

The Development of Religious Thought Among the Ancient Egyptians

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This research tracks the religious intellectual development of the ancient Egyptians, starting from the stage of totemism and ending with the invitation of Akhenaten, which represents the highest rank of religious intellectual development. The article relies on the historical method which is a process of reviving the past, by eliciting past facts and events from primary sources, and then subjecting them to the rules of scientific research, criticism and analysis to research a historical perception closer to the truth. This work concluded that ancient Egyptian doctrines are cumulative. Each historical stage in Egypt produced new beliefs that lived alongside old beliefs. Totemism existed alongside theological and paganism as well as monotheism. This interwoven fabric indicates that the ancient Egyptians possessed religious thought rich in his perceptions and horizons.

Key words: *Ancient Egyptian, Religions of Ancient Egypt, Totemism, Akhenaten, Invitation of Akhenaten.*

Introduction

In the life of the ancient Egyptian atate, religion played an important role in all spheres of life; as there was no unifying power that controlled the life of the ancient Egyptian as did the power of the religion (Joshua, 2016; Ferguson, 2016). The emergence of religious thought in ancient Egyptian religion has been linked to nature and its various phenomena. Ancient Egyptians interpreted natural and cosmic phenomena as having a supernatural power – one that exceeds logic and human capacity – one that controls nature and mankind. They believed that such power was the faith that deserves to be worshipped. Perhaps that's what prompted them to represent the invisible Gods with symbols of animals, plants and celestial planets. (Atto, 2016; Hussien,2018).

Historians have drawn their information about the ancient Egyptian religion from Pharaonic inscriptions and wall paintings. Some researchers describe such drawings as rigid ones; however, a more thorough review might illustrate them as expressive, vibrant and sequential in general; as if the ancient Egyptians had painted, engraved and preserved them for the future (Abu Baker, 2019). For those who stand in front of such drawings, the images would gradually progress, as if their painter and engraver knew that such an era was not his. In these drawings and inscriptions, there are details that do not unfold easily, as it needs an in-depth look that makes the memory reveal its secrets; hence, it would use such inscription to move to the ancient Egyptians' interpretations of their early life (Brier, 2019).

To start with the right step, we have to realise that what had been engraved, written, painted, and reserved constituted only a small percentage of what has already been found. Life in ancient times is just as it is today. It consists of ordinary incidents and events that we do not write, study or remember, simply because they are ordinary ones, that are either inherited or we do it by instinct. Or, it may be an easy work that does not require explanation or documentation. When we recognise this, we will come to a true judgment on the development and greatness of the ancient Egyptian civilization, and in particular, its religious aspects; as messages received from archaeological remains, Pharaonic inscriptions, and paintings bear the story of the ancient Egyptian curiosity (Abu Baker, 2019).

Ancient Egyptians believed in many invisible gods and superstitious legends, and their monks thought of immortality, life, and death. Hence, this review has been conducted to highlight all of this; it has traced the emergence of the Gods among the Egyptians based on their phases and then were analysed using a collection of ancient and modern sources and references.

This review relied on the historical descriptive approach, which depends on gathering information from primary sources and interpreting them based on the data surrounding the historical event, to arrive at an appropriate interpretation of the event. Accordingly, various information on ancient Egyptian religions was collected from historical sources, whose information was derived from a study of the monuments left by the Pharaohs, such as the wall paintings of the symbols of the gods, and the hymns and chants they engraved on the walls of their pyramids and explained the principles of their religion and their transcendence. These historians have relied on an analysis of the religious intellectual development of ancient Egyptians from a purely historical perspective drawn from the influence of historical events on the change of deities. In addition, the study relied on another type of source, and by that, we mean the religious sources whose authors relied on explaining the development of the Egyptian religion on religious legislation and Pharaonic myths, so they had a vision that differs in some of its data from that of historians.

The research proceeded within two tracks: In the first track, it studied the intellectual development of religion from totemism to monotheism. This led us to the second track, in which the researchers traced the historical development of religion from the cult of living beings, symbols and pharaohs and then discussed the issue of multiplicity of deities, the influence of the religious system on the political system, and the rule of worship (Aten).

Importance of Studying the Egyptian Religion

Religion was beneath and above everything in ancient Egypt (Durant, 1988); we find it in every stage of its ancient history, and it encapsulated all aspects of their civilization. Hence, the Greek historian (Herodotus) considered the ancient Egyptians the most accurate people in religiosity in their daily lives; they were keen to work under the constitution of their customs and forbidden deeds. In the Egyptian religion alone, there was a justification for managing the homeland; particularly since they were convinced that the ownership of the homeland belongs to the Gods and that Pharaohs were authorised to rule on behalf of the Gods (Aymard, 2003).

