

HEKA

He Who Activates
The Ka

HEKA: HE WHO ACTIVATES THE KA

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The Netjer

Heka, also spelled Hekau, is the Kemetic Netjer of magic and medicine.

To me belonged the universe before you gods had come into being. You have come afterwards because I am Heka. - Coffin Texts, spell 261

...In the Coffin Texts Heka is described as coming into being at the beginning of time at the will of the creator god ATUM to provide a supernatural strength which would pervade the universe and enable deities and mankind to function. In the Pyramid Texts Heka is a threatening force and in the spells where the king hunts and devours gods and men his own power is increased by their magic which he has swallowed. The Book of the Dead has spells which emphasize that the deceased will possess the universal magical power of Heka to counteract hazards in the Underworld...In later magical spells Heka is along with RA, THOTH, and SAKHMET, one of the protectors of OSIRIS, whose power is invoked to overcome crocodiles by binding them. Heka is frequently depicted in anthropomorphic form in the Book of Gates standing in the boat of the sun-god during his nightly journey through the Netherworld. In the Second Hall, decorated in the Ptolemaic period, of the Mammisi in the Temple of Philae, Heka is the god who proclaims the enthronement of the son of ISIS - and symbolically the pharaoh himself - as ruler of Egypt, holding up the child in his arms. - George Hart

...There is no way of knowing whether the god of magic, Heka, had been invented to personify magic in Predynastic times, but by the Old Kingdom (from c. 2686 BC), he occupied this role. He was usually represented as a man with loosely hanging hands, sometimes holding snakes, with a short beard and a nemes, royal headdress, marked by the hieroglyph for a lion's backside; sometimes Heka was represented as a child. - Simson R. Najovits

He Who Activates The Ka

Heka/Hekau - He Who Activates the Ka. The term is made up of the word “ka” which is the ancient Kemetite concept of the vital force. Heka has been incorrectly translated as “magic” in a lot of text.

In the beginning, according to the myth of the Ennead, there was a mysterious act of creativity or fertility by the creator - the sun-god atum, for instance, was considered to have created himself with the aid of such forces as Heka (the Egyptian term for magic), Sia (a personification of 'perception') and Hu ('the divine word'). - Ian Shaw

Heka magic is many things, but, above all, it has a close association with speech and the power of the word. In the realm of Egyptian magic, actions did not necessarily speak louder than words--they were often one and the same thing. Thought, deed, image, and power are theoretically united in the concept of heka. - Ogden Goelet, Jr.

...a supernatural energy called heka, with which the gods were endowed by their very essence, with the result that they could be described as being “of powerful hekau” or “with many hekau”...But humankind was not deprived of it, as we learn from the text of the Instruction of Khety for His Son Merikare: “God has given heka to men as a weapon capable of frustrating the normal course of events.” And the magician knew how to make use of it. - Françoise Dunand

In ancient Kemet, the practice of heka was oral and backed by written text. This is why it's important to know a name. If you know the name, you can possibly have power over whomever holds the name.

To know and to say. Knowledge that was in principle secret, that was not supposed to be revealed. - Françoise Dunand

The entirety of the system of deities, demons, cosmogonies, theologies and the afterlife was underpinned by heka. Heka was at the very heart of creation myths, the operation of the universe, temple rituals and contact, appeasement and manipulation of the gods, the combat against demons, art and architecture, political power, international relations, oracles, personal protection, healing, medicine and life after death. - Simson R. Najovits

If you look at various African Indigenous Spiritual paths, you'll notice a common notion of energy or a force. For instance, Ifa has Ase - the power to make things happen and produce change. It's power. Existence is dependent upon it. Heka can be viewed the same way.

You can't look at African spiritual paths with a Western/European eye. If you do, you'll miss the true meaning of a word. Heka isn't just magic. It encompasses everything. As you can see from the above quote, it's "the very heart of creation".

