

THE CYCLE OF LIFE

Produced for The Discovery Networks

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VISUALS

MUSICIANS at night in front of
campfire (Bin 27, 13:14:50),
DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE OF CONTRAST in
modern Egypt

REVEAL ancient monuments

KEY TITLE: *Cycle of Life*

DISSOLVE TO: CARS & TRAFFIC

AUDIO

**MUSIC FULL, THEN MUSIC &
NATURAL SOUND-ON-TAPE (SOT)
MIXED -**

NARRATOR V/O: It is a land of stunning
contrasts. Oceans of burning sand surround
lush river valleys. Modern urban centers
tower over primitive farming villages. And
the present is at a crossroads with the past.

While the history of other lands is measured
in centuries the history of Egypt is
measured in millenniums.

MUSIC FULL - :04 - :06 then b.g.

V/O: To the ancient people who once lived
here, the many contrasts in their world -- the
sun and moon, heavens and earth, life and
even death -- were not separate elements, but
all pieces of a divine whole. For them,
everything was part of the “cycle of life.”

MUSIC FULL - :05

NAT SOT FULL - CARS HONK, then b.g.

MODERN streets of Cairo

V/O: As exhaust-spewing traffic clogs the modern streets of Cairo.... only a few miles away *Bedouins* slowly weave their way across shifting mountains of sand. From the barren Arabian desert, to its teeming bazaars, Egypt is a collage of opposing sights and sounds.

BEDOUIN riding his camel

But a deep spirituality, and a firm belief in the Muslim God *Allah*, unites the majority of its people.

CROWDED BAZAAR

MINARETS throughout Cairo

NAT SOT FULL - CALL TO PRAYER - :04-:06, then b.g.

V/O: Five times each day, Egyptians must reaffirm their Islamic faith through prayer. The call to prayer rings out from the tops of thousands of minarets that dominate the urban landscape.

Centuries before the advent of Islam, a different religious structure dominated the landscape. Today, the pyramids continue to cast a spell over the entire nation of Egypt.

REVEAL PYRAMIDS

TRANSITION TO:

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

GRAPHIC: WORLD MAP

MAP OF NORTHEAST AFRICA

V/O: Occupying the northeast corner of the continent of Africa, Egypt is an arid desert, crossed from south to north by the river Nile. While Islam may be the soul of the country, the Nile is most certainly its heart.

MAP OF EGYPT featuring Nile running through the center

TRANSITION TO:
LARGE SHIP

NAT SOT FULL - SHIP'S HORN

THE NILE

V/0: In a nearly rainless land, this river is the only source of water. Every year, for thousands of years, the Nile rose and fell, flooding its banks and creating fertile fields out of barren sand.

FARMERS in the fields

NAT SOT FULL - FARMERS :03, then b.g.

V/0: Since ancient times, Egyptians have worshipped the Nile. Without it, there would be no life. As Greek historian Herodotus remarked in the fifth century B.C.: Egypt is truly "the gift of the Nile."

FARM ANIMALS

NAT SOT FULL - then b.g.

HERDING ANIMALS

V/0: It was in the dimness of prehistory -- more than 10,000 years ago -- that man first began to settle along this verdant stretch. Sustained by the life-giving river, tribes developed tools and machinery whose design is still utilized today.

GRINDING wheat into flour

NAT SOT FULL - GRINDING WHEAT

FARMER working in field with ancient hoe

V/0: Farmers continue to work the Nile's rich soil by hand, toiling under the relentless Egyptian sun.

SUN

TILT DOWN from sky to reveal
STEP PYRAMID at Saqqara - Bin 8,
03:51:28

Only a few miles from the flowing waters, the fertile land becomes desert once again. Out of this unyielding expanse rises a magnificent pyramid. Archeologists believe it is the first stone building ever constructed.
MUSIC FULL - :03-:05 then b.g.

STEP PYRAMID

V/0: This man-made mountain has stood for nearly fifty centuries. It's so old, the ancient Greeks and Romans considered it to be ancient two thousand years ago. A testament to the misty origins of a civilization about to burst into splendor in the primitive world.

