

## Understanding “Banī Isrāʿīl”, the “Jews”, “Judaism” and the Religious Sects of the Jews (3)

# The Firʿaun of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) Was a Tyrant from the ʿAmālīq Tribe of Arabs and Not a Qibṭī<sup>1</sup>



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Muslim sources (exegetes, historians, linguists)<sup>2</sup> state that the Firʿaun mentioned in the Qurʾān in the story of

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to Islām, the only source of information for the story of Mūsā and Firʿaun was the Torah and what is found with the Jews in their books. On the basis of these sources and Western scholarship, the common view is that Firʿaun was an Egyptian (Qibṭī), that Mount Sinai (Ṭūr Sīnāʿ) is in the Sinai peninsula (and not in Arabia) and that the Israelites were forced to build the pyramids of Egypt (despite the fact that they are much earlier than the Israelites). The Isrāʿīliyyāt (narrations from Banī Isrāʿīl), which are not free of exaggerations, were relied upon in providing many of the details of this story and they have shaped knowledge of this event.

the Prophet Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was from the offspring of 'Amlāq (Amalekites), an Arab tribe from the perished tribes (al-'arab al-bā'idah) that no longer exist, similar to 'Ād and Thāmūd, who originated in Yemen.<sup>3</sup> His name is given **al-Walīd bin Muṣ'ab** bin Mu'āwiyah bin Numayr bin al-Salwās bin Qārān, bin 'Amr bin 'Amlaq (from the offspring of Sām, son of Nūḥ) and his wife was Āsiyah bint Muzāhim bin 'Ubayd bin al-Rayyān bin al-Walīd, and she was the believing wife who was praised by Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) in Surāh al-Taḥrīm. This al-Walīd—the great, great grandfather of Āsiyah—was the ruler during the time of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) a few generations earlier, indicating that the time between Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) involved no more than **three or four generations**. In contrast, the Torah provides a different genealogy for those that are said to be Egyptians, coming from Ḥām, son of Nuḥ. So this is a clear conflict between Islamic sources and Jewish sources in terms of the origin and lineage of Fir'aun.

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<sup>2</sup> Such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Shawkānī, Ibn Manẓūr, al-Fayrozābādī, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī and many others.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ṭabarī wrote: “The 'Amālīq, Umaym and Jāsīm are an Arab people, their tongue upon which they are disposed is the Arabic tongue.” al-Tārīkh (Dār al-Ma'rifah) 1/204.

The given names for these Fir'auns are **Arab names** and alongside the numerous other points discussed further below, it indicates that the Fir'aun of Mūsā was not Egyptian (Qibṭī) but an Arab who spoke Aramean, the same tongue as the Banī Isrā'īl.<sup>4</sup>

In this regard, we have numerous considerations:

**The first** is what has been mentioned above from Muslim sources with respect to the names of Fir'aun and his wife. They are Arabic names and suggest another setting for the story. Proper names cannot be translated by meaning into other languages and it is not possible to insert these Arab names into a list of known Egyptian kings. This would be similar to drawing up a list of English kings: George, Edward, Richard, Muṣ'ab, Charles, John and James. "Muṣ'ab" is clearly an Arab name and does not belong there. However, this is what has been done by some people who have tried to merge the given Arab name of Fir'aun with the kings of Egypt from the 18th dynasty of Egyptian kings. There should be Egyptian records of the actual names of these "Pharoahs" as given in the Arabic sources and they

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<sup>4</sup> The Arab 'Amālīq Fir'auns have their origins in Yemen (as indicated in their genealogies). They moved northwards to the Hijāz and Shām, eastwards into Arabia and up the Red Sea towards the Sinai peninsula and across to its Mediterranean coast line.

ought to be the same, with next to no variation, because proper names cannot be translated. It is also strange that the Torah does not mention the names of the Pharaohs in the time of Ibrāhīm, Yūsūf and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) whereas Arab sources mention them clearly with their full lineages.

**The second** is that it is claimed—on the basis of a Qibṭī Pharaoh—by historians and archaeologists that there is nothing recorded in history by any of the major nations of the time who had trade and diplomatic relations with Egypt and its rulers (within its modern boundaries) and nor by Egyptians themselves that there was a Mūsā and a Banī Isrā'īl present in Egypt (with its modern boundaries) contending with its Qibṭī Fir'aun, who is in Muslim sources, is a Fir'aun **with the given Arab name**. That nor is there any record of a mass exodus on the scale alleged, involving millions, according to them from such a Qibṭī Fir'aun. That nor is there any record of any of the plagues and calamities suffered by a Qibṭī Fir'aun that made him allow Banī Isrā'īl to leave, which would definitely have been recorded in history of Egypt (within its modern boundaries) who were expert record keepers, and especially when these were great signs, according to what they say. This is known as a major problem in the

history of Banī Isrā'īl and the historicity of the Bible.<sup>5</sup> This has led many Jews and Christians to become atheists leading to their denial of the existence of Muṣā (and also Sulaymān and Dāwūd) and their rejection of

