

The Message of the Senet Board

by

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If we place the Hebrew letters on the Senet Board according to the positions of the Egyptian gods in the Weighing of the Heart Judgment Scene (see **Thoth and the Tarot: The Amazing Secrets**), we are able to decipher an important message that links the essential culture of ancient Egypt to the essential message of the Bible that is presented in the opening pages of Genesis. Here is the layout of Hebrew letters on the Senet Board based on my analysis.

𐤅	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	𐤎
	𐤏							𐤐	
𐤑	𐤒	𐤓	𐤔	𐤕	𐤖	𐤗	𐤘	𐤙	𐤚
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

This array of letters may have meaning in Hebrew. Can we decipher it? Traditionally Hebrew is read from right to left. So that is a reasonable way to start. Reading horizontally we can extract individual words, but not a coherent message. After some experimentation I discovered that an intelligible message appears when we read the letters from right to left in vertical columns from the bottom upwards. Reading from the bottom upwards seems backwards, but is indeed the usual direction of growth on our planet. The sun gives energy from above, and plants and animals expand and grow upwards. I have numbered the columns along the “bottom” of the Board from right to left. Starting with V (col 1) we have the image of Thoth holding a vertical strip of paper with writing on it. Biblical literary style characteristically links narrative with the letter Y, the hook, used by the Hebrews to express the idea of conjunction or joining together of ideas. It suggests that the message is circular and wraps around from the end to the beginning, or possibly just parodies Biblical narrative style. Another rule for deciphering that immediately presents itself is that we include the two letters from the middle row in the column where they appear. A third rule is that the letter V is sometimes “hidden” in the text (“A” for Amen, means “hidden” in Egyptian). As it turns out, the two hidden A’s (cols 4 and 7) are perfectly symmetrical on the Senet Board, like two brackets for hanging it on wall hooks (V’s). Below is the text (written out from left to right) and my translation.

Y V 𐤕 𐤗 Z 𐤕 𐤗 [V] 𐤖 𐤊 Y 𐤕 W 𐤕 [V] W 𐤕 P 𐤕 𐤗 X 𐤕.
 And God Tree this vomits goodness. Honesty prospers, delivers top drum.

The first half of the message clearly refers to Genesis. “And” is the narrative linking word and the symbol for Tehuti, the High Priest who leads the world below (X𐎃X) and links it back to the Source above (O𐎃 = 𐎃𐎃). God (AL, cols 1 and 2) is shorthand for the full name, Alohim, or Yahweh Alohim. “Goodness” (column 5 on the Board) is the word Alohim uses to describe the judgment God makes after inspecting each stage of His/Her creation: “And God saw that it was Good.” Two trees are specifically mentioned in the story of the Garden of Eden. The tree on the Senet Board (col 2) surely refers to the Tree of Life, because Alohim creates Life in the Genesis story. But it also refers to the Tree of Knowledge, because that specifically allows for the perception of Goodness (col 5). The word “vomit” (col 4) sounds a bit strong, but it matches both in its position on the board and in style of behavior the Egyptian lion goddess, Tefnut (col 4, top), whose name means to spit out. We might substitute the more literary word, “emanates” or the more scientific word “emits”. The baboon fool Qeftennu (col 4, bottom), friend and admirer of Tefnut/Sekhmet, may be crazy, but he still adores the first rays that emanate from the sun. The baboon showing his joy and adoration toward the leonine rising sun (Tefnut) is a traditional theme in Egyptian iconography. He often clones himself into a whole chorus of baboons. This baboon is a magical transformation of Thoth.

The second half of the message starts with the word “Honesty” (col 6). This word appears right at the position of the Heart (col 6, bottom) in the Egyptian tableau, and is the core message of that scene. Nut (col 6, top) is above the heart and expands the honesty to fill the universe and to create the future. The purpose of the judgment is to measure the honesty of the heart. The root KN (col 6) also means to confirm (or say “yes”). But there is another funny gloss for that word: “worm”. This calls our attention to the serpent-worm that is on the Tree of Knowledge and persuades Eve to eat the apple of knowledge. The root KN gives us our word “ken”, and is the root for knowledge. Knowledge is awareness of facts that are true, information that matches our experience. This positive knowledge brings prosperity and growth. We gain in loftiness, both of stature and of consciousness. These are all ideas suggested by SG[A] (col 7). This growth delivers W𐎃P (cols 8 and 9) a special gift. What is the gift? In Egyptian mes means a newborn baby. 𐎃𐎃 (col 9) means apex, topmost point, and refers to the stairway up to the top of the pyramid where we find the Eye of Wisdom, the Eye of Ra-Horus, the disc of the Sun, the Source of Life. If we add the Hidden Sun’s Divine Source letter to the front of this root, we get 𐎃𐎃𐎃 which is Unity. The Shma’ prayer reminds us of this: “Harken, Oh Israel, the Lord is our AL, the Lord is One.” However, 𐎃𐎃 has another meaning that we must consider. It is a riddle, an enigma, a mystery. The gift is a mysterious drum (TP, col 10).