Called a "step pyramid", it was built as a tomb for King *Zoser*, who united and ruled the tribes living in the Nile River valley.

Subsequent Kings built their own lavish pyramids, and the area was soon rich with temples and tombs.

OTHER Saqqara pyramids and structures

SOT MUSIC FULL - :05-:07, then b.g.

MODERN MUSICIANS, Bin 21,
10:08:50

V/0: Nearby, elaborate religious and burial ceremonies were held. Through music, dance, chanting and processions, the ancient Egyptians pledged devotion to their Gods.

SUPERIMPOSE MUSICIANS over
shots of CEREMONIAL GROUNDS

SOT MUSIC FULL - :03-:05

SUNSET behind Zoser's pyramid,
Bin 8, 03:54:30

V/0: Over the course of thousands of years, myths and legends swirled around these structures like fierce desert winds. It wasn't until the early 1800s that scholars began to unlock the secrets buried deep inside. As they started their excavations, they discovered mysterious markings chiseled into walls of the tombs.

DISSOLVE TO:
BLOWING SAND

MUSIC FULL - :03-:05, then b.g.

DISSOLVE TO:
POV SHOT of pyramid tunnels

DISSOLVE TO:
RELIEFS & CARTOUCHES on
interior walls

RELIEFS of Pharaohs

V/O: A bewildering collection of symbols and emblems, these imprints -- called *hieroglyphics* -- are believed to have been dedicated to a man whom the ancient Egyptians worshipped as a God on earth.

MUSIC FULL - :03

COMMERCIAL BREAK #1

PYRAMIDS

V/O: For nearly fifty centuries the pyramids of Egypt have held a silent vigil, enduring earthquakes, wars, neglect and decay. Deep inside, archaeologists discovered answers to many of the mysteries behind who built them. And why.

RELIEFS, CARTOUCHES &
HIEROGLYPHICS

On the walls of the tombs are elaborate symbols and etchings called "Pyramid Texts." It is believed these are magic formulas designed to ensure a smooth transition from this life to the next for the man buried beneath millions of tons of stone. The man whom the Egyptians thought to be divinity incarnate -- the *Pharaoh*.

TILT DOWN from STONE
INSCRIPTIONS to Pharaoh's
SARCOPHAGUS, Bin 10, 04:46:40

Kent Weeks is a Professor of Egyptology at the American University at Cairo.

B-ROLL of Dr. Weeks walking past
pyramid

SOUNDBITE: You could picture ... Egyptian society ... in relation to their Gods rather like an hourglass. The top of the hourglass represents the pantheon of Gods,

WEEKS ON CAMERA

the lower part of the hourglass human beings -- you and me -- and right at the point where these two pyramid shape structures meet is the Pharaoh.

B-ROLL OF STATUES &
CARTOUCHES of Pharaohs, burial
tombs and pyramid texts

SOUNDBITE (CONT.): Gods
communicated to man through the Pharaoh,
man made their requests known to the Gods
through the Pharaoh, and the death of the
Pharaoh ... was a very serious matter. It
meant that temporarily ... there could be no
communication at all between Heaven and
earth.

NILE RIVER

NAT SOT - WATER, then b.g.

TILT DOWN from SUN to
FARMERS working in the fields
(OR farmers silhouetted by the
setting sun)

V/O: The ancient Egyptians believed their
very survival ultimately depended on the
Pharaoh. Without his divine guidance, the
two most important elements in their lives --
the endlessly flowing waters of the Nile, and
the radiant sun pouring down from the
heavens above -- would no longer exist.

TEMPLES & PYRAMIDS

So they built the tombs that would preserve
and protect the bodies of their deceased
rulers. In return, the Pharaohs ensured that
peace and prosperity would reign over the
land. Egyptian culture flourished. And from
the desert sands arose the perfection of the
Great Pyramids of *Giza*.

