

Story 27

AKHENATEN... and MOSES !?



Aten is a creator of the universe in ancient Egyptian mythology, usually regarded as a sun god represented by the sun's disk. His worship (Athenism) was instituted as the basis for the mostly monotheistic — in fact, monistic — religion of Amenhotep IV, who took the name Akhenaten. The worship of Aten ceased shortly after Akhenaten's death; while Nefertiti was knifed to death by the Amun priesthood!



Fig. 1. Pharaoh Akhenaten, his beloved Queen Nefertiti, and family adoring the Aten, their Sun God; second from the left is Tutankhamen who was the son of Akhenaten. The relief dated 1350BC of the sun disk of Aten is a lime stone slab, with traces of the draftsman's grid still on it, found in the Royal Tomb of Amarna, the ill-fated capital of the founder of *monotheism* long before Moses claimed it for Judaism.

Aten was the focus of Akhenaten's religion, but viewing *Aten* as Akhenaten's god is a simplification. *Aten* is the name given to represent the solar disc. The term *Aten* was used to designate a disc, and since the sun was a disc, it gradually became associated with solar deities. Aten expresses indirectly the life-giving force of light. The full title of Akhenaten's god was *The Rahorus who rejoices in the horizon, in his/her Name of the Light which is seen in the sun disc*. (This is the title of the god as it appears on the numerous stelae which were placed to mark the boundaries of Akhenaten's new capital at Amarna, or "Akhetaten.").

This lengthy name was often shortened to *Ra-Horus-Aten* or just *Aten* in many texts, but the god Akhenaten had raised to supremacy is considered a synthesis of very ancient ones viewed in a new and different way. Both Ra and Horus characteristics are part of the god, but the god is also considered to be both masculine and feminine simultaneously. All creation was thought to emanate from that god and to exist within it. In particular, the god was not depicted in anthropomorphic (human) form, but as rays of light extending from the sun's disk. Furthermore, the god's name came to be written within a cartouche, along with the titles normally given to a Pharaoh, another break with ancient tradition.

The Aten first appears in texts dating to the 12th dynasty, in *The Story of Sinuhe*. Ra-Horus, more usually referred to as *Ra-Herakhty* (*Ra, who is Horus of the two horizons*), is a synthesis of two other gods, both of which are attested from very early on. During the Amarna period, the 18th dynasty, this synthesis was seen as the invisible source of energy of the sun god, of which the visible manifestation was the Aten, the solar disk. Thus Ra-Horus-Aten was a development of old ideas which came gradually. The real change is the apparent abandonment of all other gods following the advent of Akhenaten, *i.e.*, the introduction, apparently initiated by Akhenaten, of **monotheism**. This is readily apparent in the Great Hymn to Aten.

The timing of Akhenaten's existence, together with his apparent, and significant, break from **henotheism**, has led British scholars to irrevocably conclude that the biblical character of Moses was Ramses II son, raised by a Jewish nanny, who defected to Judea, thus giving rise to

monotheism among the Hebrews* Returning to Egypt some 20 years later, Moses confronted his father and inveigled the release of perhaps no more than 5-6,000 families or 18-20,000 souls, taking them back to Judea, but not before he killed his brother and heir apparent, Amun-her-shepeshef, in the Red Sea marshes, who had decided to slew his brother and return the Jews back into slavery. Of course, this becomes a religious crisis in the biblical tradition of the Old Testament, which claims monotheism for Abraham, Jacob and other prophets, placing Adam in Paradise, surprisingly in the then actual confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of Babylonia. While contemporary research fixes Paradise in the ancient river valley existing in antiquity under the present Persian Gulf; the Indian Ocean waters breaking at Hormuz Straits c. 30,000 years ago flooding the exotic valley full of animal life, obviously including the Hominid. Noah's Ark story or myth could only have evolved there, north of Dubai in the middle of the Gulf of Arabi, if you wish...with the indigenous population scudling for their lives from the valley floor to the nearby hills and mountains, driving their domesticated herds and flocks ahead of them, while wild animals fared for themselves, the built-in instinct prerogative to run for your life even in the forbidden zone, with or without Noah's Ark, eh!... To a victim or an observer the raging gulf waters looked and behaved like an endless turbulent sea, hence to survive it one needed a huge boat, whence the myth... Mt. Ararat of northern Turkey (once in Armenia) is no doubt an invention of the early biblical fathers, perhaps more to confirm the event to the tune of the Ark of the Covenant, the "burning bush" revelation to Moses happening many eons after the historical flood.