The attachment of the Egyptians to their religion was demonstrated by the fact that they had made their lives, art, and systems of governance (Rawahneh, 2007). Such broad interwoven relations recognise the greatness of the ancient Egyptian civilization. To highlight the reasons behind its unique character among other civilizations of the ancient world, to trace the phases of its development, and to interpret its architectural and decorative patterns, it was necessary to start with the first step of judging civilizations. This first step is the awareness of the religious thought of the ancient Egyptians, as well as the realisation of their interpretation of the origin of their first life, and their fate after death.

The Totem in Ancient Egyptian Religion

The Totem is a religious system that dates back to the primitive traditions of ancient nations in history. It is based on the reverence of man for animals, plants or birds, and is the result of primitive mankind's deep admiration of natural phenomena that transcend him with their abilities and power; which raised the idea of religion in their thoughts, and then he worshipped what exist in the surrounding nature (Al-ashimi, 1963).

As human awareness of the role of nature increased, the Totem evolved from more than just animals, plants and birds revered by mankind, to the belief that these creatures in surrounding nature are symbols of what the human mind can only grasp by the mediation of a concrete symbol (Al-Anzi, 2011). For example, the lion, which the ancient man's had passed beyond worshiping it, to become a symbol of that mysterious power that is instilled in everything worthy of worship and reverence.

The Egyptian religion, like other primitive religions, began with Totems. Some historians of Egyptian religious thought have denied the occurrence of Totems in Egyptian religiosity, however, the discovery of several tombs that have mummified animals constitute evidence of their reverence for such creatures; and this confirms the presence of Totem The first Egyptian religion (Shalaby, 1983). It seems that Totems remained vital in Egypt until the Roman era; at this stage of their religion, the ancient Egyptians worshipped animals, such as Ibis, crocodiles, falcons, cows, dogs, the jackal and the snake (Dimas 1998). The Totem was worshipped in the Egyptian provinces, and some of these provinces bore the name of the totem they worshipped; for example, the Crocodile Province was named after the crocodile they worshipped, and Gazelle Province was named after the gazelle, and the same would apply for the Ram Province, and the Falcon Province... and many others (Abu Zahra, 1991).

As the Totem phase of the ancient Egyptian religion developed, Egyptians no longer worshipped particular animals or plants. They began to believe that there were Gods with great powers that govern their lives and world, and that these animals are just a symbol representing the attributes of those Gods. From this belief, the Egyptian gods retained the double animal image; as Egyptians used to represent their gods in the form of animals, or beings with a human body and an animal's head. For example, Apis was represented in the form of a bull; Horus was represented in the form of a human body with a falcon's head, Amun with a ram's head, Amenhotep with a cow, and Horus with a falcon (Durant, 1988). Hence, the ancient Egyptian, one with a developed religious thought, retained his animal and plant symbols as Gods in the late Totem periods of the Egyptian religion, because he saw in these animals what embodies some of the attributes of the Gods he worshipped.

With the development of life among Egyptians and the emergence of the kingdoms of Egypt, known as Upper and Lower, Egyptians moved from hunting to agriculture and livestock farming, and their worship and religion changed; they worshipped the sun, the moon and the earth. The philosopher Breasted states that green planting drew their attention to the idea of the origin of life; hence, such change in their lives. From hunting to cultivating and farming the land, impacted their changing religious beliefs and thoughts (Breasted, 1996). As a result, two religions emerged in Egypt: the official religion, and the religion of the people. The Totem became a personal Totem for the king, who was considered as his son, heir and name holder; in other words, the king ruled in the name of God (Dalo, 2014).

The Multiplicity of Gods in the Ancient Egyptian Religion

A huge mass of Gods had emerged in ancient Egypt, which can be divided into: first, a group of Great Gods that evolved with the development of Egypt's political history and varied across cities and regions. Among the Great Gods throughout ancient Egyptian history were: Ra, Amun, Ptah, and Aten (Al Qaisi, 2013).