REVEAL PYRAMIDS of Giza

MUSIC FULL - :03-:05 then b.g.

V/O: Only one century after the first
pharaoh mounted his throne, Egyptian
architects had completely mastered the
complex art of construction in stone.
Without the use of wheel, block or tackle
working with only the simplest of tools
builders were able to quarry and transport
millions of stone blocks. Each one weighing
over two-and-a-half tons!

MUSIC FULL - :03-:05 then b.g.

V/O: Cased in white limestone, polished to a glass-smooth finish, these mammoth structures once glistened in the pure desert air like gigantic prisms. It's no wonder Greek historians hailed Giza's pyramids as the most marvelous of the ancient world's Seven Wonders.

MUSIC FULL - :03-:05 then b.g.

V/O: Archeologists still marvel at how these miracles of harmony and proportion could have been produced over four thousand years ago. But in the shadow of these wonders lies an even greater puzzle. It's the most spectacular sculpture on earth. The Sphinx.

REVEAL SPHINX

MUSIC FULL - :05-:07 then b.g.

V/O: Controversies, legends and superstitions surround this work of art.

When was it built? Who built it? And from where does it draw its mystical powers? The only thing scholars agree on is that a single ridge of rock was transformed into the body of a lion, topped with a human head.

NAT SOT FULL - WIND, then b.g.

V/O: Some Egyptologists believe the Sphinx was a depiction of *Ra* -- god of the sun. Others have proposed it is a likeness of *Chephren*, the Pharaoh who oversaw its creation. If so, he has been staring out over these desert sands for nearly fifty centuries.

MUSIC FULL - then b.g.

MONTAGE OF CARTOUCHES

V/O: The spiritual significance of the Sphinx is a mystery that may never be solved. For the religious beliefs of ancient Egyptians were extremely complex riddled with inconsistencies and confusions.

MUSIC FULL - then b.g.

CARTOUCHES of daily activities
(farming, eating, raising animals, etc.)

V/O: Egyptologists have determined there were a variety of competing religious cults in ancient Egypt. Each dedicated to their own cosmic deities, and controlled by different groups of priests. What they all shared was a firm belief that the entire universe was infused with a single divine spirit. And every action, no matter how mundane, was considered to be an earthly symbol for divine activities.

MUSIC FULL - then b.g.

SHOTS FROM MILWAUKEE
MUSEUM OF ANIMAL STATUES

V/O: Scholars also agree birds and animals were believed to embody the spirits of certain Gods. Statues of these sacred animals were often buried in the tombs next to the Pharaohs.

AWE-INSPIRING SUNSET

NAT SOT FULL - :03-:05, then b.g.

V/O: And the brilliant sun that pours down on Egypt was worshipped by many as supreme God *Ra* the giver of life. Every night *Ra* died in the west, and each morning he would be reborn in the east. The cycle of life itself, forever being renewed.

It was a pattern the Pharaohs sought to emulate as they spent their lives striving to fulfill their ultimate goal: immortality.

MUSIC FULL - then b.g.

COMMERCIAL BREAK #2

FARMERS along the Nile

MUSIC or SOT FULL - then b.g.

V/O: Egypt's Nile river valley is the cradle of one of the earliest civili-zations. A brilliant culture that sustained its achievements for an unprecedented twenty-seven centuries.

Advances made by these ancient people can still be found throughout the countryside today.

FELUCCAS

NAT SOT - RIVER - :03

V/O: *Feluccas* gently slice through the flowing waters, an age-old means of transportation.

MAN-MADE DAM, & WATER WHEEL

NAT SOT - WATER RUSHING THROUGH CANAL - :03

V/O: A complex system of canals and dikes is used to irrigate the precious top soil ... a method that was first developed nearly five thousand years ago.

NAT SOT - WATER WHEEL - :03

PEOPLE riding Donkeys

V/O: In the villages that dot the countryside, daily life seems to have changed little since the Pharaohs ruled this land.

