

The Urantia Book

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Excerpts on:

Ikhnaton

P. 1047-9

The teachings of Amenemope were slowly losing their hold on the Egyptian mind when, through the influence of an Egyptian Salemite physician, a woman of the royal family espoused the Melchizedek teachings. This woman prevailed upon her son, Ikhnaton, Pharaoh of Egypt, to accept these doctrines of One God.

Since the disappearance of Melchizedek in the flesh, no human being up to that time had possessed such an amazingly clear concept of the revealed religion of Salem as Ikhnaton. In some respects this young Egyptian king is one of the most remarkable persons in human history. During this time of increasing spiritual depression in Mesopotamia, he kept alive the doctrine of El Elyon, the One God, in Egypt, thus maintaining the philosophic monotheistic channel which was vital to the religious background of the then future bestowal of Michael. And it was in recognition of this exploit, among other reasons, that the child Jesus was taken to Egypt, where some of the spiritual successors of Ikhnaton saw him and to some extent understood certain phases of his divine mission to Urantia.

Moses, the greatest character between Melchizedek and Jesus, was the joint gift to the world of the Hebrew race and the Egyptian royal family; and had Ikhnaton possessed the versatility and ability of Moses, had he manifested a political genius to match his surprising religious leadership, then would Egypt have become the great monotheistic nation of that age; and if this had happened, it is barely possible that Jesus might have lived the greater portion of his mortal life in Egypt.

Never in all history did any king so methodically proceed to swing a whole nation from polytheism to monotheism as did this extraordinary Ikhnaton. With the most amazing determination this young ruler broke with the past, changed his name, abandoned his capital, built an entirely new city, and created a new art and literature for a whole people. But he went too fast; he built too much, more than could stand when he had gone. Again, he failed to provide for the material stability and prosperity of his people, all of which reacted unfavorably against his religious teachings when the subsequent floods of adversity and oppression swept over the Egyptians.

Had this man of amazingly clear vision and extraordinary singleness of purpose had the political sagacity of Moses, he would have changed the whole history of the evolution of religion and the revelation of truth in the Occidental world. During his lifetime he was able to curb the activities of the priests, whom he generally discredited, but they maintained their cults in secret and sprang into action as soon as the young king passed from power; and they were not slow to connect all of Egypt's subsequent troubles with the establishment of monotheism during his reign.

Very wisely Ikhnaton sought to establish monotheism under the guise of the sun-god. This decision to approach the worship of the Universal Father by absorbing all gods into the worship of the sun was due to the counsel of the Salemite physician. Ikhnaton took the generalized doctrines of the then existent Aton faith regarding the fatherhood and motherhood of Deity and created a religion which recognized an intimate worshipful relation between man and God.

Ikhnaton was wise enough to maintain the outward worship of Aton, the sun-god, while he led his associates in the disguised worship of the One God, creator of Aton and supreme Father of all. This young teacher-king was a prolific writer, being author of the exposition entitled "The One God," a book of thirty-one chapters, which the priests, when returned to power, utterly destroyed. Ikhnaton also wrote one hundred and thirty-seven hymns, twelve of which are now preserved in the Old Testament Book of Psalms, credited to Hebrew authorship.

The supreme word of Ikhnaton's religion in daily life was "righteousness," and he rapidly expanded the concept of right doing to embrace international as well as national ethics. This was a generation of amazing personal piety and was characterized by a genuine aspiration among the more intelligent men and women to find God and to know him. In those days social position or wealth gave no Egyptian any advantage in the eyes of the law. The family life of Egypt did much to preserve and augment moral culture and was the inspiration of the later superb family life of the Jews in

Palestine.

The fatal weakness of Ikhnaton's gospel was its greatest truth, the teaching that Aton was not only the creator of Egypt but also of the "whole world, man and beasts, and all the foreign lands, even Syria and Kush, besides this land of Egypt. He sets all in their place and provides all with their needs." These concepts of Deity were high and exalted, but they were not nationalistic. Such sentiments of internationality in religion failed to augment the morale of the Egyptian army on the battlefield, while they provided effective weapons for the priests to use against the young king and his new religion. He had a Deity concept far above that of the later Hebrews, but it was too advanced to serve the purposes of a nation builder.

Though the monotheistic ideal suffered with the passing of Ikhnaton, the idea of one God persisted in the minds of many groups. The son-in law of Ikhnaton went along with the priests, back to the worship of the old gods, changing his name to Tutankhamen. The capital returned to Thebes, and the priests waxed fat upon the land, eventually gaining possession of one seventh of all Egypt; and presently one of this same order of priests made bold to seize the crown.

But the priests could not fully overcome the monotheistic wave. Increasingly they were compelled to combine and hyphenate their gods; more and more the family of gods contracted. Ikhnaton had associated the flaming disc of the heavens with the creator God, and this idea continued to flame up in the hearts of men, even of the priests, long after the young reformer had passed on. Never did the concept of monotheism die out of the hearts of men in Egypt and in the world. It persisted even to the arrival of the Creator Son of that same divine Father, the one God whom Ikhnaton had so zealously proclaimed for the worship of all Egypt.

The weakness of Ikhnaton's doctrine lay in the fact that he proposed such an advanced religion that only the educated Egyptians could fully comprehend his teachings. The rank and file of the agricultural laborers never really grasped his gospel and were, therefore, ready to return with the priests to the old-time worship of Isis and her consort Osiris, who was supposed to have been miraculously resurrected from a cruel death at the hands of Set, the god of darkness and evil.




The teaching of immortality for all men was too advanced for the Egyptians. Only kings and the rich were promised a resurrection; therefore did they so carefully embalm and preserve their bodies in tombs against the day of judgment. But the democracy of salvation and resurrection as taught by Ikhnaton eventually prevailed, even to the extent that the Egyptians later believed in the survival of dumb animals.

Although the effort of this Egyptian ruler to impose the worship of one God upon his people appeared to fail, it should be recorded that the repercussions of his work persisted for centuries both in Palestine and Greece, and that Egypt thus became the agent for transmitting the combined evolutionary culture of the Nile and the revelatory religion of the Euphrates to all of the subsequent peoples of the Occident.

The glory of this great era of moral development and spiritual growth in the Nile valley was rapidly passing at about the time the national life of the Hebrews was beginning, and consequent upon their sojourn in Egypt these Bedouins carried away much of these teachings and perpetuated many of Ikhnaton's doctrines in their racial religion.

THE
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BOOK

A Revelation for Humanity

		
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