



# INNER SEA GODS



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# INTRODUCTION

**G**reater than the wars of armies and empires, beyond the ambitions of revolutionaries and tyrants, more devastating than the fury of magic or monsters, is the power of faith. Apart but not aloof from the races of Golarion stand a legion of deities: merciful guardians, impassive observers, vile destroyers, entities and more inscrutable, all with designs they seek to make manifest upon the mortal world. Awesome beings of unfathomable power, these divinities sow their influence across the planes, whether in direct displays of miraculous might or through the acts of their countless servants. Every deity and demigod knows the power of faith to change lives, shape nations, and alter the destiny of whole worlds. To such ends, the gods seek followers among mortalkind—champions to take up their banners, give voice to their doctrines, and thwart their foes. The gods seek worshipers, and they offer the ability to work great miracles to those who please them. All they ask for in return is faith and allegiance.

The tome you now hold presents secrets and revelations central to the deities, religions, and divine magic of the Inner Sea region of the Pathfinder campaign setting. Whether you're a Game Master running a campaign set in Golarion or a player whose character is driven by faith, you'll find expansive details on the predominant faiths of the Inner Sea region. Players of clerics in particular will find much of interest here, but note that the gods do not merely look to clerics for worship, or even to their dedicated priests—any class and creature can gain power or salvation from worshipping a god, and options for all manner of characters can be found herein.

As the deities of the Inner Sea make their presences known through the works of divine servants and the magic of their mortal worshipers, their faithful have little question about the existence of divine beings—many even have a sense of their god's personality and desires. This isn't to say that every deity has a personal relationship with her servants, though. The gods are not merely powerful mortals, but enigmatic beings that operate on a scale beyond mortal ken and with a vision fathomless to even the wisest sages. Even deities that were themselves once mortals have shed most of the limitations imposed upon them during their former lives, and now possess insights into the deepest mysteries of existence. How mortals interact with their deities, and how these deities in turn interact with their followers, varies wildly from person to person and god to god.

## MORTALS AND DEITIES

Golarion is a world shaped by the actions of divine beings, as well as by those who worship these immeasurably powerful beings. Whether they devote their lives to service or simply offer minor prayers, most people of the Inner Sea choose a deity as their patron at a young age, either as part of their upbringing or as a personal choice. Yet while the populace of the Inner Sea is a predominantly religious one, even priests zealously dedicated to a single deity recognize that the other gods are fantastically powerful entities worthy of awe and respect.

Although many people choose to worship a single deity, it's not uncommon to pay momentary or otherwise limited homage to a wider range of deities who watch over various aspects of their lives. For example, a farmer might consider Erastil (god of farming) her patron, but still offer prayers to Pharamasma (goddess of birth) when delivering a child, a curse to Abadar (god of trade) when cheated at market, or a plea to Sarenrae (goddess of healing) while tending to a sick friend. Even clerics, who must choose one deity as their patron above all others, sometimes offer such minor prayers to divinities allied with their chosen gods, although their faith must still remain primarily focused on their deity of choice, for even the good gods can be jealous.

While deep understanding of religion is the province of priests and scholars, most mortals are reasonably familiar with the deities commonly worshiped in their communities and can give some common description of them. In the Inner Sea region, the names and basic attitudes of the core 20 deities are well known, while those of some minor deities, racial deities, or the like may be completely unknown.

The predominant faith where one grows up can have a profound impact on one's chosen faith, yet this doesn't mean everyone worships a deity commonly venerated in their hometown. On Golarion, evidence of deities abounds, and the specialized and disenfranchised often look to the gods that best suit their needs. As a result, few communities are completely homogenous in their religion, and even those that seem monolithic often have pockets of divergent worshipers praying in secret. Whether through family ties to a religious minority, an interaction with a traveling priest, a direct vision from a divine messenger, or some other means, it's easy to justify playing a character of a faith uncommon in a region. Of course, choosing a faith not openly and commonly





worshiped in a region might make a character stand out or invite persecution, but such differences can make for powerful backstories and roleplaying elements. Players of such characters should think about why and how their character came to follow an unusual faith, and check with their GM to make sure that deity is appropriate for the campaign, as well as with the rest of the group to make sure your particular mix of religions won't cause conflict.