With regard to the second group, they were Local Gods, who were worshiped in the province, as the Egyptian religion was characterised by religious geography. In the pre-North and South Kingdoms, Egypt was divided into forty-two provinces; each had a special God to worship. However, one God could be considered as an enemy in another province (Abu Zahra, 1991). Over the years, the Egyptian provinces were united in two kingdoms: North and South. Each Kingdom, besides its Local Gods, had an official God with a religious symbol; as the people of the South worshiped a God named (Set), the people of the North worshiped the God named Horus. Such religious division was accompanied by political conflict and war between the two kingdoms. The dominant kingdom often imposed its greatest God as a royal symbol of all Egyptian provinces (Erman, 1995). In addition, the first Pharaohs also approached the victorious kingdom, in as to link their titles in the God's name of that kingdom. Thus, royal titles, since the early dynasties, were a measure of the God's sovereignty (Sulaiman, 1978).

In addition to the presence of Great Gods and Local Gods, other Gods were common in all Egyptian provinces, such as Hapy, who was the Nile God, and Toueris hippopotamus (Dimas, 1998). In addition, there were people Gods, representing some famous legends, such as heroes of the legend of Osiris, his sister and his wife Isis. Through this legend, Osiris became the God of the dead, who weighs the deeds of the dead after their death (Aldred, 1996).

This multiplicity of Gods only means a rich religious conception; when the ancient Egyptian could not come to the idea of a single physical god, which embodied the attributes of the desired God, they tried to distribute such God's attributes and embodied them into multiple Gods. Those Gods carried symbols, which differed and changed according to the evolution of religious thought; when the first symbol falls short of expressing new attributes of the God, another symbol would appear that completes the first, or would form a second symbol with it. Therefore, Gods and symbols had multiplied by the development of civilization and life (Meslin, 2009).

Hence, despite the multiplicity of Gods in ancient Egypt, it can be said that the ancient Egyptians, during the various phases of their religions, had provided indications of their tendency towards monotheism. Among these indications, is the principle of homage to the Great God, which emerged after the political division of the ancient Egyptian Upper and Lower Kingdoms. Another approach was to merge more than one God; the Egyptians merged the names and functions of two or three Gods into one (Dalo, 2014).

The Myth and Interpretation of the Origin of the Universe and Mankind among Ancient Egyptians

Mythological interpretation of life, cosmogony, and existence has a significant role in Egyptian religious thought. Based on the division conducted by archaeologists and Egyptologists, such interpretation can be divided into schools and theories. With respect to the general interpretation, some Egyptian texts state that the cosmogony had taken place from a hill in the eternal waters; as this was the beginning of the earth's emergence (Nardo, 2011). The texts then highlighted the Cosmic Egg, one of the symbols of cosmology among the Egyptians, which includes the sacred ibis and the lotus holding a 10 child (the sun), from which creation began.

One of the texts illustrates that the God Apis is the one that laid such egg, and when the egg exploded, a great bird came out of it. It is believed that it was the sacred ibis, which is the symbol of the God Thoth, the God of Wisdom. Another text illustrates that the one who came out of that egg was the God Ra. With the emergence of God Ra, the eight Gods withdrew to the underworld, leaving the God Ra in the universe to perform the task of creating mankind and the universe phenomena (Eliade, 1987). Some scientists believe that the idea of the emergence and explosion of the egg is a representation of the idea of the Big Bang.

Mythical Schools' Creation Stories in Ancient Egyptian Religions Thought

There were four major Egyptian theories about the origin of the universe; as each was associated with a geographical area in which it originated. These theories include:

- *Heliopolis School*; this theory supported an ancient past that had no land or sky, but a vacuum occupied by a water entity they called Noun, in which a spiritual Creator had emerged in that called Atum who gave birth to Shu and Tefnut, who both gave birth to Geb and Nut, and the latter two gave birth to Isis, Nephthys, Set and Osiris, and this is the Great Ennead (Armour, 2005). Thus, the first God was Atum, who created his first wife, and from his wives, he created Osiris, who is the God of the Nile and fertility, and created Isis, who is the black land, who divides the water of the Nile, and created Nephthys, who is the barren land. These elements serve as the bridge between mankind and nature (Hammad & Aly, 2017).

- *The Hermopolis School*: It was based on a sacred Thamon before the emergence of Ra and Atum. The Hermopolis School agreed with the Heliopolis School that the origin of life is water and made the eight Gods to be four frog-shaped Gods and four snake-shaped Gods. This school made the God of Light (the sun); thus, it complements Heliopolis)theory with its interest in creating the universe before the Gods (Nardo, 2011).

