

These formulas, being so numerous and mysterious that no human memory was capable of retaining them, were written upon the walls of the tombs, or upon the coffins, or upon papyri hidden within the sepulchral statues, or under the mummy bandages—it being supposed that the eyes of the soul could, in the hour of need, read the powerful words and thus work the charm and save itself from harm.

Many of the chapters are so full of mythological and magical allusions as to make it very difficult for a Westerner to understand them.

The following chapters given in full are a fair sample of such:

*Chapter xxxiii.—Whereby All Serpents are Kept Back.*

“Oh, serpent Rere, advance not! Here are the gods Seba and Shu!

“Stop! or thou shalt eat the rat which Ra execrated, and gnaw the bones of a putrid she-cat!”

*Chapter xxxiv.—Whereby a Person is not Devoured by the Dweller in the Shrine.*

“O Uræus! I am the flame which shineth, and which openeth out eternity, the column of Tenpua. Away from me! I am the Lynx goddess.”

*Chapter lviii.—Of Breathing Air and Command of Water.*

“Let the door be opened to me. Who art thou? What is thy name? I am one of you. Who is with thee? It is Merta. Turn away then, front to front, on entering the Meskat. He grants that I may sail to the abode of those who have found their faces. Collector of Souls is the name of my bark; Bristler of Hair is the name of my oars; Point is the name of its hatch; Right and Straight is the name of its rudder. The picture of it is the representation of my glorious journey upon the canal. Give me jars of milk and cakes and meat at the house of Anubis.”

*If this chapter is known, he entereth after having gone out.*

Such utterances as the above seem very much like nonsense; but it cannot be doubted that at least the oldest chapters contain in the midst of many obscurities a great many profundities. There can be no doubt that most of the chapters in this “Book of the Outgoing by Day” referred to the soul’s journey “through the night of the grave to the light of a new life.”

Again and again in various forms the deceased repeats:

“Award to me the life of yearly speech, through countless years of life in addition to my years of life; countless months in addition to the months of my life; countless days in addition to the days of my life; and countless nights in addition to the nights of my life, that I may come forth and beam upon my own images with breath for my nostrils, and eyes which see, amid those who are at the horizon, on that day when brute force is brought to a reckoning” (lxxi).