Abstract

In ten chapters the author works out the ancient Egyptian’s understanding of himself as a moral human being. As soon as the literate person had begun to sum up his life and his personality in the form of an “autobiography” inscribed in his tomb, he included in it statements on his moral personhood. In the course of the centuries these statements grew into rounded self-portraits in which he reported on his doing what he recognized as right actions and his shunning what he judged to be evildoing. He understood his knowledge of right and wrong as an innate capability which was articulated by himself as a thinking person, an “I”. Altogether, he thought of himself as a person shaped by innate traits which were fostered by growth, education, and experience. The process of moral growth he viewed as a learning process in which parents and teachers exemplified moral precepts which he, the thinking person, worked out in his daily life. The Egyptian viewed his gods as ultimate judges of people’s moral actions; but he did not ascribe a teaching function to the gods. An intense lover of life, he felt sure that rightdoing brought success and happiness, whereas evildoing was bound to bring failure. His moral thought added up to a social ethic which encompassed all members of society. Family, friends, neighbors, village and town, the nation as a whole and foreign peoples too – one and the same rules of rightdoing applied to all. Fair-dealing and benevolence were viewed as the leading virtues; greed was deemed the most pernicious vice. In sum, the ancient Egyptian recognized the brotherhood of mankind.

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These value-creating practices are means by which AFAM moves beyond its sacredness to the secular context of Africa. Unlike other scholarly communities, AFAM does not have the luxury of not ‘unliving’ the African challenge; it has a sacred duty to help provide a different and new living to Africans than the one they are currently experiencing. This article retrieves and articulates key elements in Marcus Garvey's philosophy that point toward a moral anthropology. The author discusses these in the context of ancient and modern concerns for issues of human dignity and human rights and the right and responsibility of the struggle for freedom as a particular African and universal human project. This article is also part of the author's Ancient Egyptian ethical thought and action revolved around the notion of maat. Although there are no traces of a standard moral code surviving from ancient Egypt, moral principles are often reflected in the literature—especially works of wisdom literature, funerary books and songs, tomb biographies, and literary narratives. In these sources moral principles are mostly...
expressed in practical admonitions and general observations on everyday conduct, and are voiced by authoritative sages. The concerns of the moral values comprising the system of Egyptian ethics resemble themes of a code of conduct, the Egyptian term for which was mTn n anxt ("a way of life"). The main difference between.