GIRLS learning weaving

SOT FULL - WEAVING -

FIELDS OF PAPYRUS

V/O: The papyrus plant is still being sliced and pressed into sheets, upon which modern artists practice the ancient writing style of *hieroglyphics*.

PAPYRUS being sliced and pressed

MONTAGE OF MODERN
PAPYRUS ARTWORK

SOT FULL - SLICING -.

V/O: A collection of signs and pictures, the ancient Egyptians called hieroglyphics *medu netcher*: "the God's words." Through symbols, they sought to express their mystical ideas about the nature of life.

MUSIC FULL - :04-:06, then b.g.

PAPYRUS of the Pharaoh

V/O: The Egyptians believed that every person carried the seed of divinity within themselves. But it was Pharaoh who embodied the spiritual destiny of all humankind: eternal life.

DISSOLVE TO:
BURIAL CHAMBER

MUSIC FULL - :04-:06, then b.g.

MUMMY, Bin 19

V/O: Egyptian religion held that there were two souls: the *ba* and the *ka*. Neither could survive into afterlife unless the body was preserved. And so the deceased Pharaoh was carefully wrapped and embalmed ensuring his spirit would not be destined to wander aimlessly without a home.

HIEROGLYPHICS on the walls of
the burial chambers, showing the
perils of the Afterlife

The mystical *ka*, the immortal spirit, was thought to travel through the kingdom of the dead -- a place filled with frightful Gods and dangerous animals. Elaborate texts were carved into the burial chamber walls to guide the *ka* through its perilous journey. If the Pharaoh's *ka* was successful in reaching the afterlife, it would be newly born as the eternal Sun God Ra.

DISSOLVE TO:
SUN

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

PYRAMID

V/O: As the Pharaoh made the passage from this world to the next, the pyramid became a symbolic ladder for his spirit to ascend -- a towering stairway to the heavens.

V/O: Dr. Zahi Hawass is Director General of the Giza Pyramids:

ON CAMERA

SOUNDBITE - The Pharaohs were trying very hard to be a God. For the Pharaoh to be a God, he has to be sure that he did certain things in his life. Because without the help of the people, they would never have built the pyramid. And he has to get the help from the Egyptians to build this tomb, because this is the tomb for eternity.

PYRAMID DETAILS

V/O: It was once thought vast armies of slaves were used to construct these massive structures. Some Egyptologists now believe the Pharaohs entered into a covenant with their people. By helping to build the pyramid, commoners might be rewarded with eternal life ... while the Pharaoh would take his rightful place among the Gods.

MONTAGE OF TEMPLES at Philae,
Al-Balyana, Dendara

MUSIC FULL - :08 - :10, then b.g.

V/O: This view of the world allowed Pharaohs to control every aspect of Egyptian culture. But after eleven hundred years, their royal power began to decline. How much longer could these mortal Kings embody the spiritual destiny of an entire people?

MUSIC FULL - :05

COMMERCIAL BREAK #3

PHARAOH STATUES at Philae, Al-Balyana, Dendara

V/O: The Pharaohs who ruled ancient Egypt were devoted to the pursuit of immortality. They directed that magnificent temples and statues be built in their honor, believing their spirits would attain eternal life only as long as their names were spoken aloud.

MUSIC FULL - :03.

V/O: Egyptian civilization had already thrived under the Pharaohs for more than fifteen centuries -- three times the age of the Greek or Roman empires in their prime. But warring tribes soon appeared to the East and South, threatening the security of the entire realm.

CARTOUCHE of archer and soldiers, Bin 18, 08:47:38

MUSIC FULL - DRUMBEAT / CALL-TO-ARMS - :04-:06, then b.g.

STATUES OR RELIEFS of Pharaohs of the New Kingdom

V/O: The Egyptians rallied against the invaders. The enemy was vanquished. And then arose a new dynasty of Pharaohs -- warrior Kings -- to answer the call of destiny.

MUSIC FULL - :03 - :05, then under

MONTAGE OF LUXOR AND COLOSSUS OF MEMNON

V/O: Eleven-hundred years after the first pyramid was built, Egyptian culture entered into what is now called the "New Kingdom" a period in which Egypt established itself as the greatest and richest power on earth.

