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## Tut-Ankh-Amen and Sun-Worship

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**Abstract:** This article speculates that the Lamanite culture may have established the Egyptian practice of sun-worship in America, accounting for the appearance of this practice among certain Indian groups.

# Tut-Ankh-Amen and Sun-Worship\*

*By J. M. Sjodahl*

The tomb of Pharaoh Tut-Ankh-Amen in the Valley of the Kings, near Luxor, Egypt, was opened officially February 18, 1923, and about a hundred distinguished visitors were admitted to see the wonders it contains. Among these were the Queen of Belgium and Professor James H. Breasted, of Chicago, and other Egyptologists of note.

The grave chamber was found in excellent condition. The treasures so far examined include paintings, showing the king hunting ostriches, giraffes, and elephants, and these paintings are said to be fully equal to modern art; also funeral wreaths almost similar to modern floral offerings; and a couch, five feet long. One end of this piece of furniture was molded as a lion's head and it had legs formed as lion's feet. The workmanship is declared to be exquisite.

One of the most wonderful discoveries is that of a triumphal chariot, decorated in sheet gold, inlaid with precious stones, appearing as if it had been built yesterday; so perfectly had it been preserved in the sealed tomb. There was also a large corslet, such as warriors used to wear formerly, made of elaborate mesh, with gold clasps, "equal to the work of the middle ages."

Among the objects mentioned in the dispatches are two life-size statues of the king, beds, chariots, boxes, walking sticks, alabaster vases, and so on.

It is generally conceded that the discovery is one of the most important in the history of Egyptian archaeology but a full account of the objects in the grave and translations of the inscriptions and other records will not be given to the public for some time yet.

In order to understand the interest centering in this find it may be well to remember that Tut-Ankh-Amen lived and reigned not very long before the time of Moses, while Israel was still in bondage in Egypt.

About the twentieth century, B. C., a Semitic people known as the Hyksos, or shepherds, began to settle in Egypt. They were, probably, Chaldeans who moved westward under the pressure of invaders from the east. Some of them took a northern

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\*From a paper read by the author at the M. I. A. Meeting, Twelfth-Thirteenth ward, February 27, 1923.

route and settled in Canaan, where they became known as Phoenicians; others founded homes in the northern parts of Egypt. The latter gradually multiplied and gained influence there, and at last one of their chiefs, or sheiks, was recognized as ruler over Egypt.

Flinders Petri, dates the exodus of Terah, the father of Abraham, from Ur about 2270 B. C., as part of that great Semitic westward migration.

About the year 2000, B. C., Abraham visited Egypt. We know, from the Bible and Pearl of Great Price that he found favor at the court and that he had an opportunity of teaching the people many correct principles concerning God and the universe. Undoubtedly, his mission to that country influenced largely the religious concepts of the Egyptians and helped to form their political and social institutions.

About the year 1650 B. C., Jacob and his household entered Egypt, at the invitation of the Pharaoh who had made Joseph, the great son of Jacob, his prime minister. This pharaoh was one of the Hyksos' people, and therefore of the same race as Abraham and Jacob. And that, probably, accounts for their friendly relations. (Gen. 47:10.)

We are all familiar with the financial operations by which, as an emergency measure of protection against famine, the agricultural land of Egypt became the property of the rulers, and the people were made to pay heavy taxes. During the administration of tyrants who arose later the burdens became unbearable. The Egyptian spirit of independence asserted itself and a national reform movement, with its center at the ancient capital, Thebes, took form. Finally, the Hyksos were dethroned and driven out.

Then a new dynasty took the reins; or, as we read in Ex. 1:8: "Now there rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." This was a "king" or a line of kings, not related to Joseph and his family and under no obligation to the shepherd people. This happened about 1580 B. C. The Israelites were immediately regarded as slaves, the property of the king, and they were set to work on public buildings, such as store houses, fortifications, etc. At the same time, measures were taken to prevent them from becoming numerous and influential in the land, as had happened in the case of the Hyksos. But when the oppression became unbearable, Moses, the deliverer, was raised up, and the exodus took place in the year 1220 B. C.<sup>a</sup> Rameses

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<sup>a</sup>These dates are according to Dr. W. M. Flinders Petri: *Egypt and Israel*.



