

Akhenaten and Moses

Differences between Hebrew and Amarnian Monotheism.

Introduction

Has the Hebrew religion been the first monotheistic movement in the world? Have the Israelites been the first to believe that there is only one God? Has the religious revolution of Moses been the only one who gave an account in the belief of a God who is above all others? The answers to this question can be varied and diverse. There are many archaeologists and anthropologists who have dedicated their lives to the study of ancient religions, and who could answer these questions much better than me. However, what we can answer is that the Hebrew monotheistic revolution has not been the only religious movement to believe in the existence of a single God, and apparently it has not been the first.

Almost at the same time the Israelite exodus appears in the history of Ancient Egypt a period in which Egypt turned to the belief of one God. This period is called, "Period of Amarna", in honor of the modern Egyptian city Tell-el-Amarna, which housed one of the greatest religious reforms of all time in the 14th century BC. C. This reform was led by the tenth pharaoh of the XVIII dynasty named Amenhotep IV, who changed his name to Akhenaten in honor of the god he had chosen to be the sole and sovereign god in Egypt. Although still the Life of Akhenaten and its Reformation still has more questions than answer. Moyra Caldecott says: *"The whole Akhenaten Period is still a matter for conjecture and careful detective work by archaeologist and Egyptologists."*¹

The Religious Reform of Amenhotep IV, in the eyes of many archaeologists, is even more significant and important than the Hebrew religious revolution, since it was

¹ Moyra Caldecott, Akhenaten "Son of the Sun", United Kingdom, Mushromm Publishing, 2003, page 13.

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directed by the same pharaoh, who subjugated for almost 17 years the most important empire in the world of happiness. Epoch, to the belief of a single god called Aten. Bratton says about it: *"This was the first expression in the history of pure monotheism, a conception never to be set forth again in such a cosmic and universal form ..."*²

Without a doubt, the religious and social revolution of Moses has found a historical and cultural parallel. Parallel that undoubtedly involves a direct or indirect relationship, since they are found almost at the same time and in the same region. There have been many scholars who have proposed that both religious reforms have nurtured each other. For them, the question that must be posed in the academic community is not whether they have influenced each other, but which of them influenced the other. Has it been the Reformation of the heretical pharaoh that has had a strong impact on the Jewish Mosaic reform? Or has it been Hebrew religious thought that has influenced the greatest religious reform in the History of Ancient Egypt? This guideline, which is more focused on the similarities and mutual loans between both reforms, often has as its ultimate motive to devalue the Mosaic Religious Reform, and therefore, to reduce the weight and originality of Judaism, and of course Christianity.

However, this project will focus on the substantial differences between the two religious reforms. Our thesis will be about the novelty and originality of the Mosaic Religious Reform, even when these reforms were carried out almost at the same historical time, and in the same country. We will learn that the Amarna Reformation has goals and reasons completely different from the Hebrew Reformation. That is, they were completely different contexts that motivated these reforms, and the purposes, and objectives of both, are clearly different. With this, we will answer the

² Fred G Bratton, the First Heretic, "Life and Times of Ikhnaton", Boston, Beacon Press, 1961.

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following questions: Can we really say that the Religious Reform of Moses has not borrowed from the fundamental theological concepts of the Akhenaten Reform? Are we able to see the distinctive Religious and Social concepts of the Moses Reform with the purpose of validating the originality of Judaism? Can we say that the Reformation of Akhenaten is completely different from the Reformation of Moses? Of course yes.

For my part, I know that a lot of material has been written about the subject. Different references in the different fields of study have already answered many questions. From Freud to Lebold, through Osman to a great scholar like Hoffmeier. However, the originality and novelty of this project is not talking about what has already been said, but presenting an honest look at both Religious Reforms, and most important for me, to present the great differences that existed between them. For the same reason, I do not present here a summary of the life of Akhenaten. I understand that I am leaving many interesting facts aside, just to focus on the novelty of the Moses Reform.

To build a differentiation response between both reforms we must first know the context behind each one. We will know who Akhenaten was, what was the Amarna Period, which led him to choose a single god above all others, and of course what his goals were with that Revolution. On the same path, we will talk about the Hebrew context, its socio-political reasons for its Reformation, and the completely different objectives in its Theology. To conclude, we will build a differential academic framework between both reforms, highlighting with it remarkable distinctive issues between the two Religious Reforms, and also monotheistic, the largest in Ancient History.

Akhenaten

Neferjeperura Amenhotep, Amenhotep IV, or Amenophis IV as it is known in Greek, was the ninth Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt, who ruled for 17 years (1353-1336 BC) the largest empire the world had ever known. Known until then. Son of Amenhotep III and his favorite queen, Queen Tiye. Under his reign, Egypt entered a period of unprecedented religious reform, constituting for the first time in recorded history, a monotheism where Pharaoh chose a single god above all others: Aten. Ahmed Osman tells us about it: *"I have replaced the old gods with a sole God, the Aten. Who had no image or form, to universal God not only for Egypt, but also for Kush (Nubia) in the south and Syria in the north, to God for the whole world."*³

This religious Reformation meant the rupture with the Egyptian polytheistic religion, and with the most influential cult that the Land of the Nile River possessed at that time; the worship of Amun-Ra. Akhenaten was a revolutionary in the most complete sense of the word. He dared to break with the religious order established in Karnak, and diminish the power of the priests of Amun-Ra in Thebes. Without a doubt, to do this he had to have unprecedented will and motivations. Cyril Aldred describes him as: *"A Pharaoh who ostensibly broke with the sacrosanct traditions of a millennium and a half, and showed himself as a human being in the intimate circle of his family, dandling his infant daughters, kissing his wife or taking her on his knee, or leading his mother by the hand"*.⁴

It seems that during the first years, the Rebellious Pharaoh continued to worship Amun-Ra until for some reason that is still unknown, he broke radically with the worship of the main god of Egyptians at the time. Towards the fourth year of his reign he changed his name from Amenhotep, which meant "Amun is satisfied" by

³ Ahmed Osman, Moses and Akhenaten "The Secret History of Egypt at the Time of the Exodus", Rochester, Vermont, Bear & Company, page 20.

