

symbol was the winged solar disk, and permitted the children of the royal family to be brought up under the influence of this new and heretical religion. The court became to a large extent an Asiatic or Semitic court. The power of the priesthood of Amon (the Supreme God of Egypt) had been absolute from the rise of the 18th dynasty, and the wealth of the conquests of the earlier kings had been poured with unstinting hands into the treasury of Amon. Thebes had grown in magnificence and the priesthood had waxed fat.

The great king Amenophis III. had in no way fallen behind his predecessors in gifts, as shown by his monuments at Thebes, but now the harem influence was opposed to the sodality and the college of Amon. Upon the death of Amenophis III. he was succeeded by his son Amenophis IV., the most interesting figure in the history of Egypt, though at this time a mere boy of thirteen years. He was at first absolutely under the control of his mother, the great royal wife Teie, who was a woman of immense energy and will, and who boldly threw off all masks and defied the priesthood of Amon. The very heart of the court of Egypt was now converted to the Monotheistic religion of the Semitic people. Soon after the king's marriage with a princess from Mitanni, a relation of Teie's, and an earnest worshipper of the cult of Aten, he changed the name of Amenophis, which his predecessors had borne in honour of the god Amon, and was henceforth known as Khu-en-aten. The solar disk is "Aten," and "Khu" means glory, so this king calls himself "the glory of the solar disk."

The Semitic people of the North represented their deity in the form of a circular disk with wings on either side of it. Here we have the one God supreme over all others represented in His most majestic form, as the sun with wings. That these wings symbolized not only speed but protection is shown by one of the scenes on the now famous bowl of Palestrina, where, in a time of great peril during a royal hunt, chariot and horses and riders are all lifted up into the heavens and are enveloped in the wings and arms of the solar disk, to indicate that they will be protected by the Divine power. When the writers of Old Testament therefore spoke of abiding under the shadow of the Divine wings, and of being hidden under His feathers; when Boaz blessed his Moabitish relative, who had come to trust under the shadow of

the wings of the God of Israel; when Malachi speaks of the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings, these writers had no inadequate and belittling figure of a bird brooding over her young, but a vastly more majestic and worthy figure, the most majestic which the ancient mind could conceive of the Supreme One God, something utterly different and vastly larger than the thought of a terrestrial bird. The new faith was simply a resort to nature and to nature's God, who is now recognized as *one*, and though the new religion was not an ethical religion the entire movement was far in advance of the age.\*

The change of name was the outward sign and token of a religious revolution. The name of Amon was, by order of the heretic king, proscribed and erased from the monuments, temples, tombs and quarries alike, and even the name of the king's own father which contained it was not spared. It was not long before the Pharaoh and the powerful priesthood of Thebes were at open war. But the priesthood proved too strong for the king. The real power in Egypt was the hierarchy. One dynasty might rise and fall and be succeeded by another, but the priesthood went on forever. No dynasty could long stand in opposition to the priesthood. Khu-en-aten was forced to leave his royal city of Thebes, the capital of his fathers, and build himself a new city further north; this he called by his own new name of Khu-en-aten. It is the site of this heretical city that is now covered by the mounds of Tel-el-Amarna, and it is the correspondence office of this city that the peasant woman found in the fall of 1887.

Here the king reared his palace, the grandest man ever dwelt in, and here in the centre of the city rose the great temple of Aten. With him to his new capital the king carried the correspondence and the state papers of both his father and himself. The high positions about the court were now filled with foreigners, whose names proclaim their Canaanitish origin; even the Vizier was called Dudu, to which the name of David is akin, and the court itself became more than ever Semitic.

The domestic life at the palace seems all this time to have been all love, music and flowers. Again and again we meet with representations of the king and

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\* See also Isaiah's expression for Egypt:—"The land shadowing with wings," Isaiah xviii. 1—a reference, perhaps, to the wide-winged orbs which may still be seen on the great temple pylons.—Ed.