What in the world is the drum? The word drum is a multi-lingual pun. “Tap” is the sound of tapping on a drum. But “top” is the meaning of $\text{H}\Delta$, the apex of the pyramid. It is also the Egyptian word -- written with the icon of a head R and pronounced “tep” -- that indicates what is on top or most important.

What was the most important gift given in the Genesis story? God gave Adam animals as companions and a mate, Eve, crafted out of his “rib” bone. Adam gave the animals names to call them by, including his mate, Eve. The lowly worm gave an Apple of Knowledge to Eve and then Eve gave another such Apple to Adam. Apple in Hebrew is $\text{X}\text{J}\text{Y}\text{H}$. The first two letters of this word are TP, the word for drum. Apples are drum shaped. Right next door to TP in the middle row of col 9 on the Senet Board at the Hanged Man (unborn child) position we find the ladder of evolution H , the third letter of the root for apple. XJH . The vowel Y for Thoth, the High Priest, completes the full spelling $\text{X}\text{J}\text{Y}\text{H}$. When we apply the Qabbalistic principle of Temurah to our riddle root, we get JXH , which means “to open” in Hebrew. The Bible says that eating the apple “opened” the eyes of Adam and Eve. It opened their awareness, raised their consciousness. When we reverse it, we get the word A (Hetep), or Peace, in Egyptian. This is the setting of the sun, contentment, resting in peace, and the offerings to the departed ones. The Senet Board thus represents a day or a lifetime or a cosmic cycle.

Ptah (PAH) is also the name of the Egyptian god of Memphis, the ancient city by the great pyramid. Ptah is the Opener, and particularly symbolizes the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony during which the priests taught initiates the secret mantras that opened their minds and raised their consciousness to the level of pure awareness and the experience of Eternity. The ending of a day (Hetep) can mark the opening (Ptah) of a new day, a new step of progress and evolution as the cycle reverses on itself to repeat in ever widening gyres. In Hebrew Eternity is the name for the Garden of Eden ODN, and $\text{O}\Delta$ is the Eye of Horus over the Great Pyramid. The Semitic peoples extracted all their letters from the superposition of these two forms, the sphere and the pyramid. This was the technique of Runes that was later adapted in various ways by tribes throughout Europe and Central Asia to construct secret alphabet codes.

The letter P that begins the name of Ptah means “mouth” in Hebrew. We begin with the quickening Source of awareness, and end with the opening of the mouth. Once we have all the letters and their sounds we can use them in speech. The skull is like a drum. Try tapping on it in various ways. “Hello, anybody home?” The tongue is a large worm that can talk. A remarkable aspect of the Genesis story is that the

serpent is so clever that it can talk to Eve. Prior to that in the story only God spoke to man, and man apparently only had the ability to vaguely understand the Lord and to give names to things. The serpent is the second character in the Bible (after the Lord) to speak a coherent utterance. And Eve replies to it coherently. Perhaps Adam and Eve could speak before that, but there is no record of it in Genesis. No other animal in the garden speaks. The gift of language allows us to communicate and pass knowledge on from one person to another, from one generation to another. Language therefore gives us a form of Immortality. However, by eating this fruit of knowledge, we know that our bodies die as individual creatures. The consolation is that our consciousness and knowledge can live on in the minds of later generations.

The major discount on this form of immortality is that this knowledge has no heart. It may be factual, but it is not “honest” (YV). The Lord tried to inspire Jacob and his tribe by renaming them “Israel”, which means YSR-AL, Honest [to] God. This name secretly refers to OSIR, the Egyptian god-man who achieved resurrection and immortality, the ultimate magic of the Magician in the Tarot deck through the replacement of his lost phallus with a bull’s lingam (AL) and some secret teachings from Thoth and Baba on how to use it.

Knowledge as spoken or written words can not feel or experience. The word “apple” does not give you the experience of eating the apple. The honest heart gives the ability to experience Truth -- reality just as it is -- right from the core. You must be like the worm and get into and really eat the apple, even become the apple. Your head 🍎 becomes the apple on top of your body that assimilates all your experiences. Your tongue-worm can then tell others about it, but for another person that is just word-knowledge.

