

PHARAOH OF MOSES: A QURANIC PROPHECY FULFILLED

Dr. Amtul Qudoos Farhat

We (Allah) rehearse unto thee a portion of the story of Moses and Pharaoh with truth, for the benefit of a people who would believe. (Al Quran 28:04)

We sent Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they unjustly rejected them. Behold, then, what was the end of those who created disorder! (Al Quran 7:104)

This day shall We save you (O Pharaoh) in your body, that you may be a Sign to those who come after you! But indeed, many among mankind are neglectful of Our Signs. (Al Quran 10:93)

Pharaoh who denied the prophethood of Moses died more than 3000 years ago. More than 1500 years after the Pharaoh's death, the Holy Quran prophesized that Pharaoh's body has been saved. In the 19th century, the prophecy of the Holy Quran became fulfilled when Pharaoh's mummy was discovered.



Mummy of Ramesses II (left) and Merneptah (Right)

The word 'Pharaoh':

Since the term Pharaoh has been used for multiple kings of ancient Egypt, it should be established as to which Pharaoh the Holy Quran prophesizes about and whether this is the same Pharaoh whose dead body was found in the 19th century.

According to the book *Reading the Past-Egyptian Hieroglyphics*, published by the British Museum, Egyptians did not call their rulers 'Pharaoh' until the 18th Dynasty (1552 - 1295 BC).¹ The title Pharaoh was coined to designate the king from the new kingdom onward. In the language of the hieroglyphs, 'Pharaoh' was first referred to the king during the reign of Amenophis IV (1352-1338 BC). Prior to this period 'Pharaoh' was

used for majestic buildings and palaces.² The ruler of Egypt in the time of the prophet Moses, may peace be on him, is called Pharaoh in the Holy Quran. The Book of Exodus, in the Holy Bible also refers to him as Pharaoh in at least 120 places.

Dynasties of Pharaohs:

The period of the New Kingdom (1600 BC-1150 BC) / (1552-1068 BC) corresponds to the Mosaic Period.³ The kings and Pharaohs who ruled during this period include: Ahmose, Amenhotep (Amenophis), Tuthmose (Thuthmosis), Hatshepsut, Akhenaten (Amenophis IV), Tutankhamen, Horemheb, Seti (Sethos), Ramesses and Merenptah. Since the prophet Moses lived around 13th century BC so one of these rulers must have been the Pharaoh of Mosaic period.⁴ The ancient kingdom of Egypt is divided in to periods and dynasties: Table: 1

Number	Period	Approximate Years	Dynasty
1	The Early Dynastic Period	3000-2600 B.C.	The first & second Dynasties
2	The Old Kingdom	2600-2100 B.C.	The Third to Eighth Dynasties
3	The First Intermediate Period	2100-2050 B.C.	Ninth and Tenth Dynasties
4	The Middle Kingdom	2050-1800 B.C.	The Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties
5	The Second Intermediate Period	1800-1600 B.C.	The Thirteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties
6	<i>The New Kingdom</i>	<i>1600-1150 B.C.</i>	<i>The Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties</i>
7	The Late Dynastic Period	1150-330 B.C.	The Twenty-First to Thirtieth Dynasties

The Pharaoh of Moses a Transgressor according to the Quran:

When Moses and Aaron, may peace be on both, were commissioned to prophet hood, they were directed to deliver the message of Allah to Pharaoh, the arrogant and the transgressor. They asked him to liberate the Israelites from his bondage and there are several mentions of this communication in the Holy Quran:

We are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds. (26:17) (20:25) (20:44)

And We did send Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said, 'I am truly a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.' (43:47) (7:105)

Indeed, Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the earth, and divided the people thereof into parties: he sought to weaken a party of them, slaying their sons, and sparing their women. Certainly, he was of the mischief-makers. (28:05)

Pharaoh proclaimed to be the lord himself and challenged the supreme authority of Allah. He said: 'Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?' (20:50) 'What then will be the fate of the former generations?' (20:52)

'O chiefs, I know of no God for you other than myself; (23:39) "If thou takest a God other than me, I will certainly put thee into prison.' (26:30)

‘O my people! does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me and these streams flowing under me? Do you not then see?’ (43:52)

His people didn’t accept the message because of fear of persecution, according to the Holy Quran:

And none obeyed Moses save some youths from among his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, lest he should persecute them. And of a truth, Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land and surely he was of the transgressors. (10:84) (20:80) (23:47)

Pharaoh challenged, ‘If thou (Moses) hast indeed come with a Sign, then produce it, if thou art of the truthful.’ (7:107) And We did show him (Pharaoh) Our Signs, all of them; but he rejected *them* and refused *to believe*. (20:57) (10:76) (17:02)

Moses explained to him again: ‘Thou knowest well that none has sent down these Signs but the Lord of the heavens and the earth as so many evidences; and I certainly think thee, O Pharaoh, to be a ruined man.’ (17:103)

Pharaoh invited wrath of God and in doing so he was a transgressor. He called Moses a ‘mad man,’ ‘a magician,’ ‘a liar’ (40:25) and threatened to kill him (40:27).