- *The Memphis School*: the school made an Ennead that parallels Heliopolis Ennead; as the God Ptah created eight Gods, and from his spirit and word, he created Atum, so he was the creator before other Gods. Those Gods had entered into living beings' visible bodies (Eliade, 1987). The people of Memphis declared that the Gods known to all mankind were only images of Ptah or Trinitas; hence, he is the origin and the centre (Asfour, 1987).
- *The Thebes School*: They declared Amun as the king of all Gods, and that he is the source of ancient Gods and the creator of himself (Ockel, 2014).

Among the Most Famous Ancient Egyptian Myths is The Myth of Osiris

Isis was the sister and wife of Osiris. After problems arose between Osiris and his uncle Set over Egypt's rule, Set killed his nephew Osiris; he put him in a coffin, and threw it into the sea. Isis began to search for her brother and husband Isis until she found him. Set was there first, so he cut him into pieces and threw his body into the sea. Isis collected the pieces of her husband and brother's body, and each part was buried in different region of Egypt, and where a piece of Osiris's body was buried, a temple was established to worship him. After the era of Osiris, his son Horus took over the lead. This represents a transition in the Egyptian myth between the rule of the God of Egypt and then the rule of the Pharaohs, who received the power from the God Horus (Hatoum, 1964). Therefore, the kings, at the beginning of the dynastic era took the nickname Hori. This myth remained a popular religious conception, which moved to the late era of the Pharaonic State.

Historical Events and their Impact on the Transformation of Gods

One who is tracing Egyptian religious thought would be aware of the extent to which the Egyptian religion is influenced by the idea of the invisible powers that dominate the universe. In addition, there was other mythical thought imposed by the monks in order to maintain a tight grip and influence over religion. While such belief is true, one taking a careful look at the development of the Egyptian religion would realise that there were events in the world known to Egypt that brought about fundamental changes in theological beliefs; hence, these events had a role in moving the ancient Egyptian religion to a new, more profound and sophisticated stage.

Perhaps one of the most prominent historical events, which brought about a change in the Egyptian religious thought, was the unification of the Lower and Upper Kingdoms of Egypt by King Mina I under his rule (3500 BC), and his declaration that the Gods of the Lower and Upper Kingdoms were embodied in his body (Erman, 1995). From approximately such an era, the beliefs of the deification of the Pharaoh, or him having the Spirit of God, began to dominate Egyptian religious thought (Eliade, 1987). With regard to monks, they adopted new

mythological ideas for addressing new contradictions, in order to have consistency between their mythological thought and the new beliefs introduced by King Mena I. The most prominent example for such was the idea of the immortality of the Gods; which became inconsistent with the mortality of the God Pharaoh's body, who dies just as mankind do, and is not immortal as the Gods are. A question would arise, how shall the immortal come in the mortal body, and how shall who dies rise to the status of Gods? (Abu Zahra, 1991).

The monks managed to have a consistency between the two ideas of the immortality of God and the mortality of the Pharaoh, by saying that the Spirit of God had three divisions. The first one is the lower spirit, which would embody in the Pharaoh, then be transformed to his successor, and overflows the latter with its holiness. The second is the upper spirit, governing heaven and earth. The third one is the spirit that remains in the body of the dead Pharaoh, and in order for such spirit to survive; the Pharaoh's body must be kept intact (Abu Zahra, 1991). Hence, the idea of mummification of Pharaoh's body had emerged.

The establishment of the unified state by King Mena I and the emergence of the God Pharaoh led to the creation of a new religious world, and the creation of the Pharaonic civilization that exceeded that of the Neolithic provinces. Ensuring the continuation of that civilization lies in the continuation of the Gods model; so as long as the Pharaoh is immortal, his death only means his ascension to heaven. The continuation of a God embodied in another embodied God is the inevitable result of the continuation of the universal and social order (Eliade, 1987).