Moreover, perhaps not so strange, c. 600BC, it seems the prophet Ezekiel and his followers wrote the Old Testament or portions thereof during the Babylonian captivity on the banks of the Euphrates River of Mesopotamia... Indeed, could the old prophet have been a master builder and worked for pay, with his skilled brethren in masonry as well as in liberal arts, despite the documented captivity? No doubt, it will take time for genuine research and unbiased, determined, and expert scholarship to research and rewrite the past biblical history, to see where Egyptian monotheism overrides the single-god religiousness, going back to the 18th dynasty, and where the Hebrew in captivity picked up on it, plagiarizing the transmitted oral or verbal knowledge of creation writing it as Genesis, the prolific first chapter of the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament on which our Christian Bible, the New Testament, bases its origin. After all, the Earth derives from a black hole in space or "darkness" as the Bible says. How did the ancients know it?

The problem with Egyptian culture was the flowing, written letter, or instrumental writing capability, which the archaic hieroglyphics failed to provide hundreds of generations of thinkers who were to be found far-and-in-between, if at all, because the powerful priesthood was secretive and static in vertical intellectual reach during the 34 dynasties of the Egyptian Kingdom. The Egyptian

*Between Akhenaten's monotheism or belief in a single god of the 18th to Ramses II's polytheism of the 19th dynasty Egypt was just half a century more or less, hence the belief in the single god up in heaven, be it the inanimate sun's disk, was not far removed. The renegade Egyptian prince-cum Jewish Moses only added an animate god in man's image according to the Old Testament story of Adam and the Maker. The idea of Akhenaten as the pioneer of a monotheistic religion that later became Judaism has been considered by various scholars. One of the first to mention this was Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, in his book *Moses and Monotheism*. Freud argued that Moses had been an Atenist priest forced to leave Egypt with his followers after Akhenaten's death. Freud argued that Akhenaten was striving to promote monotheism, something that the biblical Moses was able to achieve. Following his book, the concept entered popular consciousness and serious research around the world... However, Freud contradicts the Biblical story of Moses with his own retelling of events claiming that Moses only led his close followers into freedom during an unstable period in Egyptian history after Akhenaten's reforms failed, and that they subsequently killed Moses in rebellion and later joined forces with another monotheistic tribe in Midian, despite god's anger with the Midianites, as confusing and contradictory as that biblical story seems to be... In any case, Freud explains that years after the murder of Moses, the rebels regretted their action thus forming the concept of the Messiah as a hope for the return of Moses as the Savior of the Israelites. He said that the guilt from the murder of Moses is inherited through consecutive generations; this guilt made the Jews religious, solidified the race and the belief system which made them a compact and motivated people... We the Christians adopted the same story *vis à vis* Christ, who shall return to save the faithful, while he gave his earthy being "to make men free," as the traditional lyrics phrase it... Most historians since the 1960's reject the legitimacy of psychohistory including Freud's theories, although the prolific Viennese psychoanalyst paved the way to yet better future analysis of history "imitated" by our Western "copy cats" which almost every generation delivered to its believers as the final word in progressive religious and social science. In other words, the Israelites had a profound influence on family-building, from the nuclear family concept to local, city-state and nation-state rights, oral and written tradition and technology generally, indeed culture itself for our western dictionary and first names are in fact Jewish... Jews as industrious and compact society, hard working, frugal and successful in life—hence, survival prone—became a subject and object of jealousy by neighboring and war-making peoples therefrom the Diaspora dimension of anti-Semitism and perennial persecution and prosecution to this very day, despite their unique contribution to the development of modern society.

