



**Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics
by Maulana Karenga**

Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics is an unprecedented work which engages the ancient Egyptian ethical and spiritual principle, Maat, from an African-centered perspective. It poses Maatian thought as a rich resource for reflection on modern moral and social issues. Professor Karenga draws on a wide range of literary, historical and archeological sources to recover and reconstruct this ancient ethical tradition in a dual process of interpretation and transmission.

"Professor Karenga's massive scholarly tome is the definitive work on classical African ethics and an essential authoritative source for the scholar and general reader interested in ancient Kemet ethics, religion and culture. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any serious consideration of the cultural ideals, values and thought of ancient Kemet without reference to this seminal work."

Molefi Kete Asante, Professor of African American Studies, Temple University

"With Professor Karenga's book... the reception of Egypt is entering a new phase. (It) is the first attempt to revitalize a completely forgotten tradition of highest antiquity. This could only be achieved by someone embodying the skills and characteristics of a full-fledged Egyptologist and the competence and commitment of an equally full-fledged African American philosopher. Karenga is both. His book is an example of the finest Egyptological scholarship and it will certainly prove to be of highest interest for the ongoing debates in philosophy and Black Studies."

Jan Assman, Professor of Egyptology, University of Heidelberg

"The governing interest of this work is to present a critical exposition of Maat, the moral ideal in ancient Egypt, with the parallel purpose of providing as view of ways in which this ancient moral tradition informed the dawn of human moral reflection and offers concepts and modes of thought useful for modern moral discourse and philosophic reflection." -- page 407

"Maat in its most expansive sense as rightness in and of the world is the philosophical locus in which all the critical questions in ancient Maatian and modern Maatian thought converge and ground themselves. Maat insists on a holistic view of the moral ideal, one that gives rightful and adequate attention to self, society and the world as component parts of an interrelated order of rightness. The ongoing quest, then, is to maintain, renew, repair, and enhance this order as self-conscious creators and bringers of the good in the word in a process and practice called serudj ta - restoring, repairing and renewing the world. Such a world-encompassing concept of moral practice invites us to move beyond narrow notions of self, national and even species interest and understand and assert ourselves as members of an interrelated



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order of existence in the world. At this juncture, Maatian discourse offers a contribution to modern moral deliberation about human fragmentation and the ongoing quest to return to an integrity and wholeness of human life that ends division of the social and natural world, mind and body, the past, present and future." -- page 408

About the Author

Dr. Maulana Karenga is professor of the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach. An activist intellectual of national and international recognition, he is the executive director of the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies, and Chair of the Organization Us and the National Association of Kawaida Organizations. An accomplished social theorist and ethical philosopher in African culture, he writes and teaches courses on Continental African and African American philosophy with focus on ancient Egyptian and ancient Yoruba ethical philosophy. Also, he is the creator of the Pan-African holiday Kwanzaa and the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles) and the author of numerous books including: *Selections From the Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*, *The Book of Coming Forth By Day: The Ethics of the Declarations of Innocence*, *Odu Ifa: The Ethical Teachings*, *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, and *Introduction to Black Studies*.