⁴ Cyril Aldred, Akhenaten Pharaoh of Egypt – A new study, Blandford, England, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1968, page 11

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Neferjeperura Akhenaten, which means "Useful for Aten". He married Nefertiti about 1370 BC. C, with which it is believed he had 6 daughters.

He is thought to have co-ruled with his father Amenhotep III for 8 years, although Aldred believes that it is unlikely that he has said: *"Such scholars find it difficult to accept that they regard the revolutionary ideas in religion and art introduced by Akhenaten. Exist side by side with the orthodox of Amenophis III"*.⁵ After the death of his father, Amenhotep IV continued with the policy of building great monuments, finishing some that his father had left unfinished. Recall that Amenhotep III, due to his quiet government, was a great builder. Collier says about that the following: *"Amenhotep III was a compulsive builder. Not only was I responsible for the hypostyle hall of Luxor, but also for an even more magnificent forecourt, left unfinished at his death"*.⁶ However, he built immediately after taking power, a temple dedicated to Atem in the eastern part of Karnak "The Gempaaten". Such construction was not seen with good eyes by the priests of Amun-Ra, which took to the decision to leave the historical city, which had been the capital of the Empire by the XVII dynasty. For the same reason, on the 13th of the 8th month, in the fifth year of his reign, he transferred the capital of the Empire, which was Thebas, and built a new capital 400 kilometers north in the middle of the desert, called Akhetaten, the modern Tell-el-Amarna

The discoveries of the Amarna Letters made by Flinders Petrie in 1892,⁷ he tells us that Amenhotep IV built a new capital to establish his reformation and adoration of Aten. In the current Tel-el-Amarna, Akhenaten lived for almost 12 years in the new capital of the Empire, which I call Akhetaten, the city created its new political and religious order. It is believed that forced tens of thousands of people to move to the new capital, to build his palace and temple dedicated to the solar disk Aten, the new god of the largest empire in the world known at the time.

⁵ Cyril Aldred, Akhenaten Paharaoh of Egipt – A new satudy, Bound, Germany, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1968, page 105.

⁶ Joy Collier, The Heretic Pharaoh, New York, The John Day Company, 1972, page 64.

⁷ Eleonore Bille-De Mot, The Age of Akhenaten, Cory, Adam & Mackay Ltd, 1966, page 58.

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Unfortunately, the religious reform of Akhenaten was more obligatory than voluntary, which is why it did not prevail for long after the death of the Revolutionary Pharaoh. This is noticeable, when it is deduced that the city was quickly abandoned after his death. But it can also be inferred, since his son, heir to the Throne, called Tutankathen, quickly changed his name to Tutankhamun, returning with it to the worship of Amun-Ra, and to the vindication of Theba's priesthood. It is quite possible that the return to Amun-Ra has been manipulated by the forgotten Thebas priesthood, rather than by a conviction of the 'Pharaoh Boy'. Howard Carter will say the following: *"Tut-ankh-Amen may have been the tool of political religious movements, whatever political influence of the youth king may have possessed, or whatever his own religious feelings ..."*⁸ With it, all trace of the monotheistic Pharaoh and his reform, was completely destroyed, erasing from history every record of the tenth pharaoh of one of the most powerful dynasties of all Egyptian history. William J. Murnane says: *"Little evidence for dissent survives from this period, but we can infer how unpopular the program was from the speed with which it was abandoned after his founder died."*⁹ History that would be hidden for almost 3,500 years until the nineteenth century the city of Amarna was discovered.

Reasons for the Amarna Reform

Like almost all the great socio-religious phenomena in the history of Humanity, the Religious Reform of Akhenaten between the years 1353-1336 (remember that the dates are hardly exact) was not an overnight event, but rather a process that was gestating through many generations, people, and circumstances. The reform of Akhenaten was only the conclusion of something that had been externalizing since

⁸ Howard Carter, *The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen*, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1927, page 53.

⁹ William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, Atlanta. Georgia, Scholars Press, 1995, page 1.

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long before Amenhotep IV entered the scene. Contrary to what many scholars think, the reform of the heir of Thebes, has nothing to do with the "Heretic Pharaoh", but has been influenced by protagonists prior to this, and under circumstances that merited a break in the country as He had never seen himself before.

Now, there have been many theories to justify the Reformation of Amenhotep IV. Different scholars have tried to explain the reasons that led the young Akhenaten to break with centuries of religious tradition. Many theses have been formulated, and theories of political conspiracies have been constructed. In addition, it has been worked on occasion in the context of speculation. With very few sources, and weak arguments have tried to create hypotheses that have flirted with the most incredible and absurd explanations possible. From psychoanalysis, through approaches of extraterrestrials, philosophical theses, and different religious positions. It has been said of everything, and of all possible ways to explain this Religious revolution that changed the way we read history forever.

