



What is Kemetic Orthodoxy?

Kemetic Orthodoxy is a modern practice of the religious tradition of Ancient Egypt, known to its own people as Kemet. This particular practice was founded by Rev. Tamara L. Siuda in the late 1980s CE, and is called Kemetic Orthodoxy, or the Kemetic Orthodox Religion, after the term *Kemetic* for "of Kemet," and *Orthodox*, meaning "a sect conforming to established doctrine."

Through a foundation of ancient thought and spiritual structure, Kemetic Orthodox devotees are able to follow a path their forebears first walked more than 4,000 years ago. Kemetic Orthodoxy is an African Traditional Religion, and bears similarity to other African Traditional and African Diasporic religions (such as the West African religions of the Yoruba, Akan, Congo, and Dahomeyan peoples; and Afro-Caribbean practices of Vodou, Candomble, and Lukumi) as well as spiritual practices from northeastern Africa and the ancient Near East. Practicing Kemetic Orthodoxy requires a commitment to understanding a cultural heritage established in the past, which Kemetic Orthodoxy continues to respect and represent, even in places and times well removed from its original practice.

The Kemetic Orthodox Religion is a *polytheism*, meaning that it recognizes many gods and goddesses. In addition, it is a special type of polytheism, called a *monolatry*. Monolatry is a different concept than monotheism, where it is believed God manifests in one form and one form only. Monolatry is a "soft" polytheism, having a multi-god structure where gods can and do manifest as distinct individuals, and yet providing the possibility that these gods can be understood in relationship to each other via *syncretism* (several gods joining to form a new composite deity), and aspecting (gods appearing as other gods). In Kemetic Orthodoxy, full converts give special importance to their parent god/goddess (or pair of two deities) as revealed through our Rite of Parent Divination. However, we never believe that those are the only deities that exist, nor does that prevent us from honoring any other deities at any time or in any number.

A monolatrous religion simultaneously understands that there is one divine force (Netjer in the Kemetic language, meaning "divine power") that is also comprised of separate, interlinked deities, like a team can be defined both as one entity (the sum of its parts) and through individual team members. The "gods and goddesses" of Ancient Egypt, while clearly differentiated from each other in some respects and not as clearly in others, also each represent an aspect of this abstract concept "Netjer," as Its Names (after the practice of recognizing Netjer "in Its Name of..." in ritual invocations). The Names of Netjer are the Many, the individual deities of the pantheon, and they are also representative aspects of the concept of godhood itself, called in abstract Netjer ("divine power" itself), the Self-Created One.

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