What worship actually means differs widely from faith to faith. Some churches engage in ostentatious shows of wealth or power to draw converts, while others focus on more personal matters and pray alone in silence. Daily or weekly ceremonies to instruct and guide the faithful may be common. Among the worshippers of the major deities, it's possible to find outlying temples that cleave to unusual practices based on divergent interpretations of scripture, or isolated towns touched by the divine with unique revelations and perspectives about the faith. Despite the gods' presence and influence over mortals, their ways still often prove mysterious or even contradictory to mortal minds, leaving plenty of room for interpretation, misinterpretation, and disagreements even between churches of the same god. What might be

right for one congregation might not be for another. Ultimately, though, most deities care more about their followers' intentions and that worshippers uphold their dogmas rather than the specifics of ceremony and religious trappings.

Sometimes a person's individual version of a faith gathers like-minded adherents, and over time these shared practices become a cult—an offshoot of a main religion with practices or beliefs that differ from the official or predominant version of the faith. Often, a cult's practices start as a form of protest against a mainstream belief (or a misunderstanding of dogma). If a cult grows large enough and the deity continues to grant spells to its faithful or otherwise indicate approval, the cult may be accepted as a legitimate sect of the church, and could even revitalize the main church with its unorthodox beliefs. Evil religions are often called cults even though their rituals are the norm for the deity—this derogatory usage implies that they're marginal or unimportant.

Most group prayers and services take place at temples or other locations dedicated to religious activities. A shrine is a smaller location dedicated to a deity, and may just be a statue, standing stone, or alcove set aside



for offerings and prayers, or perhaps commemorating a miracle or divine manifestation. However, the gods don't require worshipers to be at such locations to hear and accept their prayers. The mere act of worship is sufficient for a god to hear the prayers of the faithful, and temples or shrines serve more as mortal monuments to their faith and centers of worship. Some faiths might have common rituals for prayer, but the degree to which each deity cares about mortal rituals or prayers varies.

In addition to deities common to nations or regions, there are gods primarily associated with different races or species, though these gods are generally not averse to having worshipers of other races (even if their churches may claim otherwise). For example,

Calistria is usually considered an elven deity and Torag thought of as a dwarven god, yet their areas of interest are still relevant to non-elves and non-dwarves as well.

Although some deities lay claim to greater concepts than others, dominate larger regions of the Great Beyond, or attract more worshipers, a deity's relative level of power among its peers has no bearing on its ability to empower mortals or affect the world. Whether one's patron is a deity, demigod, or something else doesn't affect the level of divine spellcasting a worshiper can achieve. For example, a 9th-level cleric of Desna (a well-known major deity) is no more or less powerful than a 9th-level cleric of Naderi (a minor deity with a small following), and both are able to cast 5th-level cleric spells.

Despite the undeniable power of the gods, atheism still exists in the Inner Sea region, though in a slightly unusual sense of the word. Few of Golarion's atheists doubt the gods' power or existence; rather, they believe the gods are unworthy of worship. Some nations, like Rahadoum, are bastions of such anti-divine sentiment, going so far as to outlaw the worship of the gods. While this can bring the faithful into conflict with those who adhere to such an opposing philosophy, many servants of the divine are experienced with dealing with those who cleave to different or even opposing faiths, and don't go out of their way to convert staunchly opposed zealots, choosing instead to focus on converting the undecided and pursuing their god's agenda on the Material Plane.

## DEITIES AND MORTALS

To a farmer or carpenter, the gods are remote, unseen beings who rarely if ever interact with mortals. However, servants of the divine argue that deities constantly interact with mortals, not just by providing spells to divine spellcasters, but also by presenting small omens and minor interventions. In general, deities do not personally meddle in the lives of mortals, yet how often such interventions happen depends entirely on the kind of story a GM wants to tell. Barring direct intercessions, prayer is the best way for a mortal to gain a deity's attention. Even if a mortal doesn't receive a direct answer or a sign from the deity, the message is heard.

