

## What is Kemetic Orthodoxy?

### Introduction

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 Her Holiness Hekatawy I (Tamara L. Siuda) in the late 1980s CE, and is called Kemetic Orthodoxy after the term Kemetic for "of Kemet," Kemet being the ancient name of Egypt; and Orthodox meaning "a sect conforming to established doctrine especially in religion."

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

The Kemetic Orthodox faith, both in its modern and ancient practice, is a *monolatrous* religion. **Monolatry is a different concept than monotheism, where it is believed God manifests in one form and one form only, nor is it an undifferentiated polytheism, where many gods appear in many separate and distinct forms. Monolatry is a special form of polytheism, having a multi-god structure still providing the possibility of understanding all divine beings as part of one divine source.** A monolatrous religion professes one divine force (*Netjer* in the Kemetic language, meaning "divine power") that is in turn comprised of other separate, yet interlinked aspects, like a team can be defined both as one entity (the sum of its parts) and by individual members themselves. 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 Netjer, as Its *Names* (after the practice of recognizing Netjer "in Its Name of..." in ritual invocations). The Names of Netjer are in addition to being individual entities, also representative aspects of the Self-Created One, and are parts of that whole Being. Each Name of Netjer, like the parts of the human body, has differing structure and function, yet each part is required to constitute the entire Person.

