

The Ancient Egyptian Gods

Except for a brief period of time when Akhenaten tried to instill a monotheistic dedication to one god, Egypt was ruled by numerous gods and goddesses. The ancient Egyptian religion was polytheistic, there are about 2000 known gods and goddesses.

The gods played important roles in the daily lives of the ancient Egyptians. There were two levels of gods: local gods and national gods. People looked to the gods for help with everything from bearing children to a safe journey in the afterlife. There were daily rituals for caring for the gods and festivals celebrating specific gods.

Some of the Most Important Egyptian Gods and Goddesses:



Amun was a creator god who became a national god after the pharaohs moved their capital to the city of Thebes. He was later combined with Ra, who was a sun-god, a creator god and the king of the gods. The people saw Amun-Ra as the creative power behind the existence of all life. He was primarily considered to be the god of the pharaohs and represented wind, fertility and secrets.



Ra is the ancient Egyptian sun god. He is the father of the gods and is usually depicted with the body of a human and the head of a falcon.



Hathor was a cow goddess and a cosmic goddess. She nourished all life with her milk and her name meant “House of Horus”. Some legends name Hathor as the consort of Horus and she formed a Triad with him and their son Ihi.



Horus was a sun god and the king of the gods. “The living Horus” was one of the pharaoh’s titles and emphasized his right to rule Egypt like Horus ruled the gods. His emblem was the falcon and he was one of the five Osirian gods along with Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys. One of the most well known symbols associated with Egypt is the Eye of Horus, which symbolized power.



Isis was a fertility goddess and a mother goddess. *The goddess with 10,000 names* was one of her titles emphasizing her many roles and names. She was the sister-wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus. One of the most famous legends involves Isis putting the body of her husband back together after he was killed by Set, impregnating herself with his body and giving birth to their son Horus.



Ma'at was the representation of moral and physical law. Some scholars consider her the most important goddess of Ancient Egypt. Ma'at's worship spread throughout Egypt because she helped judge the dead.



Osiris was the god of the dead and resurrection. He was the ruler of the Tuat and people would appeal to him to care for their departed ancestors. Osiris was the king of the gods until his brother killed him.



Seth (aka Set, Setesh, Sutekh or Setekh) was the god of evil and darkness. He was the adversary of Horus and everything that was good. Except for the red crown, people regarded the color red as an evil color because of its connection to Set. He was associated with war and strength, storms and deserts.



Anubis is the god of death and dying. He is also considered to be the god of the underworld. His image is often seen as the guardian of tombs and the bodies held within.



Sobek the crocodile god is usually seen as either a complete crocodile or as a combination between human form and crocodile, symbolizing the strength of the Egyptian pharaohs.