

# Egypt's God-Kings, The Divinity Of Ra

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be worthy of a god. Only a magnificent palace was suitable for his home; in fact, the very word PHARAOH means "great house." The pharaoh's ability to command the resources and labor necessary to build a huge pyramid amply demonstrates that the god-king was an absolute ruler.

As to be expected the life style of the god-king was supported by taxes levied on the common folk. Needless to say the arrival of the tax collector was never a happy occasion. Taxes might amount to 20 percent of the harvest, and tax collection could be brutal. Regardless of which dynasty was in power, little changed for the Egyptian peasant whose life was regulated by the omnipresent tax collector and the rhythm of the river Nile.

Egyptian society seems to have been a curious mixture of freedom and restraint. Slavery did not become widespread until the New Kingdom (1570-1075 B.C.). There was neither a caste system nor a color bar, and humble people could rise to the highest positions if they possessed talent. The most famous example of social mobility is the biblical story of Joseph, who came to Egypt as a slave and rose to be second only to the pharaoh.

On the other hand, most ordinary folk were little more than serfs who could not easily leave the land of their own free will. According to the Old Testament, even Joseph requested Pharaoh's permission before returning to Canaan to bury his father. Peasants were also subject to forced labor (corvee), including work on the pyramids and canals. Young men were drafted into the pharaoh's army, which served both as a fighting force and as a labor corps.

The Egyptian view of life and society is alien to those raised on the concepts of individual freedom and human rights. To ancient Egyptians the pharaoh embodied justice and order - harmony among humans, nature and the divine. If the pharaoh was weak or allowed anyone to challenge his unique position, he opened the way to chaos. Twice in Egyptian history pharaohs failed to maintain rigid centralization. During these two eras, known as the First and the Second Intermediate periods, Egypt was exposed to civil war and invasion. However, the monarchy survived, and in each

period a strong pharaoh arose to crush the rebels or expel the invaders and restore order.

The accident of geography could not shield Egypt forever from the buffeting winds of change. By 1640 B.C. people whom the Egyptians called Hyksos (rulers of foreign lands) began to settle in the Nile delta. Their presence introduced new ideas and concepts into Egyptian life. These "invaders" brought with them the methods of making bronze and casting it into tools and weapons that became standard in Egypt. This brought Egypt fully into the Bronze Age culture of the Mediterranean world, a culture in which the production and use of bronze implements became basic to society. The Hyksos's use of bronze armor as well as the horse drawn chariots and the composite bow revolutionized Egyptian warfare. In time, Egyptian culture absorbed the newcomers.

During the Eighteenth Dynasty, the pharaoh Ahmose (1558-1533 B.C.) rid Egypt of the Hyksos's presence. Following this, subsequent pharaohs subdued Nubia in the south, conquered Palestine and Syria and fought the Mitanni kingdom on the upper Euphrates. These warrior-pharaohs inaugurated the New Kingdom - a period characterized by enormous wealth and conscious imperialism. The New Kingdom realm covered approximately 400,000 square miles. The Ramesside kings, representing Dynasty XIX, are part of the New Kingdom. Ramses II is

believed to have signed one of the world's first peace treaties.

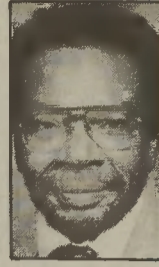
For the first time widespread slavery became a feature of Egyptian life. In pharaonic Egypt, the dominant image of the slave was that of an insider who had fallen, one who ceased to belong and had become expelled from normal participation in the community because of a failure to meet certain minimum legal or socioeconomic norms of behavior. The destitute were a part of this group. Egyptian terminology accurately reflected the internal source of slavery and the fact that it arose primarily from destitution. To the Egyptians this status amounted to social and legal death. It was into this status that captives who were enslaved were assimilated. The Egyptian word for captive, literally translated, meant "living dead." In pharaonic Egypt, as in other slave societies, slavery involved a name change - the symbolic act of stripping a person of his former identity. The slave's name died with his former self. In pharaonic Egypt, the absence of a family name was the surest mark of slavery. The pharaoh's armies returned home leading hordes of slaves, who constituted a new labor force for imperial building purposes. The Hebrews, who according to the Old Testament migrated into Egypt during this period to escape a drought, were soon put to work on imperial construction projects.