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

WEIGHING OF THE HEART - Bin
12

V/O: Where once only Pharaohs were entitled to an afterlife, by the New Kingdom all Egyptians believed they could attain life after death. The God *Osiris* would balance the heart of the deceased on a scale with truth. If they received a favorable judgment, their spirit would spend all of eternity pursuing the pleasures they had known in life.

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

BALLOON SHOT takes us overland
to the Valley of the Kings

V/O: The Pharaohs of the New Kingdom looked to a different area of the Nile to construct their final resting places. They abandoned the pyramid form, and chose to build their tombs and temples in the shadow of stone cliffs. Here, in an isolated gorge, they created the famous Valley of the Kings.

NAT SOT FULL - WIND, then b.g.

CLIFFS

MONTAGE OF TEMPLES, TOMBS
& STATUES in the Valley of the
Kings

V/O: Pharaoh after Pharaoh sought to leave their mark on the area. Monuments were erected, torn down, then merged into new monuments ... only to be torn down again. Temples devoted to creation were in a constant state of creation themselves.

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

V/O: With the Valley of the Kings in a perpetual state of building frenzy, staggering progress was made in art, architecture and the sciences. These advances were achieved with one purpose in mind: to bring mortal men closer to the Gods.

B-ROLL

CG: Dr. Kent Weeks, Professor of
Egyptology

SOUNDBITE (Weeks) - There is no such thing as science versus religion in ancient Egypt. We 20th Century Westerners tend to divide the world, thought, into scientific approaches: empirical, rational approaches and the other side: magical, religious, philosophical approaches. The ancient Egyptians did not distinguish between them. Everything was all part of a single whole.

TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB

V/O: Scholars believe all the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom were buried in this valley. Their tombs were filled with a vast array of earthly possessions, intended to serve their needs in the afterworld.

Archeologists have determined that within a few hundred years, this isolated gorge contained more sheer wealth -- in golden treasures and works of art -- than any other place on earth.

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

TEMPLE DECAY

V/O: The New Kingdom thrived for four hundred years. But foreign conquerors began to wage war on the empire: Libyans from the west, Ethiopians from the south, and Assyrians from the east. After a succession of weak kings, the power of the differing cult priests had grown to unprecedented levels. The Pharaohs' spiritual and political control over Egypt was crumbling.

CRUMBLED STATUE

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

RUIN & DECAY

V/O: By the time Alexander the Great invaded Egypt in the 4th century BC, the people had already abandoned their temples and pyramids. Robbers plundered the rich treasures buried deep within the tombs, while outside, time and nature took their toll.
NAT SOT FULL - DESERT WIND, then b.g.

EVOCATIVE DESERT SHOTS

V/O: With the Pharaoh no longer their spiritual guide, Egyptians turned to new religions. Islam swept across the land and the spirit of the people was reborn.

MODERN WEDDING CEREMONY

NAT SOT FULL - WEDDING CEREMONY, then b.g.

V/O: Today, elaborate ceremonies remain an important part of Egyptian life.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUSIC FULL - :03, then b.g.

MONTAGE OF TEMPLES AND PYRAMIDS

V/O: And the spirits of the Pharaohs live on in the tombs and monuments that were their testaments to faith. The names of these distant Kings are still spoken aloud ... they have indeed attained at least a measure of immortality.

GLORIOUS SUNSET over the pyramids

MUSIC FULL - :05, then b.g.

MAN PRAYING in the desert sands,
Bin 5, 02:12:03

V/O: Thousands of years ago, Egyptians believed that everything was a part of the cycle of life. On the shifting desert sands, where they once built glorious temples of stone, the descendants of those ancient people are again reaffirming their everlasting faith in God. The cycle of life it is forever being renewed.

MUSIC FULL - :05 - :07

FADE OUT

FADE OUT

CREDITS

MUSIC FULL - :45

THE END