The Egyptians, like other peoples of the time, did not view magic as magical, as miracles. Heka was not irrationality and superstition; it was a force, an energy, a tool of knowledge, creativity and power, much like our science and technology. Magical techniques using rituals, objects and words, and spells were seen as an efficient, pragmatic way of manipulating existence, the universe and the gods. - Simson R. Najovits

...If we start with Egyptian terminology, we get a totally different notion of magic. Magic in the sense of heka means an all-pervading coercive power—comparable to the laws of nature in its coerciveness and all-pervadingness—by which in the beginning the world was made, by which it is daily maintained and by which mankind is ruled. Magic in the sense of a particular discourse is much more specific. It refers to the exertion of this same coercive power in the personal sphere. - Jan Assmann

Exertion is "the application of a force, influence or quality". It's utilization. We're to utilize heka (creative power) in our personal lives. Keeping this in mind, if we hold the universe up as a model then our focus should be on balancing our lives so we can live in accord with nature. That would mean balancing the masculine and feminine energies within ourselves as the universe is balanced - life (Spring and Summer) and death (Autumn and Winter), darkness (night) and light

(day). Separations can bring about internal chaos. So balancing these aspects inside of ourselves can help bring about balance.

Heka is an ancient Egyptian word that meant the action of a complete living force; it was also the name of an Egyptian deity. Yet the word has been confused, misused, and misunderstood because of distorted perceptions from some Westerners who have claimed that the word Heka is the deification of magic, but that is only a part of the story. The word is literally the activating of the ka. Now it is true that some Egyptians understood heka to work by activation of the ka of a person because the embodied personality of someone's ka had great power and energy. It also includes the use of heka as activation of the ka of the gods. - Molefi Kete Asante

But there was the idea of Heka, and it could function because there was no duality as the kind that the Western world knows. In fact, there was no attempt to make a difference between prayer requests or medicine; they were part of the same process. In Egypt, the human was a whole being, with a ka, but as a person, whole. Thus, to speak of heka, one must speak only of that which is whole. Magic or heka could only exist because of the wholeness of the human. - Molefi Kete Asante

According to Molefi Kete Asante, there are four pillars to Heka.

1. Heka: The primeval power that energized the creator at the beginning of time
2. Rw: the sacred texts
3. Seshaw: the magical rituals and treatments
4. Pekhret: medicinal prescriptions

A somewhat artificial distinction is usually made between the religious texts in tombs and temples and the 'magical texts' or 'spells' that were intended to solve the everyday problems of individuals. These texts range from the Book of Gates in New Kingdom royal tombs to curses inscribed on ostraca, or even spells to cure nasal catarrh, but all of them would have been regarded by the Egyptians as roughly comparable methods of gaining divine assistance. All employed heka, the primeval potency that empowered the creator-god at the beginning of time. Whereas magic, in the modern sense of the word, has become relatively peripheral to the established religions, in ancient Egypt it lay at the very heart of religious ritual and liturgy. Magic was the means by which the restoration of all forms of order and harmony could be ensured. The royal uraeus (see COBRA and wadjyt), perhaps the most vivid symbol of the pharaoh's power, was sometimes described as meret hekaw : 'great of magic'. - Ian Shaw

The Ka

If you actually do research on the term “ka”, you’ll come across it translated in different ways - soul, spirit, double, vital force. I came across one definition as the protecting, divine spirit of a person. According to Tehuti, the “ancient Nubian/Kushite meaning for KA is that which is exalted, ascended, raised on high and elevated”.

They believed that the formation of the kA is deeply connected to the shaping, experience and remnants of the physical form. The kA includes all of the genetic material and characteristics of our parents and ancestors. The Egyptians knew that residue from all of one's ancestors were sharing in the make-up of one's own personal kA So reverence for one's ancestors, and remembering their names, was considered essential to their practices. They believed that our ancestor's kA lives on in all of us. Their genes, successfully passed down through the many generations, live on in each being born of their creation. All of our ancestors are gazing through our eyes at this very moment. The ancients believed that by just saying their names we can call them forth, with all of their wisdom and knowledge. - Jay Weidner

The ancient Egyptians knew when a person had died because he or she had lost their vital essence. This loss of essence was the loss of ka from the body but not the end of life although we would say the person was deceased. At this point the ka had left the body. However, this idea is closely related to the Western notion of soul. It refers to "spirit" and it is often related to the idea of the second image of the person, the person's double. - Molefi Kete Asante

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