Akhenaten's Call

Akhenaten is the pharaoh Amenhotep IV and is called in classical sources Amenophis. His father is Amenhotep III (1417-1379 BC), and his mother is Tiye, who came from a popular region. Sources indicate his marriage to Princess Nefertiti (the Beautiful One Has Come), which the sources described as having a magnificent beauty (Abu Bakr, 2018). He distinguished himself from other Pharaohs of Egypt by announcing a new unifying call, as it calls for the unification of the Gods in one God worshipped in all regions of the earth, and not in Egypt alone. Akhenaten chose the God Aten, who was one of the great Gods of his father's reign, King Mithotep III, to be the only God. He symbolised the God with the sun's disk, from which it emits a set of rays, each ending with a human hand, some of which reach the nostrils of both King Akhenaten and Queen Nefertiti, bringing them the breath of life (Aldred, 2001). In that symbol, there is a clear reference to the power of God Aten, derived from heaven, from which he controls the world and the destiny of the people. Akhenaten was very strict with regard to his new religion, and was determined in imposing it; so, he abandoned the old religious rites, and ordered the persecuting of monks in all the temples of Egypt. He also prohibited the use of the word "Gods" as plural, and wrote them off from all the inscriptions, and declared their unity in one God, Aten. He then changed his name from Amenhotep IV to

Akhenaten, to approach to God (Aton). In addition, Akhenaten left the City of Tiba, belonging to the God Amun, to take up a new royal residence, in which only the new God Aten was worshipped (Abu Zahra, 1991). Perhaps what preserved Akhenaten's call and its spread was the chants engraved by Akhenaten, and in which he explained the principles of his new call (Mahran, 1989). These songs are the main source for anyone interested in studying Atenism.

Features of Akhenaten's Call

1. Universality and his choice of the symbol of the sun disk; because it shines in all countries. Aten is the God of Egypt, Kush lands, Syria and Palestine. That was a new characteristic that had become apparent in the Egyptian religion. It is an advanced way in which mankind realises that God should be for all humans.
2. It rejected the myths and superstitions that dominated previous beliefs; as it relied on the apparent reality of natural phenomena. For example, it denied that the Nile was Osiris; in which it argued that the Nile is a manifestation of nature, and is subject to natural rules controlled by the God Aten (Horning, 2010).
3. The Akhantonian chant included upper aspects of the global thinking and interpretation of the common natural phenomena. For example, the formation of the foetus in the woman's uterus, and the egg break from the chick at a certain stage. Aten's excellence is not only for his call for unification; rather, the intellectual developments that chant had carried with regard to the interpretation and sophistication of considering the causes and whys (Al Saadzi, 2012).

Visits by the Prophets of Tawhid (monotheism) to Egypt and the Impact on the Egyptian Religion

One of the most important observations that comes to mind, when the researcher reviewed the historical and intellectual development of the Egyptian religion, is that such religion must have unknown important events; as such religion cannot be purely pagan. If we believe in such an idea, how did it reach a high status in intellectual sophistication (theological) independent from revelation? Therefore, there is an urgent need to consider the monotheistic calls advocated by the prophets of Allah, and their relationship with Egypt. The first of such influential steps was the visits of the prophets and sending one of them to Egypt. We will start with the father of the prophets, Abraham (peace be upon him).

Prophet Abraham appeared in Or in the 19th century B.C. He made his famous journey from Or, along the Euphrates to Harran, then, westward through the Beqaa to northern Jordan. Then he entered the land of Canaan and resided in Hebron. He then immigrated to Egypt (Genesis 20: Chapter 12). He appears to have entered Egypt during the Middle State, the era of King Senusret II and III (Sousa, 1990). As for Prophet Abraham's news in Egypt, the archaeological

relics did not help us with clear information; so, our only source lies in the Torah, the true Genesis (12, 13). The Torah stated that Prophet Abraham, his brother Lo and Abraham's wife Sara immigrated to Egypt after the great famine in Canaan. Fearing for his wife Sara from Egypt Pharaoh's greed, he claimed that she was his sister. The God reproached the Prophet Abraham for such claim, due to having a weak belief in God's ability to protect his wife. When Egypt Pharaoh took Sara, the God struck Pharaoh with great calamities because of Sara. Then Pharaoh learned the truth about Sara, and that she was Abraham's wife and not his sister; so he returned her to Abraham, and asked him to leave the country unharmed, and even he sent money and some soldiers with him (Genesis 20: Chapter 13).

The second influential figure in the Egyptian religion was Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) (peace be upon him). Prophet Yusuf was one of Jacob's sons, and the one whose brothers threw him into the well. Allah said in the Holy Quran: "Do not kill Joseph but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travelers will pick him up - if you would do [something]" (Quran, 12:10-11). Then someone from Egypt bought him. According to the Qur'anic text, Allah said: "And the one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, "Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we will adopt him as a son." And thus, we established Joseph in the land that we might teach him the interpretation of events. And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know) (Quran, 12:21-22). Prophet Joseph lived in Egypt during the Hyksos rule (Mahran, 1989). The Holy Quran confirms that he worked for the Egyptian government at the time. Therefore, He should have called for the religion of Tawhid (monotheism), and he should have followers. If not, some of his teachings must have leaked to the Egyptian religion.