So the message of the Senet Board seems to be that God’s Tree of Life IS the Tree of Goodness. The two trees become one. Evil and dishonesty are simply various creations that we can choose to label as “bad”. All of God’s creations are Good, so all human knowledge and speech is also an expression (vomiting forth) of creative Goodness in the image of God’s creative ability. When we integrate an honest Heart with a clear Intellect, we experience the highest Unity Consciousness. We open our eyes and open our mouth to eat the apple of experience and assimilate it into the Unity of Pure Awareness.

The end letters on the Senet Board when read from top down spell PT, which in Hebrew means bread. When we read the four letters on the corners of the Board

clockwise starting with P, the mouth, we get PAUT. This spells the ancient Egyptian word for bread. This particular type of loaf also symbolized the Assembly of the Gods, which is exactly what we find displayed on the Senet Board. The bread is also the core of the Hetep offerings. It appears that this Senet Board evolved into a complex literary and multi-cultural game board filled with puns and riddles that held the secrets of these ancient cultures. When the Egyptians placed Senet Boards in the tombs of their loved ones they sent them off with a Finnegian's Wake of fun to amuse themselves with in the afterlife.

And this Divine Tree emanates only Goodness. An Honest [Heart] prospers and delivers the Big Apple.

Tour of the Senet Board.

The top row represents the psychological and physical archetypes that form the individual and his world. The middle row represents the elements of the physical world and the sensory organs that perceive them. It also includes the keys to immortality in the form of the Hanged Man (Heru in the Womb) and the Magus (Osir). The bottom row represents the life cycle of the individual, from Conception to Integration.

Top Row:

Transcendent

Amen-Ra (Heru-Akhuti): Undefined Awareness, Pure Being, Source

Instinct

Atem: Will as Urge to Create, Multiply Self, the Big Bang, Id, Sex Drive, Desire.

Shu: Life, Urge to Survive, Breath, Cycles of Energy.

Tefnut: Urge to Grow, become big, hot, bright, Ego.

Identity:

Seb: Solid Matter, Stability, Presence, the Stage for Life's Play.

Nut: Space, Seeds of Possibility, Vision of Possibilities, Purification.

Heru: Will as Decision Maker, Driver, Consciousness.

Intuition (Super Ego)

Het-Heru: Higher Self as Compassionate, Loving, Witness of Self Evolution.

Asset: Guardian Angel of Mission, Secret Highest Purpose of Individual.

Nebt-Het: Initiation, Recovery of Source through Complete Experience.

Armed with these aspects of Self and a Physical World, an individual embarks on the adventure of Life. The story begins with the Lovers, Ani and Thuthu. These are your parents. Lady Thuthu is a transformation of Thoth.

Thuthu: Companionship, Intimacy, Conception

Meskhent: Midwife delivers Baby; Birth, First Breath.

Renenet: Nanny; Infancy, Diapers, First Steps and Words, Forgotten Past.

Ammit: Transformations of Youth and Teenage Years, Rebellion, Confusion.

Benu: Honesty, Maturity, Responsibility, Love; Lasting Values of the Heart.

Shai: Fortune, Fame, Wealth, Creating your Life and Success.

Qeftennu: Foolishness, Senility, Playing with Grandchildren.

Anpu: Death, Stopping of the Breath.

Ma'at: Justice, Contemplating Life, Weighing of the Heart

Tehuti: High Priest commends your Soul to Eternity, to Amen.

At any point in life you may step into Immortality.

Hu: Opening of the Mouth at initiation is Spiritual Conception.

Heru-Kenti-khat: Your Spirit hangs in a cocoon until ready for Spiritual Birth.

Saa: Wisdom comes from integrating the Physical into the Spiritual World.

Qebhsenuf: Spirit Breath is as subtle and flexible as air.

Hepi: Spirit Blood flows in all directions bearing Happiness.

Duamutef: Spirit Body adores its mother that gave it a body.

Amset: Spirit Energy is the Fire of Ecstatic Bliss.

Osir: The Magic of Spirit Vision Discovers Resurrection and Immortality.

Setchem: Spirit Hearing penetrates the subtlest sound to discover Being.

Tarot Cards

Top Row, Right to Left

Sun, Tower, Emperor, Strength, World, Star, Chariot, Empress, High Priestess, Temperance.

Middle Row, Left to Right

Queen of Cups, Hanged Man, Queen of Discs, King of Swords, King of Cups, King of Discs, King of Wands, Queen of Wands, Magician, Queen of Swords.

Bottom Row, Right to Left

High Priest, Justice, Death, Fool, Wheel of Fortune, Hermit, Devil, Moon, Judgment, Lovers.