

Mayan Religion and Gods

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Religion and Gods

1. What were the beliefs of the Maya People?

They believed that they could communicate with their gods and their dead ancestors by human sacrifice.

They would perform rituals to gain favour with their Gods. This included:

- Giving up certain foods.
- They would sacrifice their blood by piercing their tongues, cheek, lips and ears with stingray spines or thorny ropes.
- They had many gruesome festivals where people would be painted blue and sacrificed at the top of a temple having their heart ripped out.

Worship



How did they worship?



The sun god was believed to be very important. The mayan people believed the sun could not travel across the sky without human sacrifices'



Special festivals were either held at the temples or on mountain tops, victims could be men, women, children and sometimes animals

beliefs

- Mayan Kings were the most important priests, they were seen as the link between humans and gods – when the kings died they themselves became Gods..
- This lintel shows Shield Jaguar, the warrior king of Yaxchilan, standing over his wife, Lady Xook, holding an enormous flaming torch



Maya Gods

- The Ancient Maya had many, many gods (over 150!), only a few of which are mentioned by the same name in different sources.
- Many of them had overlapping roles and names.
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Some of the Gods were called:

Kinich Ahau, Ah Puch, Chac, Hun ixim, ix chel, kukulcan and Itzamna.



Ah puch

- Hes a death god – known as god of death, darkness and disaster.
- Portrayed as a human with a skeleton nose, jaw spine
- His body was covered with hideous spots.
- But he was also the god of childbirth and beginnings
- He ruled the underworld.



Kinich ahau

- He was a sun god – sometimes called A'kin.
- he controlled drought and disease.
- He was often shown as a man with a hooked nose.
- He travelled across the sky during the day. Sinking below the earth at night entering the underworld to become a jaguar god.



chac

- He is the rain maker god he brought rain because he needed to make crops grow. He also created storms, thunder and lightning.
- Chac was shown covered in scales with a curling snout and reptile fangs.
- He caused wars and human sacrifice.
- He carried a serpent as a symbol of lightning



Hun ixim

Hun ixim was known as the maize god.

He was a youthful handsome man, from his head sprouted an ear of maize.

He was very important because the Mayans diet was 80% maize and they relied on harvest being successful.

They also believed that's humans where created from maize dough by the Gods



Itzamna

Itzamna was one of the most important Gods of Mayan mythology.

He was one of the creator gods and ruler of heaven and day and night. He was the inventor of writing and patron of learning.

He was often shown as a pleasant man in human form but he was toothless with a large nose.

It was believed he taught Mayan people to grow corn, to write, to use calendars and to practice medicine he also divided up the land and was very wise.



Ixchel

- Ixchel was the wife of Itzamna .
- She was the goddess of childbirth and fertility, healing and the ruler of the moon and water and weaving.
- She was portrayed in human form wearing a headdress of snakes intangeled in her hair.
- Her fingers and toes like jaguar claws.
- She lived in the land of mist and rainbows.
- She was the mother of many Gods.



Kukulcan

Kukulcan was a supreme God.

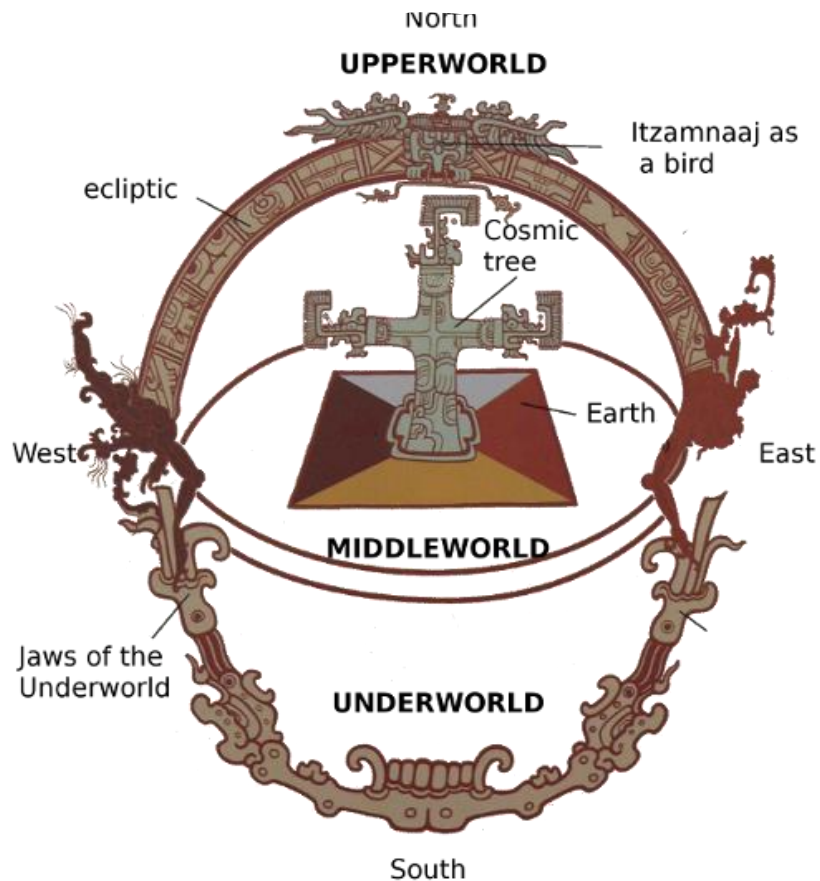
He was god of the 4 elements and the following items associated with each one:

- Earth ~ maize ear
- Water- fish
- Fire- lizard
- Air- vultures

He was a huge serpent covered in feathers in dry seasons he hibernated in lakes and during the wet season he flies to the sky and releases the water he has stored.

He was God of resurrection and reincarnation.

The underworld, the earth and the sky



Mayans believed the universe consisted of three parts, the **underworld**, the **earth** and the **sky**.

- The world for the living.
- The watery underworld, a place for the death Gods and also a resting place for their ancestors, they believed the souls of people would travel here if they passed away. It was called Xibalba which means, "place of fear". The death Gods who lived here looked like jaguars. The underworld was reached by caves and tunnels from the the world of the living (Earth).
- The sky – the Maya believe that gods guided the sun and moon across the sky. In the darkness of night they believed the sun continued to travel through the water to the underworld, threatened on its journey by evil gods who wanted to stop its progress and the growth of crops.