hieroglyph failed to deliver emotion in writing, including concrete scientific formulas. (Even the π was imprecise). In other words, there was no mass culture and literacy along the river Nile as it flourished among the trekking Hebrew, sometimes in captivity, where survival dictated knowledge of the construction trade (masonry, carpentry, irrigation canals), the artisan workshop fineness with hand tools, weaving and textiles production, leather tanning and footwear and, of course, including the basic agro-business (planting fields, raising domestic cattle, shepherding), i.e. servicing the food chain. Diaspora was perhaps not as devastating as it proved to be productive, honing the edge of knowledge and craftsmanship, fostering philosophy and vertical religion, as well as acquiring conservative behavior in finance and profit, manipulation with and assimilation of knowledge and trades from the other peoples, which became the double edge sword of slavery applying one side for subservience and discipline, the other to advance the fate of culture and cohesiveness of race, therefrom the intellectual prowess placed today at 6% per capita lead in the IQ quotient of the Jew over the other civilized nations.

One of the reasons why I have conjectured and found the Egyptians occupying the center place of creation politics is that light rays from the sun became crucial to their thinking in the development of life on Earth, not just to nurture it by heat but in the very act of germination, which lead me to postulate, for my young readers, that we humans may very well have been created from the photon rays of light emanating from the sun, where the genetic code is imbedded! As the primeval soup developed on the planet, precipitation began cooling off the planetary surface, life began to stir coming in on coded light rays, the inanimate code presto gelled with the heavier elements in the soup and its chemical agents, to form life, a hominid the end product, perhaps in the very image of the Maker; somebody or something (animate or inanimate) had to write that code. I can't believe that the intricacy and workings of living things, especially the brain of man and his thinking processes could have been accidental, or created by the subtlety of matter, the Mendeleev Table of Elements diluted into our upright walking and thinking framework...

Moreover, this personal observation and ft. note: two grains of sand whipped by the surf for 20 billion years, we could argue, could hardly produce the complex human brain and its prolific senses much less the philosophical, intellectual and high-tech advances achieved by the Hominid race of man. In other words, there must be something beyond creation, and our ponderings over atemism of Akhenaten, monotheism of Moses, Christianity of WesternCiv, and agnosticism and atheism of the 20th century, discussed to some extent perhaps 'creatively' in the final chap. 32, "Destiny Recalled" of this story book.



In February 2010, results of DNA tests performed on Tutankhamun, the boy pharaoh, were published which confirmed his being a son of Akhenaten, stepson of Nefertiti.

Therefore, Akhenaten's preoccupation with the sun disk and monotheism may not be that far off as we play out this metaphysical game of our perception in the creation of man and his place in the vast Cosmos...

Fig. 2. One Drachma Greek silver coin minted in Alexandria during the lifetime of Alexander the Great, sporting the Ovis Ammon Ammon horns of the Egyptian god Amun.



Finally, in Libya, there remained an oracle of Amun in the desert, at the oasis of Siva. Such was its reputation among the Greeks that Alexander the Great journeyed there, after the battle of Issus, where he defeated Darius III of Persia; he then doubled-back to Egypt, during that occupation, in order to be acknowledged as the son of god. Even during this occupation, Amun, identified as a form of Zeus, continued to be the great god of Thebes, in its decay. The Macedonian's head is trimmed with those horns framing his ears, depicted on Greek drachma coins... Moreover, that Maker, I suspect, if he's still alive, is sporting Alexander's wild sheep horns, and good looks... It's important for gods to be handsome, muscle toned and blond, masculinity hard as a bone be it on their head... In addition, I don't think he's

celibate (though he might be impotent, see my *Eve and the Maker*), nor do I mean to offend certain religions; he must have a feminine companion, minus the horns—as beautiful as Nefertiti, Helen of Troy, or Marilyn Monroe, because I think alongside many other men of aesthetic posture that an exotic woman is the most beautiful and perfect creation in the Universe, so motherly, perceptive and translucent she must adorn the right side of God, our JC on the left, I mean that Germanic blond Adonis not the little, dark Hebrew, à la apostle St. Paul of Tarsus from Turkey or perhaps the late Jacques Cousteau of France, tsk? tsk!... No offense intended, just an anthropological observation of the Hebrew and Gallic racial types.