The warrior-pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty created the

first Egyptian empire. They ruled Palestine and Syria through their officers and incorporated the African region of Nubia. The warrior-pharaohs celebrated their success with monuments on a scale unparalleled since the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom had built the pyramids. Artifacts from the tomb of "King Tut" provide eloquent testimony to the might and splendor of the New Kingdom.

## About The Author

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Thomas

He possesses B.A. degrees in both History Education and Liberal Arts. He also has a M.A. in Social Studies and a Ph.D. in History.

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## IN THE ARTS

### Art Ideas Sought For City Works

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Art Commission is seeking response to its artist competition for the Community Services Facility located at 500 Spratt Street, Charlotte. Artwork is being sought for the campus-type location which serves as a centralized assistance center for more than 3,000 needy people

every month. Artists who are interested should direct questions and requests for a prospectus to: Jack Stuart, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, (704) 336-2205. Deadline for artists' proposal submissions is 5 p.m., Friday, October 14, 1988.

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### CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

- Agreement
- One's dwelling
- Mountain nymph
- First-rate (slang)
- Half diameters
- Arab chieftain (var.)
- Bottoms of ships
- Sets at an angle
- Disdain
- Sheep's cry
- Soon
- Tanker
- A. U. S. President
- Georgia's capital
- Pasha of Tunis
- Sting
- List of candidates
- Governor Loveless, e.g.
- Made of wax
- Conscious
- Wide-awake
- Purposeful
- A chessman
- Fume

**DOWN**

- Flesh of swine
- Genitive of Ara
- Give over
- Heads or —
- After manner of men
- Not shut
- Encounter
- Blunders
- Perception
- Secretary's department
- Conjunction
- Large snake
- River isle
- Entire
- Aged
- Born
- One tenth of a line (obs.)
- The Great
- Cable-layer
- Tantalum (sym.)
- of London
- Strike
- Miss Lee, actress
- A fresh
- Skin mark
- Biblical name
- Part of the body

**ANSWER**

1. AGREEMENT 2. SWINE 3. OVER 4. HEADS 5. MANNER 6. SHUT 7. ENCOUNTER 8. BLUNDERS 9. PERCEPTION 10. SECRETARY'S 11. CONJUNCTION 12. LARGE SNAKE 13. RIVER ISLE 14. ENTIRE 15. AGED 16. BORN 17. ONE TENTH OF A LINE 18. THE GREAT 19. CABLE-LAYER 20. TANTALUM 21. OF LONDON 22. STRIKE 23. MISS LEE 24. A FRESH 25. SKIN MARK 26. BIBLICAL NAME 27. PART OF THE BODY

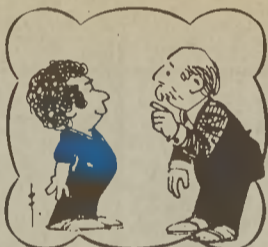
Rearrange letters of the four scrambled words below to form four simple words.

S H E A I C  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

G L T H I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

E X R I M  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

S E R V T Y  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7



My old uncle always cautioned me to keep my words soft and sweet, since you never knew when you might have to ...

Complete the chuckle quoted by filling in the missing words you develop from step No. 3 below.

2. PRINT NUMBERED LETTERS IN THESE SQUARES

3. UNSCRAMBLE LETTERS FOR ANSWER

**ANSWERS**

1. CHASE - LIGHT - MIXER - VESTRY - EAT THEM  
My old uncle always cautioned me to keep my words soft and sweet since you never knew when you might have to EAT THEM.

## "I can NBC clearly now."



Thanks to the power of our new tower, all your favorite NBC shows like *The Cosby Show*, *Golden Girls*, *Alf*, *Family Ties*, *Matlock* and *Amen* go out bright and clear across the Carolinas.

# Today's 36

### BLACK FAX QUIZ

- Who was the first Black man to preach in the U.S. Capitol?
- Where did Dr. Charles R. Drew receive his undergraduate education?
- In the N.B.C. Mini-series "King" who starred as Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- How long did Joe Louis hold the heavyweight title?
- Who wrote the book, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*?
- What do the letters "SCLC" stand for?

### LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

- 1. Newt Clendenen
- 2. 1895
- 3. Quincy Jones
- 4. O.J. Simpson
- 5. J. Saunders Redding
- 6. Isaac Hayes



"We don't have any job openings right now, but give me a minute to decide whom you will replace."