Exodus:

Dr. Maurice Bucaille writes about Exodus in his book, *the Bible the Quran and Science* examines whether Moses dealt with one Pharaoh or two different ones in his life time. He writes, “This hypothesis, which starts with the Bible, is complemented by the information contained in the Qur'an. Modern data are added to these two Scriptural sources and it is thus possible, through a confrontation between the Bible, the Qur'an and today's knowledge, to situate this episode from the Holy Scriptures in a historical context.”

The Holy Quran tells how Israelites under the guidance of Moses and Aaron planned to cross the Red Sea, and how they were chased by Pharaoh of the time and his hosts and in doing so, they all drowned:

“We brought the Children of Israel across the sea and Pharaoh and his troops pursued them out of tyranny and enmity. Then, when he was on the point of drowning, he (Pharaoh) said, I believe that there is no god but Him in whom the Children of Israel believe. I am of those who submit to God. What! Now! And indeed you disobeyed before and you were of the mischief-makers. This day shall We save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those who come after you! But indeed, many among mankind are neglectful of Our Signs.” (Al Quran 10:90-92)

The Holy Quran reveals detailed account of the last moments of Pharaoh while drowning. It reveals that Pharaoh accepted and submitted to the God of Moses Who promised him to be saved in body and made a sign for the world.

This is the prophecy which no other scripture had revealed. Not even the historians of the time had any clue. The mummified bodies of all the Pharaohs lay concealed in the Valley of Kings (KV7 & 8) along the banks of the Nile at this time and even the plunderers of tombs did not know who was buried in them. Their discovery took place in the 19th century.

The Old Testament also gives the account of Pharaoh as follows:

"And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. (Exodus 14:28) For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the Children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea." (Exodus 15:19)

Unlike the Holy Quran, in this account of the Old Testament, there is neither any clue of the last moments of Pharaoh nor of the destiny and fate of his mummy in years to come. All it mentions is that all of them drowned.

According to Dr. Maurice Bucaille:

"When the Qur'an was transmitted to man by the Prophet, the bodies of all the Pharaohs who are today considered (rightly or wrongly) to have something to do with the Exodus were in their tombs of the Necropolis of Thebes, on the opposite side of the Nile from Luxor. At the time however, absolutely nothing was known of this fact, and it was not until the end of the Nineteenth century that they were discovered there. As the Qur'an states, the body of the Pharaoh of the Exodus was in fact rescued: whichever of the Pharaohs it was, visitors may see him in the Royal Mummies Room of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. The truth is therefore very different from the ludicrous legend that Father Couroyer has attached to the Qur'an."^{5 6}

Who was the Pharaoh of Moses: Ramesses II or his son Merneptah?

The name of Pharaoh whom Moses gave the message of God has not been mentioned in the Holy Bible or the Holy Quran.

Scholars have placed Moses at various points within the New Kingdom from Tuthmosis II (1493-1479 BC) to Merneptah (1212-1202 BC).⁷ The Academic American Encyclopedia situates Moses in the 13th century BC and the Exodus taking place in 1250 BC. By historical and religious consensus Moses was born and brought up by Ramesses II son of Seti, the first (1301-1235 BC) who ruled for more than 65 years.⁸ According to Encyclopedia Britannica, as it describes Ramesses II the Great, "He was the third king of the 19th dynasty (1292–1190 bce) of ancient Egypt, whose reign (1279–13 bce) was the second longest in Egyptian history. In addition to his wars with the Hittites and Libyans, he is known for his extensive building programs and for the many colossal statues of him found all over Egypt."⁹

Merneptah, the warrior king of Palestine was his successor who ruled only for few years (4-8 years).

Holt's World History: A Dictionary of important people, places and events, identifies Merneptah as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Similarly the Egyptologist Pierre Montet in his book 'Egypt and the Bible' also concludes that Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.¹⁰ The Hutchison New Century Encyclopaedia also believes that Merneptah was most likely the Pharaoh at that time.