However, I want to expose some of the most widely accepted theories among the scientific community. All this to describe that the Amarna Reform, from its origins had great differences of motivations and purposes. For this, we will use three theses that would explain with solid foundations the revolution of the founding Pharaoh of Amarna. It should be added, that we could, as I have mentioned, account for infinities of positions and theories to try to explain this religious phenomenon, however, for the brevity of the project, I will only limit myself to expose the following:

1. Political theory- Priesthood of Amun-Ra

Amun was an ancient god, personification of the occult and the creative power associated with the primitive abyss. It is the god that cannot be seen by men, and invisible to mortals and divine beings. It appears in the inscriptions of the pyramids as a minor god associated with the air. He was known as the "Father of all winds", and for that reason he was known as the god of sailors. His cult came from the Ancient

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Empire in Egyptian history, and during the reign of Dynasty 11 (21st century), he rose to the position of patron in Thebes by replacing Montu. Jorge Dulitzky says the following about Amun: *"Amun was an aristocratic god, whose image remained hidden from the eyes of the people, and represented the power of Egypt over neighboring peoples. He was an oligarchic and national god"*.¹⁰

After the Thebes Revolution against the Hyksos, in the Second Intermediate Empire, Amun came to occupy an importance and relevance without parallel. It was attributed to him the victory against the Hyksos "Kings Invaders", and happened to occupy the paper protagonist in the Egyptian Olympus. Ronald Redford says: *"The kings of the period never tired of piling the booty from foreign campaigns at the feet of Amun, since they ascribed the success of their military ventures to him alone."*¹¹ It was Amosis I, founder of the XVIII dynasty, who chose Amun as the principal god and father of Egypt. To further increase its relevance and importance, the cult of Amun was merged with Ra, which from the year 2400 BC. C had become the Official God of the Pharaohs, calling these as Ra's children, and living reincarnation of this. By merging with the main and most recognized god of all Egypt, Amun, now known as Amun-Ra, became the sovereign god of all.

The Priesthood of Amun-Ra acquired an unprecedented power without limits. From Thebes, specifically Karnak, the priesthood of Amun-Ra controlled all of Egypt. His power was so great, that some scholars claim that they went beyond the powers of Pharaoh himself. Fletcher thinks about the great influence of the priests, Amenhotep III decides to change if capital of Memphis to Thebas: *"There could have been no better place from which to keep things under control than Thebes itself"*.¹² We will not know whether such categorization is true or not, but what we do know is the unlimited

¹⁰ Jorge Dulitzky, Akenaton El faraón olvidado, Mexico DF, Mexico, Lectorum, 2011, pag. 92

¹¹ Ronald B. Redford, Akhenaten The Heretic King, Princeton, New Yersey, Princeton University Press, 1984, page 158.

¹² Joann Fletcher, Chronicle of a Pharaoh "The Intimate Life of Amenhotep III, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, page 50.

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power and authority that the priestly caste of Amun-Ra possessed. Its members occupied high positions in the political affairs of the Government, and many of them became men so rich and influential that it was very difficult for the pharaohs to go against their advice and vision of government. For many scholars, it was the priesthood of Amun-Ra who actually ruled at the time of the New Kingdom.

In the midst of this political and religious context, Akhenaten carried out his Religious Reform. It is very likely that it was a blow on the table in the face of the power and influence of the priesthood in Thebes. For this reason, he transferred his capital to a new city, which would be free of the power and influence of the priesthood of Amun-Ra. However, Akhenaten was not the first to suffer this political pressure from the Theban priesthood. It may be that each of the pharaohs before him, who belonged to the XVIII dynasty, had a certain degree of oppression and problems. However, he was the experience suffered by his father, Amenhotep III, which undoubtedly affected him to a greater degree.

During the almost 40 years of Amenhotep III's reign (1390-1353 BC), he had to deal with the control of the priesthood of Amun-Ra in Thebes. Amenhotep III had to assume the throne from very young, since his father, Thutmose IV, eighth pharaoh of the XVIII dynasty died when this was still very small, probably when the small Amenhotep III was between 6 and 12 years old. By the same token, the influence of the Karnak priesthood was always present in the life of the little pharaoh. I imagine that, from the beginning, the priesthood had complete power over the life of Akhenaten's father. The priests needed it. It had been the family of their ancestors who had placed the religious monopoly in the hands of the servants of Amun-Ra, and it was the dynasty that was to continue to legitimize the power of Thebes.

Apparently Amenhotep III grew in power and authority during his reign. Great Egyptologists say that Amenhotep III was if not the greatest, one of the greatest pharaohs of all time. Joan Fletcher says the following about the ninth pharaoh of the XVIII dynasty: *"The reign of Amenhotep III has been momentous. The King became the*

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*Standard against whom all subsequent pharaohs measured themselves. His name featured prominently in later king list and he appeared as a figure of veneration in later Ramesside tomb scenes.”*¹³ Little by little, one begins to notice how the father of Akhenaten begins to divorce from the influence of the Karnak priesthood, however, he never had the strength, and mostly the determination, to confront the religious power, with the purpose of impose their own terms in their reign.

It was Akhenaten who had the courage and determination to tell Thebes's priesthood: "Enough," "Enough is enough." His revolution was so drastic and radical that he began a public persecution against the priesthood of Amun-Ra in Thebes. He despised the cult in Karnak, and he sent emissaries all over Egypt to let people know about his new disc cult Solar Aten, with the sole purpose of ending the power of the religious community of Thebas. He forbade the worship of Amun-Ra, and almost for safety the worship of all the other Egyptian gods. With this, he took Egypt to a completely different era, creating a strong and solid monotheism, and subjecting all peoples to the flag of the one god: Aten.