II is generally regarded as the pharaoh who defied Moses and who saw his army overwhelmed in the Red Sea.

Now it appears that one of the new pharaohs, Amenothès III, married outside the royal ranks, a girl, possibly of the foreign race, and on that account his son, Amenothès IV, may have had some trouble with the powerful priests at Thebes.<sup>b</sup> Consequently, he decided to move away from the old capital. He established himself at a convenient place now known as Tell-el-Amarna. Here he built a palace and a temple and some factories, and soon had a prosperous city.

Egypt was divided into states, or provinces, called *nomes*, and it seems that each nome could have its own supreme god and a multitude of deities surrounding him. The Egyptians were remarkably tolerant. The priests of each nome claimed that their particular god was the father of all the gods, but they were perfectly willing to let the worshipers of other nomes make the same claim for theirs. They never tried to suppress the worship of other nomes. Each god was, it seems, confined as far as jurisdiction was concerned, to his own nome, as a king is to his kingdom, or a governor to his province. But the Egyptians had also a god, *Neter*, which name seems to be identical in meaning with the Hebrew *El* (*Elohim* in plural). He was also called, as I understand it, *Nuk-Pu-Nuk*, meaning "I am that I am;" the same as Jehovah. He was the self-existing, living, generating force.

At Thebes, Amen, or Amon, was the chief deity. He was represented in various forms: As a man on a throne, holding in one hand the scepter and in the other the cross of life. He is also represented as a man with the head of a frog, or a snake, or as an ape, or as a lion.

At Heliopolis, Ra was worshiped as the chief god. He was the sun god, or perhaps one of the sun-gods, the creator and preserver of the world. He is usually depicted as a man with the head of a sparrow hawk. His symbol was the disc of the sun, encircled by a serpent.

Whenever one nome, or province, obtained supremacy, the gods of that nome also shared in the glory. Thus when the north was the seat of government the god Tem became associated with Ra and the people worshiped Ra-Tem. And, similarly, when the south became predominating, after the overthrow of the Hyksos kings, the priests at Thebes associated their god Amen with the northern god, Ra, and worshiped Amen Ra.

Amenothès IV, as stated, decided to make a new nome, a new

<sup>b</sup>According to Gaston Maspero, this happened some time during the 15th century, B. C. Others give the date of Amenothès IV as 1375-58 B. C.

city, and a new religion. He maintained that God should be worshiped under the symbol of the solar disc alone, the *Aten* or *Atonou*. This, it is claimed, was an ancient deity of Heliopolis, the city in which Joseph's wife lived, and also the birthplace of Moses. He gave to the new nome the name of "The Horizon of the Solar disc," and changed his own name from Amenothès to Khouniatonou, "The Glory of the Solar Disc."

For a short time Tell-el-Amarna flourished, but when Tut-Ankh-Amen, succeeded Amenothès,, who was his father-in-law, the new venture was doomed. He moved back to Thebes, and joined the worshipers of Amen. Tell-el-Amarna was abandoned, and soon only ruins marked the place where it flourished for a few years. This Tut-Ankh-Amen is the king whose supposed grave has now been opened. No wonder there is great expectation in scientific circles concerning what the inscriptions and records may reveal.

In 1887 part of the diplomatic correspondence that was carried on between Amenothès IV and kings and foreign representatives of Egypt were found in the ruins of Tell-el-Amarna. The messages were written on clay in cuneiform characters, and a flood of light was thrown on the history of that epoch by those seemingly unimportant tablets which had been left when more important documents were removed.

It is a peculiar fact that the Indians of the Western hemisphere, like the Egyptians, worshiped the sun as the most glorious manifestation of the great Creator of the heavens and the earth, while, at the same time, they revered other objects in nature. The Incas of Peru, for instance, had their temple of the sun at their holy city, Cuzco. But they had no images, no idols, in that edifice. On the western wall, we are told by Prescott, was emblazoned a representation of God as a human countenance, from which emanated rays of light in every direction, as the sun is generally represented by us. This solar disc was engraved on a massive plate of gold of enormous dimensions, thickly set with emeralds and precious stones. When the rays of the rising sun fell upon it, they lighted up the whole apartment, and the light was reflected from the gold ornaments on the walls and ceiling, and the temple seemed to be filled with a supernatural effulgence.

