

EGYPTIAN RELIGION

Egyptian religion was similar to Mesopotamian belief, however, in that human beings were co-workers with the gods to maintain order. The principle of harmony (known to the Egyptians as *ma'at*) was of the highest importance in Egyptian life (and in the afterlife) and their religion was fully integrated into every aspect of existence. Egyptian religion was a combination of magic, mythology, **science**, **medicine**, psychiatry, spiritualism, herbology, as well as the modern understanding of 'religion' as belief in a higher power and a life after death. The gods were the friends of human beings and sought only the best for them by providing them with the most perfect of all lands to live in and an eternal home to enjoy when their lives on earth were done.

The Egyptian afterlife was known as the Field of Reeds and was a mirror-image of life on earth down to one's favorite tree and stream and dog. Those one loved in life would either be waiting when one arrived or would follow after. The Egyptians viewed earthly existence as simply one part of an eternal journey and were so concerned about passing easily to the next phase that they created their elaborate tombs (the pyramids), temples, and funerary inscriptions (the **Pyramid** Texts, the Book of the Dead) to help the soul's passage from this world to the next. The gods cared for one after death just as they had in life from the beginning of time. The goddess **Qebhet** brought water to the thirsty souls in the land of the dead and other goddesses such as Selket and Nephthys cared for and protected the souls as they journeyed to the Field of Reeds. An ancient Egyptian understood that, from birth to death and even after death, the universe had been ordered by the gods and everyone had a place in that order.