With this religious revolution, the pharaoh of Karnak creates a political revolution. Under a new religious order build a new Egypt. A country unified by the "only" god, where the pharaoh presented himself, as his only representative and mediator. This priestly self-proclamation granted him powers and attributions never before seen by a pharaoh of the XVIII dynasty. His power was absolute and totalitarian. This new political perspective (the pharaoh was always considered as a sole sovereign, but due to the power of the priesthood of Amun-Ra was never fully implemented) was totally legitimized by his new religion.

¹³ Joann Fletcher, Egypt's Sun King Amenhotep III, London, Duncan Baird Publishers, 2000, page 163.

2. Psychoanalytic Theory- Traumatic childhood

Another of the great theories that have been constructed to try to account for the Amarna Reform has been using the tools of psychology, strictly psychoanalysis. This theory indicates that Akhenaten has actually had a mystical and transforming encounter with the Religion of Aten. This meeting has been due to the traumatic experience that the son of Amenhotep III has had since childhood. From Sigmund Freud (we will discuss it in more detail later) until different scholars of the subject have investigated the mystical experience that has led the Egyptian Empire to one of the largest religious debacles in its history.

Akhenaten had 6 brothers of father and mother, Pharaoh Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye. He had many more of course other mothers. His older brother named Thutmose, and 5 sisters; Sitamon, Henuttaneb, Isis, Nebeta and Baketaton. Akhenaten was not the heir to the throne. For this reason, I always occupy a secondary position in the royal family. Moreover, in the different archaeological finds that have been found, no record of the Rebel Pharaoh appears. His brother, Thutmose, who was Priest of Ptah in Memphis - title given to the future Pharaoh - occupies all the murals and recognition. Akhenaten was always adrift and in the shadow of the heir, however, what caused him most trauma since childhood was a disease that kept him in the curse of the gods forever.

Akhenaten suffered from Marfan's disease. Through all the paintings that have been found in the archaeological finds, we can see the misshapen structures of his body. Long fingers, elongated head, wide hips, almond shaped eyes, in short, structures of his body that gave account of a severe malformation. Remember that the gods did not accept bad formations in people. Moreover, in most of the cultures of the Fertile Crescent it was believed that when a person was born deformed it was simply because he had been cursed by the gods. That was no exception in the experience of the rebel pharaoh. He grew up thinking he had been cursed by the deity. Because of that, he was not exempted by the priesthood of Amun-Ra. He had simply been cursed

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by the gods, and excluded from any leading role he might have had in the royal family. This accounts for their lack of participation in the social presentations of the family. The young Akhenaten does not appear in any painting or record as a child. Any.

Nor did it help him to be the son of a mother, Queen Tiy, despised by the Court and the noble families of Egypt. Recall that although Amenhotep III had chosen Tiy as the main queen, she was not noble, and her family was of descent without power in the Egyptian social class. No doubt Tiy greatly influenced the young prince, even greater his religion, which came from his father Yuya. Bratton tells us the following: *"The development of Ikhnaton's thought must have been influenced by Tiy, for the King could not have been more than fifteen years of age when I inaugurated his reform."*¹⁴ Now, this caused the young Pharaoh a triple rejection: to be a younger brother, to have a cursed illness, and to be the son of a commoner. Situations that, according to the psychological vision of the Akhenaten Revolution, built in the young prince a life of low self-esteem, and the deep need to feel loved and accepted in his life. No doubt, the forgotten god Aten gave him what the young pharaoh was desperately seeking. Under this experience of rejection, forgetfulness and curse, the future monotheistic pharaoh developed his personality.

There are many who think that Akhenaten was even rejected by his own father, Pharaoh Amenhotep III. Jorge Dulitzki tells us about the matter: *"Modern psychoanalytic theory suggests that the young prince sensed parental rejection. Given his physical weakness, he grew up in the shadow of the figure of a powerful father who prevented him from developing freely and could never overcome the paternal successes in the military and economic fields. That would explain his penchant for intellectual refinement, sentimentality, self-indulgence, the need to surround himself with luxury and devotion to his mother."*¹⁵

¹⁴ Fred G Bratton, *The First Heretic, "Life and Times of Ikhnaton"*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1961, pag 50.

¹⁵ Jorge Dulitzky, *Akenaton El faraón olvidado*, Mexico DF, Mexico, Lectorum, 2011

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However, this assessment lacks force, since it is completely proven that Pharaoh Rebellion co-ruled with his father for almost 8 years. However, what can not be denied is the rejection that is granted to him by the Official Religion of Egypt and by the noble social class of the country of the black lands. With this, Akhenaten chooses a minor and forgotten god to restore his self-confidence and validate his existence. Now, Aten was not any god, but he was the god who adored his entire family. His father, mother, and grandparents (Yuya and Tuya) had chosen Aten. We can arrive at this inference due that it is very easy to see the royal family, worshipping the Solar Disco Aten, in painting of the time. Redford says: *"Thutmose IV and Amenophis III, grandfather and father of Akhenaten, enjoyed a closer relationship with the sun-disc than their predecessors."*¹⁶ Moreover, some scholars think that the temple for Aten that Akhenaten built for Aten in Karnak, was first thought and built by his father, Amenhotep III, and that Akhenaten only finished it. For the same reason, the young rebellious pharaoh does not choose Aten by chance, but he himself feels chosen by the god, to whom he will surrender all his love and fidelity.