In other words, the Church Fathers from the Western Church, and perhaps even the Eastern one, attempted to re-interpret physical anthropology to fit the racial type—the furthest sense of reality from the truth. To the contrary, it should have been the message not the racial type, eh!

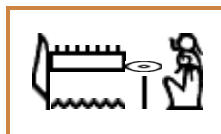


Copyright©2006 by Prof. Paul S. Cutter, all rights reserved; this slightly cynical lament was written (but not for circulation) February 11th of this very year of Our Lord, AD2006. However, the background research reverts to the early 1960s, while out in the field of operations in Siberia and Central Asia in the service of my country – USofA.



Fig. 3. A raised-relief depiction of Amenemhat I accompanied by deities; the death of Amenemhat I is reported by his son Senusret I in the *Story of Sinuhe*.

[Credit: Above pictographs, Amenhotep and Aten in hieroglyphs, the rest in the public domain.]



IN ADDENDUM



Nefertiti, Akhenaten's billowed queen.



The bird of Paradise symbology.

Pharaoh **AKHENATEN**

Amenhotep IV-better known as Akhenaten, the new name he took early on in his reign-ushered in a revolutionary period in Egyptian history. The Amarna Interlude, as it is often called, saw the removal of the seat of government to a short-lived new capital city, Akhetaten (modern el-Amarna), the introduction of a new art style, and the elevation of the cult of the sun disc, the Aten, to pre-eminent status in Egyptian religion. This last heresy in particular was to bring down on Akhenaten and his immediate successors the opprobrium of later kings.

Akhenaten was often depicted with an elongated jaw line, wide hips and a round belly. This development was a complete break from all of the conventions of ancient Egyptian art, and has led to some fairly wide speculation. Was the pharaoh developing a new art form, or suffering from a physical affliction? From this information, it would seem that Marfan's Syndrome best suits Akhenaten's possible affliction. He did show traits like *arachnodactyly*, an unusually long face, a tall, slender build, and a wide pelvis. His relatives are shown as having similar features, and elongated skulls. The fact that the rest of his family apparently showed some of these traits suggests that he had a genetic disorder such as Marfan's Syndrome. He also lived for about the amount of time that a Marfan's victim lives without medical assistance, 16-19 years of age. For example, his son Tutankhamun died young; therefore there might have been some inherent deformity symptoms. Could the deformity required a more direct access to light? How fortunate!


Some scholars have likened certain aspects of Akhenaten's relationship with the Aten to the relationship, in Christian tradition, of Jesus Christ with his God - particularly in interpretations that emphasize a more monotheistic perception of Atenism than henotheistic. Donald B. Redford has noted that some have viewed Akhenaten as a harbinger of Jesus... "After all, Akhenaten did call himself the son of the sole god: "*Thine only son that came forth from thy body.*" (1) James Henry Breasted likened him to Jesus(2), Arthur Weigall saw him as a failed precursor of Christ (3), and Thomas Mann saw him "as right on the way and yet not the right one for the way"(4). However, Thomas Mann, was short of historical knowledge as most of his Germanic brethren having arrived on the continent of Europe, AD9, just two millennia ago, and a serious problem for Western Civ in general, i.e. how to integrate the (un)initiates, the barbarian from Asia into civil life of a new emerging commonwealth of nations, a *local functional autonomy* New World Order of "Global Village" dimensions...