According to Father de Vaux's theory there was a single ruler during the period of Moses life time. (The Ancient History of Israel) and that unquestionably makes Ramesses II the Pharaoh of Moses.

Actually, as early as Eusebius of Caesarea, Ramesses II was identified as the Pharaoh of Exodus. The most popular and authentic film on Christianity 'The Ten Commandments' released in 1958 cast Yul Brynner as Ramesses II, the Pharaoh of Exodus.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica:

"The reign of Ramses II marks the last peak of Egypt's imperial power. After his death Egypt was forced on the defensive but managed to maintain its suzerainty over Palestine and the adjacent territories until the later part of the 20th dynasty, when the migration of militant Sea Peoples into the Levant ended Egypt's power beyond its borders."¹¹

So far historians agree that the Pharaoh of Exodus was either the Ramesses II or his son Merneptah. Both of them were cruel and despotic to Israelites and bodies of both have been found and displayed in Cairo Museum for visitation.

For the purposes of the Quranic prophecy, it does not matter whether Ramesses II or Merneptah was the Pharaoh of Exodus. Since the bodies of both, Ramses II and Merneptah have been found, confirmed medically and displayed for visitation for all mankind in the Cairo Museum; bearing testimony to the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Holy Quran 1500 years ago!

The elegance of the Quranic prophecy:

This day shall We save you (O Pharaoh) in your body, that you may be a Sign to those who come after you! But indeed, many among mankind are neglectful of Our Signs." (Al Quran 10:93)

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad writes in his book *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*:

"All that the Bible mentions of Pharaoh and his pursuing army is that each of them was drowned without exception.

'Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea...'
(Exodus 14:28–29)

Evidently, according to this Biblical statement, all bodies were claimed by the sea, Pharaoh being no exception. The rout was total. As against this, the following is the statement of the Quran referring to the same event. The difference is so obvious:

‘And We brought the children of Israel across the sea; and Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them wrongfully and aggressively, till, when the calamity of drowning overtook him, he said, 'I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit to Him.'

What! Now! While thou wast disobedient before this and wast of those who create disorder.

So this day We will save thee in thy body alone that thou mayest be a Sign to those who come after thee. And surely, many of mankind are heedless of Our Signs.

It should be especially noted here that contrary to this Quranic statement, the Biblical account does not as much as hint at the possibility of the retrieval of Pharaoh's body: '... not so much as one of them remained.' (Al Quran 10:91-93)

Hence, till the time the Quran mentions the saving of Pharaoh's body with the purpose that the posterity may learn their lesson from it, no human source of history had ever referred to it.

When the Quran was revealed, the tombs of the Egyptian kings lay buried deep under layer upon layer of desert sand. Little was known of the science of mummification to the people of that age, certainly not to the Arabs. No books or tradition, religious or otherwise, had ever hinted at the rescue of Pharaoh's body let alone mention its subsequent preservation. This account of the Quran is unique also in the sense that it does not merely reveal some past events which were till then unknown to the rest of the world, but it also prophesizes that the future would testify to the truth of the Quranic statement. It was implausible enough to conceive that the body of Pharaoh having drowned in the conditions described by the Bible, could be retrieved. The phenomenon of such a body, even if retrieved, would present no small problem for the purpose of mummification.

Yet, this is what the Quran claims. No man could have dreamt of making such a statement contrary to the available historical evidence at the time of the revelation of the Quran.¹²

The contrast between the Quranic and the Biblical description is very glaring and speaks volumes about the elegance of the Quran and its special status among the scriptures.

Discovery of the mummy of Ramesses II:

It was discovered in 1881 among many other royal mummies in the Royal Cache in Deir el-Bahri (DB320) on the Theban west-bank. It was contained in a closely contemporary anthropoid wooden coffin and was superficially intact. The mummy was unwrapped by Gaston Maspero at Bulaq on June 03, 1886. A hieratic docket recording its rewrapping and reburial in the tomb of Seti I (KV17) was found beneath the outer bandages and a shroud decorated within an image of the goddess Nut.

The examination gave hints to the original burial. The linen fragments, woven in blue and metallic gold were discovered within the body. A microscopic examination of sand particles associated with the body suggested that pharaoh was embalmed in the north of Egypt, at some distance from the Nile. This is because no aquatic-plant pollen was found in the body. He was suffering from severe dental problems and was plagued by arthritis and hardening of the arteries. He died at about 90 years of age.