However, should we ask who Aten was? For Egyptian mythology, Aten was the spirit that encouraged life on earth. It was Ra at sunset (remember that Ra had 3 different names). At the beginning Aten was represented as a man with the head of a hawk, however, in the days of the eighteenth dynasty, it was represented as the Solar Disk, from which extended outstretched hands towards the believers, holding signs of life. In the Amarna era, Aten was a god of infinite kindness. It was he who vivified justice and cosmic order, Maat, favoring all men equally. The sovereign was his only representative on earth, and the only one who possessed immortality. These characteristics of this forgotten god led Akhenaten to see him as hope in the midst of his problems of recognition and validation. We still do not know if it was Aten's theology that validates the deformed King's experience, or it was the experience of

¹⁶ Ronald B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1984, page 171

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this that constructs Aten's new theology. What we do know is that the Pharaoh with forgotten childhood, saw in the Solar Disc all the necessary attributes to start all over again in Ancient Egypt.

Aten provided security, and the values needed to design a new country and build a new order. He no longer needs a caste of priests (perhaps he fears that the same thing happened with the priests of Amun-Ra), since he is the only representative. He no longer needs to have an image that accounts for the Solar Disk, since Aten is a god that is not represented with any human or animal figure. No need to hide, or represent something that is not, because Aten accepts everyone equally. It does not matter that he is not the heir to the official throne. It does not matter if he comes from a plebeian family. And above all, it does not matter if it is deformed. Aten does not reject anyone. Therefore, it should no longer be hidden. He must no longer pretend something he is not.

Aten gives you the confidence to build sculptures and paintings of it, as it is. With it, it breaks a millenary tradition where the pharaohs were portrayed as men with perfect bodies, and men of war. He does not need that anymore. Aten does not seek it, unlike Amun-Ra, who sought to make his sovereigns brave and victorious men of war. For the same reason, he decides to show himself to the world as it is. The rejected Pharaoh's confidence has grown to unimaginable levels. He no longer cares to portray himself with his physical imperfections. Even more, he decides to show the world that although he has physical deformations, he is loved by his "Father Aten" and his family. Grimal tells us: *"Akhenaten exaggerated this new tendency in depictions of himself and his family ..."*¹⁷ He decides to show paintings of his family intimacy without any limit. Known is his painting with Nefertiti and his 6 daughters showing deep love. His mystical experience has led him to feel special and loved like never before. For scholars of the psychological hypothesis, this is the great basis of the Amarna

¹⁷ Nicolas Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1988, page 233.

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Revolution. The conversion of the King is real (as evidenced by his wonderful poem to the Solar Disc), and his feeling of being loved and accepted will lead him to realize the greatest religious revolution of ancient times.

3. Teoría Religiosa-Akhenaten es propulsor de la reforma hebrea.

For many scholars, the Amarna Reformation is the Historical Introduction to the Hebrew Reformation that took place in the 13th century BC. C in time of Ramses II. Of course, to validate this hypothesis, we must assume the late hypothesis of the Israelite Exodus. With this, we would be accepting that the Amarna Reformation completely influenced the Hebrew Reformation almost two centuries later. This theory posits Aten as a variation of Yahweh. For this, it should be accepted that the tradition of the God of the Hebrews came earlier in the land of Egypt. This would be solved assuming that the Hebrews arrived much earlier in the Land of the Pharaohs. To support this, it is described that Joseph and his family had arrived in Egypt at the time of the Hyksos.

The Hyksos were a powerful group of emigrants who arrived in the Land of the Nile in the mid-eighteenth century, in a time of internal crisis, conquering the land of Avaris. Later they took the city of Memphis and founded the XV and XVI dynasties.

The Hyksos introduced great military strategies, in addition to the chariot and the horse. For many Egyptologists the Hyksos were close to 100 years in the land of the Nile (although there are theories that they were almost 500 years old), however, they never came to have total control of Egypt, especially the south of the region, among them the city of Thebes. The government hicso came to its apogee with one of the most famous pharaohs Hyphos Apophis I. Finally the founder of Dynasty XVIII Nebpehtyra Ahmose, or Amosis I, definitely defeated the Hyksos and expelled them.

According to this theory, Joseph and his family left a great influence in the land of Egypt. His influence was not only cultural, but also theological. According to this line, this theological influence would come from the side of the mother of Akhenaten, Queen Tiy, the favorite wife of Amenhotep III, which is considered one of the women

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with more power in antiquity. Recall that Queen Tiy, despite being the Chief Wife of the ninth Pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty, did not come from a family with royal lineage. His father was Yuya, chief of chariots, and his Mother was Tuyu, which had the title of *"Royal Ornament"*.¹⁸ Yuya was of Asian descent, and many postulate that somehow, if not Hebrew, he had a life influenced by Hebrew theology. Some think that Yuya was the same Joseph: *"es muy probable que el visir Yuya haya sido el José Del Antiguo Testamento"*.¹⁹ Now, after Tiy married Amenhotep III, Yuya went on to occupy a tremendous position and influence. You can see this being the only marriage, not Pharaoh, and no nobles, who were buried in the Valley of the Kings. This hypothesis goes to indicate that three first kings of the period of Amarna (Amenhotep IV, Semenkhekare and Tutankhamun) were direct descendants of the family of Jose. Osman says about it: *"all the Amarna Kings were descended from Joseph."*²⁰