Redford argued that while Akhenaten called himself the son of the Sun-Disc and acted as the chief mediator between god and creation, it must be noted that kings for thousands of years before Akhenaten's time had claimed the same relationship and priestly role. However Akhenaten's case may be different through the emphasis placed on the heavenly father and son relationship. Akhenaten described himself as "thy son who came forth from thy limbs", "thy child", "the eternal son that came forth from the Sun-Disc", and "thine only son that came forth from thy body". The close relationship between father and son is such that only the king truly knows the heart of "his father", and in return his father listens to his son's prayers. He is his father's image on earth and as Akhenaten is king on earth his father is king in heaven. As high priest, prophet, king and divine he claimed the central position in the new religious system. Since only he knew his father's mind and will, Akhenaten alone could interpret that drive for all mankind with true teaching coming only from him! Therefrom, the notion and religious practice of "political power to the king coming from god." The Israelites received it from Moses, he from Akhenaten, and we the society at large from that tradition.

1. "The Monotheism of the Heretic Pharaoh: Precursor of Mosaic monotheism or Egyptian anomaly?", Donald B. Redford, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May-June edition 1987.
2. "Creation and the persistence of evil", Jon Douglas Levenson, p. 60, Princeton University Press, 1994, ISBN 0691029504.
3. *Akhenaten and the religion of light*, Erik Hornung, David Lorton, p. 14, Cornell University Press, 2001, ISBN 978-0-8014-8725-5.
4. Thomas Mann, in his fictional biblical tetralogy *Joseph and His Brothers* (1933-1943), makes Akhenaten the "dreaming pharaoh" of Joseph's story.

Picture of the Nefertiti bust now on loan to the Neues Museum, Berlin. The bust is believed to have been crafted in 1345 BC by the Egyptian sculptor Thutmose. A German archeological team led by Ludwig Borchardt discovered the Nefertiti bust in 1912 in Thutmose's workshop in Amarna, Egypt.



 Akhenaten was the famous heretic king who moved the capital of the royal family from Thebes to Amarna and worshiped the sun god Aten (Aton). The new religion, often considered monotheistic, featured the royal couple, Akhenaten and Nefertiti (the beauty discovered in 1912 and known to the world from the Berlin bust, above), in place of other gods in a triad of divinities. In fact, the father, the son and the holy ghost concept it seems then emanating from Amarna back in the mid-15th century BC... Perhaps little known in the West, the Egyptian pharaoh was God's broker on Earth, the population prayed only to the head of state, not directly to the Maker, a completely different approach to what eventually monotheism established in

Judaism, Christianity and other major religions; the middle-man concept was dashed to commerce and trade, we the people were allowed to pray directly to god, for our own needs and for the king and state, which has been the practice ever since. Consequently, it was long before Michelangelo found god in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican at the turn of the 15th century AD, i.e. that the communion with the Maker became an institution! We could, then, perhaps rightfully ask, who needs the state and the King these days of financial mayhem and warfare, but for their elitist posturing, to feed their trough and life styles via taxation and conscription?



A house altar showing Akhenaten, Nefertiti and their two daughters; the pharaoh kissing the one in his arms, while the other sibling, sitting in her mother's lap seems to be jealous...; very interesting and intimate family scene, unusual for the static 'dimensional' Egyptian art. It's a small limestone piece from the Amarna period, c. 1350 B.C. Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, Inv. no. 14145. Credit: Public domain.



During the reign of Amenhotep III (Akhenaten's father) artists began to depict nature in all its glory in a naturalistic way not common to traditional Egyptian art dimensional art. This art form was also apparent during the reign of Akhenaten as his worship of the sun disc included a reverence for the natural world. The depictions of nature from this period are amongst the most beautiful works of art recovered from Ancient Egypt. The Dalmatian canine breed seems to have had its genetic roots in the Nile Delta among the pharaonic aristocracy. Akhenaten surrounded himself with a number of powerful women whom he obviously adored and respected. Each of the royal women had her own private sunshade temple where she could worship the Aten. They were generally located within beautiful gardens complete with ritual pools where the wonders of nature could be enjoyed. The Amarna women, in particular Nefertiti, seem to have represented the feminine aspect of the Aten as creator with a biogenic aesthetic verve... Could the Maker of Adam or Eve, be an aesthete?!



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