traditional tale about the gods and heroes, and the second part (Logy)) indicating science, and the word "mythology" means the science of studying traditional tales about gods and heroes (Al-Sawah, 1987, p. 10), in other words, the science that deals with myths circulating among people (The oxford English Dictionary, 1933, p.818). Mythology also means the myths that belong to a particular nation. (Al-Sawah, 1987, p. 10) Mythology is neither a religion, nor history, nor philosophy, nor poetry, since it forms all of this under that distinct form of natural expression at a certain stage of the development of thought and language. (El-Khoury, 1990, p. 4). Tourists know the myth as a sacred

tale, the roles of which are played by gods and demigods, the events of which are not made or imagined, but facts that took place in the first sacred times. It is a firm belief, and disbelief in which the individual lost all the values that draw him to his group and culture. It is transmitted from one generation to the next by oral narration, making it the memory of the group. (Al-Sawah, 1987, p. 21)

Warren Willick defines "a myth" as (an irrational tale, indicating any anonymous story that deals with the origins and destinies, and the interpretation that society provides to its people about the reason for the existence of the world, the reason for our actions, and the educational metaphorical images of the nature and destiny of man). (Reiter, 1992, p.18) It is a composite of stories, some of which are facts and the other is fiction, which people consider for various reasons as manifestations of the internal meaning of the world of human life. (Reiter, 1992, p.19). (David Badni) believes that it is a cosmic cultural phenomenon that arises from a collection of motives and affects all mental capabilities. (Reiter, 1992, p. 19) The myth, according to Cramer, is a sacred story that includes the theme of creation and the beginning of existence, and describes the exciting events that accompanied the creation process, and the role that various gods and mythical creatures played in these events. (Kremer, 1971, p. 13) It is brilliantly distinguished for photography, originality in style and accuracy in formulation, the artistic and literary side almost dominates the intellectual side. (Cramer, 1971, p.13)

Some believe that myth is not just a fairy tale, but rather an intellectual method used by ancient man to express his views on the universe, the beginning of creation, the system of the universe, the eternal struggle between good and evil. He raises his questions about the contradictions in this system created by the supreme god, (Clack, 1988, p. 3), while de Saussure tries to narrow the circle of meaning so that the myth is an aesthetic model for the myth of creation (Saussure, 1985, p. 121)

But Claude Levi-Strauss, who subjected the study of myth to the laws of anthropology, affirms that the myth is always based on past events "before the creation of the world" or "during the Middle Ages" or "long before", but the subjective value attributed to the myth stems from the fact that these events, which are supposed to have occurred in a moment in time, constitute a permanent structure, and this structure relates simultaneously to the past, present and future. (Strauss, 1977, p. 247). Therefore, myth is not an ideal idea or concept. Rather, it is for the mythical subject life itself, all its hopes, fears and frustrations, as it is a tangible reality that man lived from eternity, and differs in the content from myth, and it has practical goals aimed at consolidating social customs and the consolidation of the authority of the clan itself or the establishment of a social order in particular.

Second: The concept of symbol in Egyptian religious thought

The most important characteristic of the ancient Egyptian religion is its reliance mainly in formulating the teachings of religion and its philosophy in a symbolism that controls all conditions of religion. Those who follow the ancient Egyptian civilization are fully aware that religion was nothing but a set of symbols placed in a coherent pattern that provides an explanation of the Egyptian philosophy of religion. Amulets are a world miniature of religious symbols and deities. (www.civgars.com). The use of the symbol is as old as mankind, where the ancient Egyptian was the first to resort to the use of symbols, as he embodied his thought by symbol and expressed it in myth. This was the language of initiation, where the myth and its symbolic vocabulary were nothing but attempts to understand and adapt nature and its surrounding phenomena with it. It is with all the images and symbols it bears which must carry a deep philosophical content.