Then the adoration of Aten came from the family of the mother of Akhenaten, which greatly influenced the Reformation of the Rebel Pharaoh. Aldred mentions that during the period of the reign of the father of Akhenaten, the Solar Disk became a relevance never before seen: *"There was thus a progressive increase in the mention and importance of the Aten as a separate divinity throughout the period."*²¹ For this, the family of Queen Tiy had to identify the name of the Asian God Yahweh, with the Egyptian figure of the forgotten god Aten. Therefore, both were the same deity, and somehow the Reformation at Amarna was a pre-Hebraic Reformation. According to this theory, the Amarnian Reformation did not have the expected success, however, it was carried out through the figure of Moses, almost 200 years later. With this, it is concluded that many of those who left Amarna after the death of Akhenaten, were Hebrews and that they continued to worship the Solar Disc in secret, which was none other than Yahweh the Hebrew god.

¹⁸ Cyril Aldred, Akhenaten Pharaoh of Egypt – A new study, Bound, Germany, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1968, page. 43

¹⁹ Jorge Dulitzky, Akenaton El faraón olvidado, Mexico DF, Mexico, Lectorum, 2011, page 87.

²⁰ Ahmed Osman, Moses and Akhenaten "The Secret History of Egypt at the Time of the Exodus", Rochester, Vermont, Bear & Company, page. 41.

²¹ Cyril Aldred, Akhenaten King of Egypt, London, Thames and Hudson, 1988, page 239.

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This theory has a variation, which points out that Moses was really Egyptian, and that he took the Akhenaten Revolution and fulfilled it in the Hebrew people. This hypothesis was made by the world-renowned psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, who identifies Moses as an Egyptian, a direct descendant of the Reform of Pharaoh Akhenaten, based on three essays he wrote between 1934 and 1936. Freud says: *“Moses, was egyptian. It is simply the egyptian Word ‘mose’ meaning ‘child’ and is an abridgement of a fuller form of such names as ‘Amen-mose’ meaning ‘Amon-a-child’...”*²² The essays took the form of a book, which was published in 1939 in Amsterdam, being the last work of the Father of Psychoanalysis, which dies a couple of months later in London at the age of 82 years.

His thesis postulates that Moses is not Hebrew but Egyptian, which transmits to the Jewish people the monotheism of Amarna. According to this theory, Moses is killed by the Jews, and they quickly abandon the teaching of this. For Freud. Moses was an Egyptian aristocrat.²³ However, after some time, the memory repressed by the Jewish community, comes to La Luz originating the Hebrew revolution, their religion and their identity as a people. This thesis had acceptance and rejection in the midst of the scientific community, however, it was the basis for great criticism of the originality of the Hebrew monotheistic movement. From it, many speculations were born, some serious, and some not, however, it is not disputed that it has been one of the most surprising analysis in line with the Egyptian hypothesis of the Hebrew Reformation.

Radicality in the hypothesis that the Monotheistic Revolution of Amarna completely influenced the Hebrew Monotheistic Reformation, will reach its climax, when one thinks, without more or less, that Akhenaten was the same Moses. One of the great precursors of this theory is Ahmed Osman, which says the following: *“Moisés is to be*

²² Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Montevarchi, Italy, Harmakis, Edizioni, 2016. Page 12.

²³ “The conclusion that Moses was a distinguished Egyptian...” Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Montevarchi, Italy, Harmakis, Edizioni, 2016.

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regarded as the Pharaoh Akhenaten".²⁴ Now, there are many more scholars who state that Akhenaten really was Moses, giving this theory more and more strength, but at the same time, more unanswered questions arise from it. Sheldon L Lebold speaking of the religion of Akenathe-Moses as follows: *"The religion could have easily died with Yuya/Joseph and his brothers, except for one thing. Yuya/Joseph had a grandson, Moses/Akenaten."*²⁵

Great differences between Aten and Yahweh.

Finally, and having exposed three of the greatest hypotheses of the Amarna Reform, the time has come to answer the central question of our Thesis. Is there a difference between the Amarna Reform and the Hebrew Reformation? Of course yes. There are great differences between Aten's theology and Yahweh's theology. It is true that some similarities, however, the differences that exist are much larger and more significant. These differences strengthen the originality of the Hebrew Proposal, and break with the possibility of Amarna's influence on it. In addition, we will realize that the Reformation of Akhenaten has more political than religious edges, and we will realize that the Hebrew Monotheistic Reform is unparalleled. We can trust in its originality and its differentiation, to assume that the Jewish Reformation is the Base of a wonderful Religion that changed the world forever. Here are some of the big differences.

1. Aten is Amenhotep III

For some scholars, the Solar Disk Cult was about the Adoration of Amenhotep III. As we have said before, the Aten was not rediscovered by Akhenaten, but was actually

²⁴ Ahmed Osman, *Moses and Akhenaten "The Secret History of Egypt at the Time of the Exodus"*, Rochester, Vermont, Bear & Company, page 17.

²⁵ Sheldon L. Lebold, *The Legacy of Moses and Akhenaten "A Jewish Perspective"*, Chicago, Berwick Publishing Company, 2013, page 104.