Everywhere, in South America, in Central, and North America, the Indians worshiped the sun, the solar disc. They prayed to it. They offered incense and sacrifices to it. They danced in its honor. And in their sanctuaries they kept the sacred fires as a reminder of the Force that gives and preserves life.



How did the Indians in America, in prehistoric times, come to adopt sunworship as well as many other Egyptian ideas?

From the Bible we know that whenever the Israelites decided to apostatize from the God of their fathers, they turned to Egyptian gods. Right in the shadow of Mt. Sinai, the people danced around the golden calf—possibly a representation of the Egyptian god Hathor—as they had seen the Egyptians do, or, perhaps, as they had done themselves. And when Jeroboam led the Ten Tribes in revolt from the house of David and the temple service in Jerusalem, he set up images of calves at Bethel and Dan.

Even the Jews, immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, had adopted Egyptian sun worship and were practicing it on the temple grounds, as may be gathered from Ezekiel 8:16.

When the Lamanites in this hemisphere, separated themselves from their brethren, by their rebellious spirit, and sought to destroy the Nephites and their records, it was but natural for them to adopt Egyptian sun worship, such as had been practiced by the people of Heliopolis, the city of the father-in-law of Joseph, Potiphora (Gen. 14:45), just as Amenotes did in Egypt, when he decided to establish a new mode of worship there. That is how, through the Lamanites, Egyptian sun worship may have come to America.

There is another peculiar fact connected with this discovery, which should be noticed, by our young people particularly,

It has become fashionable, lately, to regard our civilization, our arts, our intellects, and ourselves as the very highest development from lower and lower civilizations, etc., until we come down to the status of apes, and then from still lower levels down to the single cell.

If there is any foundation for this philosophy, it ought to be confirmed by such discoveries as the objects and industry and art now found in Egypt. But such confirmation is looked for in vain. The paintings made 3,500 years ago are declared to be "fully equal to modern art." The sculptured objects are "superbly molded," "beautiful," and "delicately formed." The furniture, the decorations, the jewelry, the millinery, are so exquisite that it is predicted that the opening of that grave will be the beginning of an era of new ideals in our modern fashions. The designs, and colors, it is said, are absolutely unsurpassed in beauty.

How does that fit into the modern philosophy of unfoldment?

The fact is, that no matter how far back history goes, we meet, in some part of the world, civilized nations on high levels

of culture, while other nations, in other parts, are crawling along on lower levels, just as is the fact today. This is so strikingly true that Maspero, the great French Egyptologist, does not hesitate to say that when we reach the Egypt of the era of the pyramids, we stand in the midst of a civilization that has already begun to decay from an earlier state of perfection. He says that at that time the language was already perishing of old age, the religion was changing, "art was revealing itself the nearer perfection the farther back it went into the past,"<sup>c</sup> and political organizations and social life tended to grow slack.

A simliar tale is told by the fossil remains. The earliest skull found—or rather found in the earliest strata—shows no marks of great inferiority to those of the present day. For ought we know, the Calaveras skull, a fragment of which was unearthed in 1857, in gold-bearing gravel at Table Mountain, California, may have graced the shoulders of a philosopher, and some of the bones from American mounds may be those of former great statesmen, orators, and artists.

This is so true that a scientist recently, after having explained the Mendelian law of heredity and the lessons of fossil remains, added:

"In view of all this, there does not seem to be anything solid on which to build any broad scheme of organic evolution. \* \* \* Personally, I must confess that I have lost all faith in any scheme of evolution which would seek to derive man from the lower animals, or which would endeavor to derive the various orders or classes of animals from some common original. All this is, in the light of modern developments, too wild a scheme to be dignified with the name of even a scientific theory. It is an unscientific pipe-dream."

And this is quoted, not from a speech by Wm. J. Bryan, but from an article in an eastern publication,<sup>d</sup> under the name of George McReady Price, prof. of geology, Union Pacific College, California.

We need have no fear for the Bible. We need not be ashamed of the Book of Mormon; for every new discovery of real scientific worth testifies to their truth. We need not be ashamed of Joseph Smith, for history as it is written today in the daily events proclaims him a prophet of God.

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<sup>c</sup>*New Light On Egypt*, p. 126.

<sup>d</sup>*Dearborn Independent*, February 10, 1923.