

"There is a fundamental notion, abstract yet vitally real, which colours all the myth, the morality and the life of the ancient Egyptians. This is Maât. Divine entities and human beings alike live by Maât, in Maât and for Maât.

"This single name expresses all notions of equilibrium and poise."... "The scales, and Maât's symbol, the feather, support a plumb line at the end of which hangs the plumb bob. Maât represents therefore accuracy, honesty, fairness, faithfulness, rectitude, and in this aspect becomes the emblem of the judge, who in the late period wore a small Maât of lapis lazuli on his breast. Maât is the symbol of Justice and Truth, of authenticity, legitimacy, integrity, legality.

"Maât is also the symbol of harmony, in the sense of accurate tones and perfect musical accords. In the New Kingdom (after 1567 BC) harps are often decorated with a figure of Maât." (from *\_Egyptian Mysteries\_*, by Lucie Lamy, page 17)

Jan Assmann is an Egyptologist who has also studied the meaning of Ma'at:

"Ma'at guarantees that what was valid yesterday will hold good today, that a person will stand by what he said and did yesterday, that he will respond to what others have said and done. Ma'at is, thus, a consistency of action beyond the limits of the day, a form of active remembrance that provides the basis of trust and successful accomplishment. '**All actions are interjoined,**' says the Instructions for King Merikare." (From *\_The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs\_*, by Jan Assmann, page 129)

People will remember our actions, and they will respond accordingly. Furthermore, if we behave to the highest of our ethical understanding, we can take pride in this. This pride gives strength to all our future actions, thereby creating a continually self-reinforcing cycle.

Lucie Lamy goes on to explain:

Ma'at "is consciousness itself, and also the individual consciousness that each person carries in his heart, for she is both the motivating force and the goal of life. She is invoked on all occasions; she is omnipresent. Maât moves and directs existence, and Maât is its ultimate treasure." (from *\_Egyptian Mysteries\_*, by Lucie Lamy, page 17)