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worshiped previously by his predecessors, especially by his father. James K. Hoffmeier tells us the following: *“Raymond Johnson has advanced the view that Amenhotep III was actually deified in his final years and that identifying himself, with the Sun God”*.²⁶ For Johnson, Akhenaten really adored his father Amenhotep III, calling him father, and labeling him as sovereign of everything. The theory of Johnson has a solid base, since in the statue of Amenhotep III discovered in 1989, the King makes himself represent himself as the Solar Disc.²⁷ In relation to the representation of Amenhotep III as deity, David O'Connor tells us: *“Amenhotep III divinity can be seen also in his self-deification at the Nubian temple of Soleb, where he became a lunar deity to whom he himself offered the cult.”*²⁸

By becoming god in life Amenhotep III creates a new concept in Ancient Egypt. Never before has a pharaoh called the living god. Some scholars say about this: *“Amenhotep thus introduced and publicly emphasized a new concept, that of a divine living king”*.²⁹ Until then the pharaohs were considered as children of God, and their deification was realized when they died. However, Akhenaten's father began to call himself god on earth prematurely like never before. His identification with the Solar Disk was so strong that the theory that Akhenaten really adored his father grows stronger every day.

In the Reformation of Moses, Yahweh, the Hebrew God, is not compared to anyone. There are no vestiges that can say that Yahweh was the prototype of any leader,

²⁶ James K. Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, page 34.

²⁷ This life-size figure of the King was discovered in 1989, along with a number of other sculptures, buried in a pit at the west side of the “sun court” which Amenhotep III built in front of his temple at Luxor. Now in the Luxor Museum, the statue represent the king as Atum, wearing the double crown and standing upon a sledge of the type used to drag sacred images in procession. William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, Atlanta. Georgia, Scholars Press, 1995, page 19.

²⁸ David O’Connors and Eric H. Cline, *Amenhotep III Perspectives on His Reign*, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1998, page. 294

²⁹ David P. Silverman, Josef W. Werner, Jennifer Houser Wegner, *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun “Revolution and Restoration”*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006.

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caudillo or warrior. The God of the Hebrews is original in its essence, and its figure is not used to validate the figure of Moses or any representative. Yahweh is completely incomparable, and his presence and Glory have no simile on earth or in heaven. His divine figure has never been seen in Moses or in any other person. Therefore, this is one of the great differences in theological concepts.

2. Akhenaten is the only representative of Aten

The rebel pharaoh considered himself as the only representative of the Solar Disc on Earth. For him, there were no priestly castes, nor prophetic communities to interpret Aten's will. He was the only one able to define the will of the deity, and interpret his commandments. Therefore, everyone should follow Akhenaten and his commandments. The new god had validated and throne the rebel pharaoh, and everyone should follow his precepts. Redford says of this: *"He was the Disc's image on earth, and for that reason occupied the central position in the whole system."*³⁰ For this reason, the teachings of the King are infallible, and his person is the living image of Aten who rules from the heavens. Rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices are no longer needed. The people had direct access to the deity. In Aten's eyes all human beings were equal. Pierre Gilbert tells us: *"There is no more mythology, no more conventio; nothing but direct effusion of the soul before the beauty of the sun and of nature that draws life from it."*³¹ All were able to say with their own lips the prayers necessary to reach Aten. However Akhenaten was the only apostle and prophet.³²

In this case, the Hebrew Reformation is more communal than individualistic. It is true that Moses is the representative of God in the people, but the will of the Almighty is not interpreted only through his mouth. The Hebrew Reformation contains 10 commandments, and hundreds of laws that regulate civil and religious society in

³⁰ Ronald B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1984.

³¹ Pierre Gilbert, *La poesie egyptienne*, Bruxelles, 1943.

³² Sir Alan Gardiner, *The Egyptians An Introduction*, London, The Folio Society, 1961, page 217.

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Israel. Moses is not the only authoritative voice, but it is the Law that regulates what God wants. In addition, the Hebrew Reformation has other leaders, such as Aaron and Mary, as pillars in the leadership of the Reformation. In addition, the Hebrew Reformation will have a priestly caste to organize and administer worship for Yahweh. Big difference between both Reforms. Amara seems to be an individualist Reformation, Exodus is a more communitarian Reformation.

3. Aten is representing as the Solar Disk.

Aten had shape and image in the time of Amarna. Although many scholars tell us that Aten was not represented by any figure on earth, as Osman says: *"The Aten, who had no image or form..."*³³; we know from the different archeological findings that Aten was represented as a Solar Disk, from which long arms with hands that caressed his faithful were detached. Eleonore Bille-De Mot says *"The radiating disk, which serves as the eloquent image of divinity, can be understood by everyone."*³⁴ For the same reason, we have no doubt that Aten represented himself as the Solar Disco, and his image could be seen in the different murals and paintings of the Amarna era. Ian Shaw says about it: *"A disc with rays ending in hands that touch the King and his family, extending symbols of life and power towards them and receiving their offerings."*³⁵

On the contrary, Yahweh never had an image or representation. Moreover, one of the great commandments of the Reformation of Moses was: "You shall not make an image before me ..." (Exodus 20: 4-6). The Hebrew Religion did not allow images, nor figures of anything. Yahweh had no representation, no figure to worship. Never before in History, there was a religion that did not have an image to rely on for Adoration. Other big differences between Aten and Yahweh.

³³ Ahmed Osman, Moses and Akhenaten "The Secret History of Egypt at the Time of the Exodus", Rochester, Vermont, Bear & Company, page 20.

³⁴ Eleonore Bille-De Mot, The Age of Akhenaten, Cory, Adam & Mackay Ltd, 1966, page 89.

³⁵ Ian Shaw, The oxford History of Ancient Egypt, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, page 927.

