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# The Power of Amun-Ra

Yusuf Baqai

Chapman University, [baqai@chapman.edu](mailto:baqai@chapman.edu)

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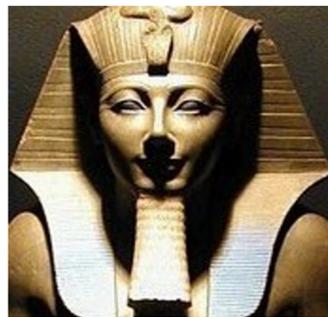
# The Power of Amun-Ra

Yusuf Baqai

FFC Sailing of the Wine Dark Sea: The Power of Myth  
Chapman University

## Greek Influence

- Amun-Ra was considered by the Egyptians to be the father and king of all the gods
- Similarly, Zeus from the Greek Gods was also considered by the Greeks to be the same
- Zeus also had ram horns, which the animal was typically symbolized Amun-Ra first
- Zeus ruled Mount Olympus and many times has been called upon when making important decisions
- In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs were considered to be the son of Amun-Ra because he was the most powerful being, and the pharaohs wanted to be like him
- In Greek mythology on the other hand, there were also children of the all powerful Zeus who were known as demigods
- Sons of Zeus include Gods such as Harmonia, Dionysus, Heracles, and more
- Zeus in Greek mythology was considered to represent the sky while Ra, a part of the god known as Amun-Ra, was represented by the sun
- These two representations are similar due to the fact that the ray of light projected from the sun are similar to the idea of the lightning bolts that Zeus has
- The Romans later adopted Zeus from the Greeks and was known as Jupiter to them



## Significance of Myths to Egyptians

- Everything Ra saw was perfect causing tears in his eyes
- The tears fell to earth and grew into human beings
- Ra became angry with the humans because of their actions
- He summoned his divine eye, the goddess Hathor, and transformed her into Sekhmet, a savage lioness
- Ra sent the lioness to earth to kill humans, but after she had killed a lot of people, he decided to save the humans that remained
- He played a trick on Sekhmet, getting her so drunk on beer that she forgot to continue killing
- This story is significant in that it explains the concept of death to the Egyptians
- In the beginning, before there was any land of Egypt, all was darkness, and there was nothing but a great waste of water called Nun
- Since according to the Egyptians Ra created himself, it would make sense that he arose from the darkness to form himself and everything in the universe
- Amun similarly was created this way and was the protector of the king
- He was mysterious to the Egyptians and was known as the “Obscure One” and was whatever the Egyptians wanted him to be

## Overview

- Amun is the ancient Egyptian god of the sun and air and rose to prominence in ancient Egypt during the beginning of the New Kingdom in Thebes
- Ra was known to the Egyptians as the sun god and was later combined with Amun, a patron of pharaohs, to create Amun-Ra
- Amun-Ra was worshipped by the Egyptians by 16th to the 11<sup>th</sup> century
- He is typically depicted with various animal heads such as a ram head
- Rams in Egypt typically represent fertility and death representing both creating and end of humans
- He was known to the Egyptians as the “Self Created One” and the “King of Gods”
- He created everything in the universe including himself
- Ra had many stories including being swallowed every night by the goddess Nut, and reborn every morning
- He also travelled on two different sun boats, one for the evening and the other for the morning and would be defended against monsters in the underworld his protectors
- Ra’s appearance was of a man with a hawk head and headdress with a sun disk
- Amun’s appearance on the other hand was of a man with a ram head

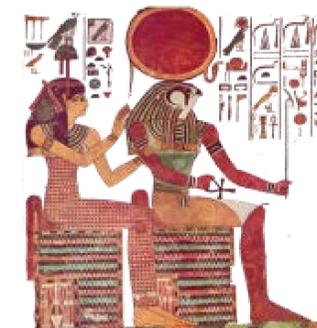


## Impact on Egyptians

- The Egyptians during the time believed he was responsible for all life on Earth, in heaven, and the underworld
- When the pharaoh Akhenaten tried changing the main god of Egypt to Aten, the cult that believed in Amun-Ra changed it back once he had died
- This expresses the power that Amun-Ra had over the cult that believed him and the extent to what they would do for him
- There would be celebrations that the people of Egypt would celebrate in regarding Amun-Ra and the wife such as the Opet Festival
- In the Opet Festival, Amun travels from the Great Temple at Karnak to the temple at Luxor which would celebrate the marriage between the god and his wife
- Known as a father God who reigned over the Sun and fertility of the region
- The Egyptians believed he was able to boost the growth of crops by shining his light on them and to ensure the flooding did not happen to the Nile
- According to them, if they did not worship him, he could do the opposite and take the light away
- Amun-Ra also had a wife that was usually the queen or the queen’s mother and she was highly respected and treated well among the Egyptians

## Abrahamic Religion Influence

- It was around 3500 to 3000 BC that the Egyptians developed a system of writing and were thus able to develop complex religious beliefs
- By about 1400 BC, the main God the Egyptians had worshipped was Amun-Ra
- There are some theories that the word amen in Christianity could have been influenced by the Egyptians in regard to the god Amun-Ra
- Amen is an Egyptian word that refers to the Egyptian god of Thebes and was most likely adopted by the Hebrews and passed off to Christianity
- During the year of 1350 BC, the pharaoh at the time changed the Egyptians polytheism belief to a monotheistic one
- It has been theorized that Amun-Ra could have been a part of the influence towards a monotheistic belief later in history
- During the New Kingdom, he was gaining so much power that some theorized that Egypt had become a monotheistic state at one point
- It was theorized by some that the Egyptians during this time had Israelite slaves that could have seen the monotheistic state Egypt had become at the time and possibly influenced in doing the same
- Whether or not this may be true, it is important to realize that the Egyptians did at one point had somewhat of an idea of believing in strictly one god



## Amun-Ra and Ma’at

- Clearly, Amun-Ra had a lasting influence on different civilizations and religions
- The fact that he merged with Ra signifies how he became both a visible and invisible deity
- The hidden god and the sun god appeals to the Egyptians concept of duality and balance
- This leads to the association between Amun-Ra and Ma’at
- Ma’at refers to the Egyptian goddess of truth and balance that is clearly shown through Amun and Ra being combined
- She first appears during the period known as the Old Kingdom
- Amun-Ra being the creator of everything that exists, logically was created by him through the power of Heka
- She had the spirit of harmony and balance infused in her creation and caused the world to operate rationally and with purpose