According to the recordings of hieroglyphics on the linen covering the body of the Ramesses II, he was originally buried in the tomb KV7 in the Valley of the Kings. It was removed from the actual royal tomb for safety reasons by Egyptian priests in the 10th year of the reign of king Pinudjem (around 1070 B.C.) and transferred to a holding area. They re-wrapped it and then placed it inside the tomb of queen Inhapy. Within three days it was again moved to the tomb of the high priest Pinudjem II. His mummy can be found today in Cairo's Egyptian Museum:

The pharaoh's mummy features a hooked nose and strong jaw, and is below average height for an ancient Egyptian, standing some 1.7 metres (5 ft 7 in). Microscopic inspection of the roots of Ramesses II's hair at a later stage proved that the original color of the king's hair was red suggesting the origin from a family of redheads. In ancient Egypt, people with red hair were associated with the god Seth, the slayer of Osiris, and the name of Ramesses II's father, Seti I, means 'follower of Seth.'

In 1974, the mummy of Ramesses II was flown to Paris for examination. He was issued an Egyptian passport that listed his occupation as 'King (deceased).' The mummy was received at Le Bourget airport, just outside Paris, with the full military honours befitting a king. In Paris, Ramesses's mummy was diagnosed and treated for a fungal infection. During the examination, scientific analysis revealed battle wounds and old fractures, as well as the Pharaoh's arthritis and poor circulation. For the last decades of his life, Ramesses II was essentially crippled with arthritis and walked with a hunched back. Recent studies however excluded ankylosing spondylitis as a possible cause of the Pharaoh's arthritis. A significant hole in the Pharaoh's mandible was detected while "an abscess by his teeth was serious enough to have caused death by infection, although this cannot be determined with certainty. When Ramesses' mummy returned to Egypt, it was visited by the then-President Anwar Sadat and his wife.



Valley of the Kings-Tomb of Ramesses II and his sons

Mummy of Merneptah:

The mummy of Merneptah was discovered in 1898 along with eighteen other mummies in the tomb of Amenhotep II. It is believed that he was originally buried in the Valley of the Kings. The mummy was unwrapped and identified in Cairo by Dr. G. Elliott Smith on July 8, 1907

In 1975, Dr Maurice Bucaille received permission to examine the bodies of mummies. The primary medical examinations (1974-1975) of Ramesses II and Merneptah were carried out in Egypt by a team of ten doctors and dentists. They made certain discoveries which cast new light on a variety of old questions pertaining to Pharaoh Merneptah.

The forensic evidence was given by Dr Maurice Bucaille, a French surgeon and Archeologist who gave the forensic report that Merneptah died of asphyxiation/ due to drowning. He had no knowledge of Islam or the Holy Quran and its prophecies at that time. Knowing that this is the prophecy of the Holy Quran being fulfilled, drove him to learn Arabic to read and understand the Holy Quran himself. He ultimately became a Muslim. Merneptah's body bears the traces of fatal blows. It is reported that these marks may have been caused during his drowning or after the recovery of his body, that had washed ashore; the Egyptians mummified him like all the other Pharaohs. The tomb's location has meant that it has been very badly damaged in the flash floods that periodically sweep through the valley.

Dr Maurice Bucaille in his book *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* also suggests that the reigning Ramesses II died when Moses was in Midian and the Exodus took place in the reign of Ramesses II's successor, Merneptah.¹³

Salt crystals in the mummy of Merneptah favored him as the drowned 'Pharaoh of the Exodus' – some critics have pointed out that all mummies showed evidence of these embalming salts!

Dr. Maurice Bucaille suggests in his book, *the Bible the Quran and Science* that Ramesses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression and Merneptah the Pharaoh of the Exodus. He writes:

“All the evidence points towards the fact that Moses was born at the beginning of Ramesses II's reign, was living in Midian when Ramesses II died after a sixty-seven year reign, and subsequently became the spokesman for the cause of the Hebrews living in Egypt to Merneptah, Ramesses II's son and successor. This episode may have happened in the second half of Merneptah's reign, assuming he reigned twenty years or nearly twenty years. Rowton believes the supposition to be quite feasible. Moses would then have led the Exodus at the end of Merneptah's reign. It could hardly have been otherwise because both the Bible and the Qur'an tell us that Pharaoh perished during the pursuit of the Hebrews leaving the country.”