The third prophet who left an influential mark on Egyptian religious thought is the Prophet Moses. His news was clearly reported in the Holy Quran and Torah. In the Holy Quran, many verses indicate the time, situation and place in which Moses (peace be upon him) received the revelation from Allah and conveyed Allah's Message. This occurred when Moses returned from Medina to Egypt after serving the term; Allah said in the Holy Quran: ((And when Moses had completed the term and was traveling with his family, he perceived from the direction of the mount a fire. He said to his family, "Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire. Perhaps I will bring you from there [some] information or burning wood from the fire that you may warm yourselves. But when he came to it, he was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed spot - from the tree, " Moses, indeed I am Allah, Lord of the worlds) (Quran, 22:29-30)). After Allah entrusted Moses with the message and supported him with miracles and his brother Aaron, he went to Pharaoh, and invited him to believe in Allah and worship him faithfully. Pharaoh, however, denied him and accused him of witchcraft.

There are many diverse and contending opinions regarding the character of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him); as some made him an Egyptian who called for the Religion of Akhenaten.

One of the advocating authors of such opinion is Sigmund Freud, who, despite his Judaism, made Moses Egyptian, and considered him as one of Akhenaten's closest advocates. Sigmund Freud emphasised that after Akhenaten's death, Moses contacted a Sami tribe, and considered it as his nation and taught them the religion of Akhenaten, but with harsher teachings (Sigmund, 1986). Here, it should be noted that Sigmund Freud, has based his vision on the deviated Israelites about the prophecy of Moses in Egypt. Such claim has many irregularities, ambiguities and disagreements from what is said in the Holy Quran, which is considered one of the most important sources of the study of Moses' prophecy and his monotheistic call in Egypt. It seems clear that the purpose of Freud, of Jewish origin, is to recognise the existence of the Semitic Hebrew group, and that they are the related to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), and also to confirm that Prophet Moses belongs to this group.

What concerns us here is to emphasise that the call for monotheism was received by the ancient Egyptians through the prophets of Allah, peace be upon them. Although the Pharaohs adhered to worship what was produced by their imagination of Gods, the call of Allah's prophets must have influenced the transformation of Egyptian religious thought during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten.

Conclusion

After tracing the development phases of the ancient Egyptian religion, this exploration concluded that it could not be described as purely pagan, based on the worship of idols and images. Nor can we contradict this, and say that it is a monotheistic religion from the beginning, based on the worship of one God; but what is the solution? What is the reason for this contradiction?

The reason could be related to the cumulative nature of Egyptian religions; as every historical phase in Egypt has produced new religious beliefs, which have lived alongside the old ones, without affecting them. Totem was present alongside theology, and paganism alongside Tawhid (monotheism). If we are to come up with a characteristic view of these intertwined relations, let it be by tracing the characteristics of each developmental phase of the Egyptian religion.

1. The beginning would be of what characterised Egyptian religious thought in its early phases; that is, both the nature and the state are religious. This was reflected in the study's discussion of the impact of nature on religious thought, and the effect of political events on the change of the Gods.
2. The multiplicity of the Egyptian religion: it is not possible to ignore the multiplicity of Gods in the Egyptian religion. Historians have counted huge numbers of Egyptian Gods with different functions. However, some of these scholars and historians considered such

multiplicity as an apparent matter revealing certain aspects of deity manifestation. In doing so, they highlight the features of monotheism that developed in the first Egyptian religion, but it was mysterious. Therefore, when the ancient Egyptians could not reach the idea of a single physical God, that embodied the attributes of the desired God, they tried to distribute his attributes and embody them in multiple Gods, which then carried different symbols embodying the manifestations of one God.

3. Monotheism in the Egyptian religion: Monotheism emerged in the Egyptian religion with the emergence of Akhenaten's call for a single God embodied in the God Aten. In view of the teachings of such a call, we find them close to the idea of monotheism found in the divine religions; which confirms the fact that this call (Atenism) was influenced by the divine monotheistic calls, which Egypt was honoured to have on its land. Although the Egyptians did not believe in those divine religions calls, such calls left them with religious signs and guidelines that brought their religious thought closer to monotheism.

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