Symbolism is the art of thinking through images and figures used as physical or intangible symbols. Symbolism was not limited to its role and its use on the doctrinal aspects of ancient Egypt, but rather extended and extended to include aspects of life and knowledge between arts, architecture, mythology, language, literature and other aspects of life. (Qadus, 200, p. 43). The symbol means is a human attempt to make the divine world a "tangible" concept (Mahran, 1989, p. 334) that can be perceived by human logic or an abstract philosophical idea that moves from the mind and the unconscious to become a reality visible to the seer. Others see the

symbol as an abstraction and simplification of reality from its image in a diagnostic or natural form carries the basic features of the element to be expressed. It is inferred through the symbol to a meaning inherent in the consciousness, which the senses do not perceive through their contemplation of the form. (Darraj, 2003, p. 3), According to writers and philosophers, Adnan al-Dhahabi defines it as "a tangible thing that expresses with a reference to an intangible thing that does not fall under the senses, and this consideration is based on the existence of an analogy between the two things in the imagination of the symbolizer" (Al-Dhahabi, 1949, pp. 364-365). Hegel says about it "it should be distinguished with the meaning and expression it contains, for the meaning is related to a representation or an object, for the meaning is related to a specific topic, whatever the content of this topic, as for the expression it is a physical presence or an image. " (Hegel, 1986, p.11) The symbol is a substitution of reality with simple signs in a symbolic form. It is not just a representation of an ordinary thing as it is a representation and expression of an idea. Consequently, the image comes out in the appearance of a symbolic language that takes a representative form (Cooper, 1998, p.7)

Symbols by their nature are the focus of imaginary contemplations or emotions that in turn belong to the world of myth, even if they are of a worldly origin. Symbols are not self-standing units. The unknown facts, and the relationship between the symbol and the myth is based on the fact that the myth, with its expressive methods and the people and gods it narrates within it, carries in its interior symbolic interpretations, such as symbolizing the god Horus with the symbol of the Horus's eye. (Zayed, 1985, pp. 30-31) It can be said that the symbol is a manifestation of the human attempt to make the elements of the divine world tangible on human foundations. That is, man can know them with logic and sensory perception. The phrase (the divine world) means what man cannot construe and perceive sensorily, even if this thing was present. Natural bodies such as the sky and the sun appeared in the mind of the ancient Egyptian that they belong to the divine world, and it is not possible for a person at any time to perceive in his mind any being of the divine world except by symbol.

Third: The role of the eye as a symbol for the ancient Egyptian

Symbols played an important role in the life and thought of the ancient Egyptian, making them related to all that surrounds him from various cosmic phenomena in nature, whether fixed or variable and fluctuating, such as drought, torrents, lunar eclipses, and solar eclipses. So, he drew his symbols from the surrounding environment, so that he could easily understand them by linking them to what symbolized for. We find him using them to refer to those hidden forces that drive these phenomena surrounding him, and for every phenomenon that stirred his mind, he found a cause that was dominated by imagination and symbolism (Nour al-Din, 2011, p. 186)

Therefore, the eye was one of the most important symbols that were used in the ancient Egyptians, as it derived its power from the power of myths and belief that permeated their souls. The ancient Egyptian believed the eye to be a symbol of the great goddess, regardless of the name used. Since myth is related to the symbol, it is also the main substance in it.

Since the eye has a special place in the ancient Egyptian myths and beliefs, it is a symbol of the God who created human beings from the tears of his eye. Attention to it as an organ of vision, its protection, beautification, and studding of their dead with an artificial eye, coffins and statues as well, as it occupied a place in his language because of its value and ideological position in his myths. We will mention the most important myths that dealt with the eye of Horus (Al-wachaat), namely:

1- The Osirian myth

It is one of the oldest and most important ancient Egyptian myths associated with the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil. It has historical roots related to the emergence and legitimacy of the monarchy in ancient Egypt and its events talks about Osiris, the Greek name for (Osir) in the ancient Egyptian language. It seems that its meaning "the pupil of the eye, or its stable" (Cherny, 1996, p. 40). He was just king, and his wife (Izet), which in Greek is called (Izis), meaning the throne, and his sister is (Nabet Hutt) and her

Greek name is (Nevits), which means "the lady of the castle." Her husband (Seth), who is also Osiris's brother, killed him in envy and also killed his assistants. (Hamid, 2007, pp. 90-91)

The significance of the myth has expanded from the religious point of view, as the offerings made by family members or temple priests to the dead in the burial room were associated with the offering of the Horus's eye, which he presented to his father Osiris. The gifts presented to the god became the Horus's eye (Nour al-Din, 2011, p. 107)

2- The Myth of the Lunar Eclipse (The Horus's Missing Eye)