Ramesses II as the Pharaoh of the Oppression as well as the Pharaoh of the Exodus:

In this section we present the views of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, as described in his book, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*. He favors Ramesses II as the Pharaoh of Exodus, from the Quranic description and suggests that he probably survived near drowning at the time of the Exodus and lived for sometime afterwards in a poor state of health and was mummified after his death. His support is based on following rationale:

1. The support for Merneptah comes from Bible according to which Moses, may peace be on him, was informed by God during his exile in Midian that the Pharaoh in whose reign he had committed manslaughter was dead. Therefore he could now return safely. This scenario seems logical and acceptable superficially but on reflection, death of a king does not absolve anyone of his crime. In the Holy Quran God does not even remotely hint at the death of any Pharaoh to dispel fear of Moses. Instead he is told not to fear because God would protect him and his brother irrespective of the Pharaoh who ruled the land. . So the biblical reasoning does not hold much water, Moses had to face the trial who ever was the Pharaoh at that time.
2. We also know from the Holy Quran that Moses was accused of his act of manslaughter by the Pharaoh to whom Moses returned. He was hesitant to take action because of the Divine signs which Moses had displayed. Evidently, his escape from punishment was certainly not due to the death of one Pharaoh and the enthronement of another.
3. According to the archaeological evidence Ramesses II who died at the ripe old age of ninety years had spent the last thirty years of his life as a bedridden, senile, tottering old man probably suffering from an extreme arteriosclerosis. His poor health could be a direct consequence of his near-drowning, resulting in an insufficient supply of oxygen to the brain for an extended period.

4. The exile of Moses to Midian and his entire stay there lasted only eight to ten years. Therefore on his return to Egypt Ramesses II could not be more than forty to fifty years old. Archeologically and medically we know that Ramesses II died at the age of 90 years.
5. The life of Moses and Aaron after their return to Egypt is described by the Quran and the Bible as very eventful and their confrontation with Pharaoh seems to be drawn out over decades. The Holy Quran mentions nine signs which includes years of drought and scarcity. Allah instructs the Israelites to build a township, something which would take years rather than days. All the signs narrated could not have been packed in few years time. Logically it was a prolonged period. However historians estimate that the entire reign of Merneptah from the day of his crowning to the day of his death lasted only eight years or less.
6. Moreover, history describes Merneptah as a warrior king who repeatedly attacked the Palestinians year after year. Both the Quran and the Bible are absolutely silent about the Pharaoh of Moses having carried out such expeditions into the land of Israelites.¹⁴

Epilogue:

The good works of Moses, may peace be on him, are all so apparent in our contemporary society. His name and wonderful influence will live eternally in the scriptures, the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran. Ramesses II or any other Pharaoh for that matter, leave no followers to applaud them. Their works have minimal influence in the contemporary world. Ozymandias was another name for Ramesses. 'Ozymandias' is also a sonnet by Percy Bysshe Shelley, published in 1818. It is frequently anthologized and is probably Shelley's most famous short poem.



The 'Younger Memnon' statue of Ramesses II in the British Museum thought to have inspired the poem by Shelley

Here is the poem by Shelley:

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away

About the author:

Dr. Amtul Qudoos Farhat MD, DCH (UK) FCPS (Pak)
 Former Assistant Professor of Pediatric, Fatmia Jinnah Medical College Lahore (FJMC).
 Former: Editor in Chief 'Vanguard' the scientific magazine FJMC.
 Editor in Chief 'Oais' the Literary Magazine of FJMC.
 Current:
 Consultant: United Medicine Group, Canada
 Researcher for Lajna Amaillah Canada

¹ British Museum Dictionary Of Ancient Egypt, 1995, British Museum Press: London AND_Qur'anic Accuracy Vs. Biblical Error: The Kings & Pharaohs Of Egypt by M S M Saifullah, `Abdullah David & Elias Karim AND "Pharaoh" in T. Wilkinson, The Thames & Hudson Dictionary Of Ancient Egypt, 2005, Thames & Hudson: London, p. 186.

² Wörterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache, the dictionary of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.

³ <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/history/periods/newkingdom.html>

⁴ TimeLines - School of Arts & Sciences - University of Pennsylvania, <http://www.britannica.com>

⁵ Dr. Maurice Bucaille. The Bible the Qur'an and Science.

⁶ <http://deenrc.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/the-biblethe-quran-science.pdf>

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/13th_century_BC

⁸ <http://www.britannica.com>

⁹ "Ramses II." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 21 Apr. 2010

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¹⁰ http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pierre_Montet

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¹² http://www.alislam.org/library/books/revelation/part_6_section_1.html

¹³ M. Bucaille, Mummies of the Pharaohs: Modern Medical Investigations, 1990, St. Martins Press: New York, p. 153.

¹⁴ http://www.alislam.org/library/books/revelation/part_6_section_1.html