4. Aten is the Only God

Another of the great differences between the Amarna Reformation and the Hebrew Reformation is monotheism. Apparently Pharaoh Rebel's experience with Aten was somehow so revolutionary that the king quickly considered Aten as the One and Sovereign God. Bratton says: *"The genius of his reform lay in his conviction that the sun-god was not only the god of the whole world; he was the only god."*³⁶... Redford will point to Aten as the creator of everything, who supports everything *"All life depends on the Disc..."*³⁷. Although it is good to add that, one of the first works that were published about the Amarna letters, they do not describe Aten as the only god: *"There was nothing strikingly exalted in the religion which was now so filling the king's mind. Ra-Horakhti Aton was in no wise considered as the only God."*³⁸

Unlike the radical Monotheism of the Amarna Reformation, the Reformation of Moses does not claim that Yahweh is the only god. It seems that the Reformation of Moses is more enoteist than monotheistic. That is to say, one believes in a god above all others, but does not deny the existence of others. Moses himself will say in Exodus 15:11 "Who is like your Lord among the gods" ... This makes it clear that Hebrew monotheism was an issue that developed over the centuries, and through the progressive revelation of God. It seems that after the exile of the Northern Kingdom (587-538) the figure that Yahweh is the only God was gaining strength, until developing an absolute monotheism. Therefore, this unique view between Aten and Yahweh is another of the great differences between both Reforms.

³⁶ Fred G Bratton, *The First Heretic, "Life and Times of Ikhnaton"*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1961, page 81.

³⁷ Ronald B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1984, page. 177

³⁸ Arthur, E. P. Weigall, *The Life and Times of Akhenaton*, Edinburgh, William Blackwood and Sons, 1911.

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Although many theologians have tried to describe that the Jewish experience and its religious reform were monotheistic, it seems that in principle Yahweh was not considered as the only God, however, he was considered the most powerful of all.

5. Aten is only Father of Akhenaten.

Another of the theological differences between Aten and Yahweh is the title he gives to the King. Akhenaten has as its only father the Solar Disc, and this considers the King as his only son. There are many poems that are preserved and that mark this intimate relationship between the king and his god. Bratton comments: *"For the first time in history, God was conceived as the father of all mankind"*.³⁹ Now there are other Egyptologists who say that Aten was the father of all⁴⁰, but in practice, the only one who enjoyed his benefits was the king of Amarna.

It seems that Akhenaten returns to the roots of the theology of the Fourth Dynasty, where the King was considered the son of the sun god Ra. Recall that it was in the Fourth Dynasty that Giza, Saqqara and Abusir were built. Some Egyptologist will tell us that the Rebel King apparently wants to return to the magnificent times of the fourth dynasty.⁴¹ Base of this would be by his constant interest in the city Heliópolis, where I build some monuments. That is why, the king calling father his god is not bringing something new, however, by calling the sun god father, making reference to the god-king relationship of dynasty 4, is rediscovering with it a lost concept.

Now, the Religion of Moses does not take particular and special relationships with anyone. Moses never calls a father to Yahweh, nor does Yahweh ever call Moses a son. The Father Son relationship is communal. The third Isaiah will tell us that Yahweh is

³⁹ Fred G Bratton, *The First Heretic, "Life and Times of Ikhnaton"*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1961, page 122.

⁴⁰ Eleonore Bille-De Mot, *The Age of Akhenaten*, Cory, Adam & Mackay Ltd, 1966, page 89.

⁴¹ David P. Silverman, Josef W. Werner, Jennifer Houser Wegner, *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun "Revolution and Restoration"*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006, page 29.

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the father of the entire nation of Israel (Isaiah 63:16; 64: 9). Its roots are not in Abraham, but in God himself. This communitarian vision of the Father-Son relationship in my opinion is one of the great differences that exists between the Religion of Amarna, and the Religion of the Exodus.

1. Aten no es un Dios de misericordia y Amor.

Another of the great differences between Aten and Yahweh, has to do with its essence of love and merciful nature. Ronald Redford tells us: *"he seems not to show no compassion in his creatures... No text tells us he hears the cry of the poor man, or succors the sick, or forgives the sinner."*⁴² It seems that this loving perspective of Aten does not serve the purposes of the king and his reform. The only beloved is he, and who he chooses. Aten's love and his loving hands are only for his chosen and his family.

⁴² Ronald B. Redford, *Akhenaten The Heretic King*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1984, page 179.

Conclusion

Akhenaten and the Amarna Reformation has been one of the great mysteries of Ancient Egypt. Many have been fascinated, and have tried to answer different questions that are born according to the influence they had on the Hebrew Monotheism. For this reason, I have tried to make a brief synthesis of the History of Akhenaten, organized by a thematic line that serves as a basis to talk more about the differences than the theories of loans and influence. For this reason, I have presented 6 points to talk about the originality of the Reformation of Moses, in order to separate it from those who see in the Reformation of Moses a continuation of the Reformation of Amarna.

There are many other differences between the Amarna Reformation and the Hebrew Reformation. I could be citing many more things that separate one from the other, however, I firmly believe that the ones I have exposed can be a sufficient basis to support the basis for the differentiation between the two. It should be added that these differences I have not taken from any text or publication, but that it has been an original construction that is born after reflecting, reading, and studying about the subject. In addition to this, give us enough tools to respond satisfactorily to the central question of this project: Are there differences between the two reforms? As we have already detailed, we can answer that of course yes. Differences that strengthen the Jewish experience with the God who has chosen them above all other peoples, and who is the introduction in the world to the coming of Jesus Christ more than a thousand years later.

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