This legend is one of the stages of the bloody struggle between Horus and Seth, between darkness and light, written on the coffins of the dead in the Middle Kingdom era. Its events take place while Horus sits with Ra, and a black pig passes over them, Horus is terrified of his shape, and asked Ra if you saw this pig the black ? Horus did not turn around until he cried out a thunderous cry, because this pig threw it with a fiery arrow that struck his eye, so Ra was terrified and said: I knew that he was the evil of Seth, but Horus began wailing, saying that he really is the Seth that hit my eye, do not let Seth escape without being punished, but Seth, who was disguised as a pig, has disappeared. Ra was agonized when Horus was struck, and he said, "Let Horus lie on his bed so that he can rest from what he had afflicted, that the dreaded Seth was the one who hit Horus's eye with a fiery arrow, and when Horus woke up from his fainting and restored health and vision, Ra gave him the city of" B "(Bhutto), where he rejoiced in this giving, the clouds cleared, and the country celebrated (Nour al-Din, 2001, pp. 238-239)

Through the events of this myth, we can conclude that it is nothing but an explanation of the phenomenon of the lunar eclipse and the struggle between light and darkness, when the moon falls in the shadow of the earth, the eclipse of the moon occurs. The moon appears in its waxy image that tends to redness as if it was the Horus's eye, which Seth struck with a fiery arrow. It was believed that Horus's right eye represented the sun, and the left one that had been exposed was the eye of the dead, representing the moon. The stealing or damaging of Horus's eyes equates to the darkness of the moon during its various phases or during the eclipse, and this conflict seems to occur every month. In myth, whether Horus retrieves his lost eye or the goddess including Isis or Thoth returns it to him or heals her, restoring Horus's eye to his body represents the moon return to its full radiance.

3- The Myth of the Winged Sun Disk

This myth was found written on the inner sides of the eastern and western walls surrounding the temple of Edfu, consisting of five texts. The first starts from the second row on the western wall and is divided into (16) scenes, and this part of the myth occupies the views from (5 to 13). It was engraved from north to south, while the rest of the scenes point from south to north, indicating the artist's attempt to separate each of them from the other, and this part directly follows the participation of Horus, the son of Izis, in the second stage of the myth (Cherny, 1996, p. 58)

This inscription dates back to the reign of Ptolemy the Sixteenth or "Caesaron". The inscription includes elements dating back to much earlier periods. In the myth, Horus takes the role of the son who avenges his father Ra, my sister Horus, just like the role of Horus, the son of Iszis who avenges his father Osiris. It is likely that they do not have two different gods, but rather they are one god, whose forms have varied and varied ways of representing him. (Hamed, 2011, pp. 23-24). The conflict is renewed between Horus as a representative of good and Seth a representative of evil. A legend says that Thoth turned Horus into the sun disk with flat wings, when he subdued the Nubians. Thoth waved to Horus by placing a winged sun disk over the entrance to every temple in Egypt to commemorate this event and to secure protection from enemies. . (Hamed, 2011, p.24)

The myth provides an explanation for the presence of the winged sun disk on the facades of the temples, and sometimes replacing it with Horus's winged eye (Fig. 2). The role of the winged eye can be deduced as the role

of the sun disk that RaHur my sister assumed in the context of mythological events to play and is the role of protection from enemies.

4- The myth of human destruction (saving humans from annihilation)

This myth narrates the human tendency to evil and sin that caused God to become angry and decide to punish them, as it tells of his forgiveness for his servants. Two tombs from the Twentieth Dynasty are the tombs of King Ramses III (1184-1153 BC) and King Ramses VI. (Hassan, 1990, p. 81) This myth implies that it is a mythological interpretation of the phenomenon of night and day and that sunset represents the departure of Ra (the sun). On the earth, leaving Thoth behind him, represented by the moon, where the myth came to an important role to explain a cosmic phenomenon surrounding it, as it was nothing but an attempt by him to understand this phenomenon. The myth also included a different role for the eye of God, which is "the creative eye of human beings through Ra," the human beings who created them from my eyes, utter words against me. " (Budge, 1912, p. 17)

5- The myth of furious Horus's eye

This myth is characterized by the use of the symbol other than the rest of myths and the overlapping of mythological representations in it throughout the ages and the overlapping of its events as well. Among those perceptions that it comes after the myth of the destruction of human beings as the events of the myth continue when Ra's eye transforms from the beautiful image of Hathor to the powerful, vengeful goddess Smakht when her father sent her to extinguish the fire of the human conspirators, but she did not return, so he sent both Shu and Tukkoth to bring her. After pleasing her, she returned to her beautiful image of Hathor, and when she came back she found an eye that had grown in its place, then the god placed her on his forehead like a snake. (Cherny, 1996, p. 49) (Armand, 1995, p. 43)