A god's ability to influence planes and creatures is far beyond the comprehension of mortal beings. Most deities reside on the Outer Planes, but are nonetheless quite capable of granting spells to countless individual mortals on the Material Plane, even if those mortals travel to places where the deity's church doesn't have a presence. Even the few deities who live in the mortal world





(such as Gozreh, whose realm includes any natural place, or Azathoth, who roils without heed deep within the Dark Tapestry of outer space) are still able to provide magic for their priests on the most remote planets and planes.

Mortals often wonder why—if the deities have such great power—they don't prevent or reverse large-scale disasters such as the opening of the Worldwound, or at least prevent bad things from happening to their followers. Indeed, many deities would intervene to prevent such things, but they are opposed by other deities who want these misfortunes and disasters to occur, and all recognize that a confrontation between beings of near-infinite power could destroy entire worlds and still end in a draw. Any deity who tries to directly intervene in the mortal world on a large scale becomes a target for rival powers, many of whom might temporarily ally to eliminate the troublemaking deity, and no god wants to push her enemies into an alliance. As much as Iomedae would like to heal the Worldwound, taking direct action would not only unite a dozen demon lords against her (including Lamashtu, a goddess in her own right), but also draw the ire of Gorum (who enjoys the ongoing war the demonic presence creates in the world) and Nethys (who is intrigued by the weakness between the planar barriers and the effects they have on magic). To prevent all-out war and unmitigated disaster, the deities have an informal arrangement that discourages them from grand acts in the mortal world, and have laws among themselves that forbid taking direct action against each other's planar realms. It's this very divine truce that makes mortal worshipers—and their proxy conflicts—so important. However, even these laws are sometimes broken, such as when Desna invaded the Abyss to destroy the demon lord Aolar for possessing and corrupting her favored priest. Most of the demon lords united against Desna, and it was only with the help of other deities that the goddess left the Abyss unscathed.

Deities have friends, allies, lovers, confidantes, rivals, and enemies, but these relationships are often more complex than mortal bonds: two deities might be lovers and enemies simultaneously, or have an alliance that doesn't eliminate their rivalry. Alliances may be permanent or temporary—although on a divine time scale, even a temporary alliance might last an entire mortal lifetime, or could be specifically tied to the life and death of a particular hero—and for many deities the benefit is camaraderie and the exchange of information rather than power.

Most major deities have a herald: a powerful creature sent to other planes as a direct agent of that deity. Deities also have servitors, which are minor outsiders tasked with performing tasks on behalf of their patron god. In some cases, these divine servants are members of

## REFERENCES

References to rules content introduced in this book are marked with an asterisk (\*). This book also refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd).

<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3
<i>Bestiary 4</i>	B4
<i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i>	ISWG
<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM

common outsider categories such as demons, devils, and psychopomps, though their service may cause them to differ from members of their parent race. Heralds and servitors can be summoned or called only by a member of that deity's religion.

In rare cases, a deity might manifest physically in the mortal world. The deity's physical form can sometimes be slain, even by mortals, but such a demise is only a minor setback for the deity and typically has no permanent detrimental effects for them. Although brave and foolish mortals have dared to invade divine realms, it is commonly believed that a mortal cannot actually kill a true deity, and even the mightiest mortal army lacks the power to do so.

Deities can produce offspring with mortals, but how often they do so is a matter of speculation. Descendants of the gods are mortal, and may have mortal brothers, sisters, or ancestors. They walk the world as any other mortal, yet their touch of divine blood marks them as destined for greatness, whether they know it or not. Even when gods take physical form, they transcend common matter and magic, and the source of a divine "bloodline" is more likely to be an act of godly will than of normal mortal reproduction. A god who desires heroic mortal offspring can bless a newborn with a great destiny, imbue a priest with power that passes to her children, or simply create new life out of nothing and present the infant to a suitable caregiver. Such beings typically have some traces of mythic power—see *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Mythic Origins* for more details.