Fourth: The genesis of the Horus's eye (Alwachaath) as an amulet

Horus's eye (alwachaath) penetrated into the daily life of the ancient Egyptian, for he did not keep it within the temples, worship rituals and funeral rites. So, it occupied a large part of his life as he believed in the eye of God that watched, protected and nurtured him from the forces of nature surrounding him. He feels as though he is in the protection of God, so he sought protection from the sacred powers that control the phenomena of nature with these amulets. He considered them a symbol of the goddess. The amulet means everything that carries, hangs, or puts on something to protect it, or to ward off all kinds of harm from him or for the purpose of achievement in hunting and victory in war or bringing good luck and good luck. (Mona, 1999, p.19)

It is everything that a person carries that he believes is working to protect him and ward off evil from him. In the Egyptian language with the name (Waja) which means healing, or (Makthao), the protector of the body, or (Sa), which means protection, or (Nakhto), which means an amulet. Legendary, associated with the ancient Egyptians with the victory of the good forces of Horus and Osiris over the evil forces represented by the god Seth. Horus's eye (alwachaath) was associated with many gods and was painted with a doctrinal dye due to the symbolic connotations it carries in every myth related to. It is a symbol of the triumph of goodness and a symbol of healing, health and completeness as a result of the healing of Thoth after she was torn by Seth, and this is according to the Osirian legend. It has significance in funeral rites as an amulet to be placed with the deceased king to revive the heart and open the mouth and eyes. (Spencer, 1987, p. 215). The ancient Egyptian also used the amulet of the Horus's eye (alwachaath) to protect him from the evil gaze (the envious eye) that causes disease. (Budge, 1930, p. 361).

The amulet of Horus's eye became one of the most used amulets for the ancient Egyptian to believe in its magical effect, as every part of the body was placed in the protection of those amulets or what it achieved for him. Therefore, they took care to be with the mummy to help in the hereafter world. It was placed in mummy scrolls as an offering to the deceased. (Spencer, 1987, p. 215) (Aldred, 1971, p. 15) Furthermore, it was painted on boats and oars in the belief that they were a symbol of granting strength and protection, as well as hands

were used for mirrors and also in the cover of mirrors and on utensils. They were painted at the entrances to tombs and stone sarcophagi until the deceased could look through them to the outside, and the Horus's eye (wachaat) became a powerful symbol of healing and supreme perfection for the deceased and the living as an amulet (Anna Ruiz, 2005, p. 158)

It was used as a symbol for measurement which where its parts used to refer to 2/1, refers to 4/1, to 8/1, 1/16, to 1/32, and to refer to 1/64. These fractions are the sum of 63/64 and the probability of decreasing 1/64 which may have been magically subdued by the god Thoth. (Gardiner, 1973, p.197) The amulet of the Horus's eye was also used in many vests, rings and bracelets (Fig. 3) Perhaps for the religious significance and purpose of it and also as an ornament, and it is worth noting that the ancient Egyptian had been interested in studding eyes for humans, animals and mummies (Lucas, 1991, p. 169).

2. Conclusion

Through this study, we reached the following:

- 1- The ancient Egyptian myth has an important role in the emergence of the eye as a symbol in daily life.
- 2- The eye was, in ancient Egyptian art, a source of enrichment of the ancient Egyptian civilization. It was painted on the walls of temples, tombs, coffins, amulets and boats, and the parts thereof were used as a unit of measure.
- 3- The eye symbol of the ancient Egyptian carries many artistic and aesthetic values.



Figure (1)



Figure (2)

The winged sun disk on the façade of the Edfu temple above the temple gate as a symbol of protection since the Middle Kingdom and through

The Ptolemaic period as an amulet for protection. Quoted from: <http://www.reshafim.org.il>

A scene in which it becomes clear: the phenomenon of a total eclipse of the sun in which the moon appears like a black pupil of an eye, and bright lines radiate from it forming an iris for this eye. So it looks exactly like an eye staring at you from the sky. Reportedly: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk>



Figure (3)

The eyes are made of red agate, on top of which is the sacred serpent (The Horus's eye of Fury), which is the main element of the bracelet. This part is connected to nine rows of beads of agate, porcelain and glass, separated by six gold connections, which is a bracelet of King Tutankhamun of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It is located in the Egyptian Museum. Quoted from:

[Http://www.collector-antiquities.com](http://www.collector-antiquities.com)

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