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Israel Finkelstein, Neil Silberman (2002) in *“The Bible Unearthed Archaeology’s New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Ancient Texts”* (New York:Touchstone). **Ze’ev Herzog**, an Israeli archaeologist and a leading figure in the field of the historicity of the Hebrew bible, wrote in a 1999 Haaretz article titled *“Deconstructing the Walls of Jericho”*: “Following 70 years of intensive excavations in the Land of Israel, archaeologists have found out: The patriarchs’ [i.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses] acts are legendary, the Israelites did not sojourn in Egypt or make an exodus, they did not conquer the land. Neither is there any mention of the empire of David and Solomon, nor of the source of belief in the God of Israel. These facts have been known for years, but Israel is a stubborn people and nobody wants to hear about it. This is what archaeologists have learned from their excavations in the Land of Israel... Most of those who are engaged in scientific work in the interlocking spheres of the Bible, archaeology and the history of the Jewish people—and who once went into the field looking for proof to corroborate the Bible story—now agree that the historic events relating to the stages of the Jewish people’s emergence are radically different from what that story tells.” The reason why they have come to these conclusions is because the geography has been changed by the writers of the Torah, the identity of the actual Fir’aun has been concealed, and as such, they are unable to find what they anticipated because they have been pursuing a Qibṭī Pharaoh when he is actually an Arab from the ‘Amāliqah.

revelation and to dismiss what is in the Torah as mere stories that were made up or embellished based upon smaller scale events. However, these claims and whatever evidence that lies behind them cannot be used on their own to dismiss the the reality of Mūsā, Firʿaun and the deliverance of Banī Isrāʾīl because the Qurʾān has affirmed them and provided the details.<sup>6</sup> In Islāmic sources, the Firʿaun of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) actually traces back to the Arab Amāliqah originally coming out of Yemen and not to the Qibṭīs. They are the dynasty known as the “Hyksos” who conquered the coastal parts of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sinai and the eastern part of Egypt where the Nile runs into the Mediterranean sea. Understanding this crucial difference will ensure that we are not lured into what is accepted by Jews, Christians and Western scholarship of a Qibṭī Firʿaun, and what that then leads to of rejection, because of the lack of evidence for such events, as they assert, or great confusion in the details at least. Our Islāmic sources have established the truth, and that which is with the Jews and Christians is false.

**Third**, the Qurʾān makes it clear that the Banī Isrāʾīl inherited the land of Firʿaun after he was drowned:

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<sup>6</sup> The boundaries of “Miṣr” in the time of Mūsā are not necessarily the same as they are today, they could be much broader and span both sides of the Red Sea.

فَأَخْرَجْتَهُمْ مِّنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعَيُْونٍ وَكُنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

“So We expelled them from [their] gardens and springs, and [their] treasures and honourable positions. Thus. And we made the Children of Israel to inherit it.” (26:57-59)

**Al-Ṭabarānī** (d. 360H) stated in al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr: “Allāh returned Banī Isrā'īl to the land of ‘Miṣr’ after Fir‘aun and his people were drowned and gave them everything possessed by Fir‘aun and his people of wealth, land and property”. **Al-Baghawī** (d. 516H) states in his tafsīr of this verse that “Allāh returned Banī Isrā'īl to the land of ‘Miṣr’ after He had drowned Fir‘aun and his people and gave them everything possessed by Fir‘aun and his people of wealth and property.” And **al-Qurṭubī** (d. 671H) states about this verse: “All of what Allāh the Exalted mentioned of gardens, rivers, treasures and noble positions [of leadership, ownership and the likes], Allāh made Banī Isrā'īl to inherit it. Al-Ḥasan said: ‘Banū Isrā'īl returned to ‘Miṣr’ after the destruction of Fir‘awn and his people.’” **Ibn al-Jawzī** (d. 597H) said in Zād al-Masīr, “Allāh returned them to ‘Miṣr’ after the drowning of Fir‘aun and gave them what used to belong to Fir‘aun and his people of properties and wealth.”

There is no record in history and nor in the Torah that the Banī Isrā'īl who fled a Qibṭī Fir'aun in Egypt returned to Egypt (with its modern boundaries) after this Fir'aun was destroyed and inherited the land of a Qibṭī Fir'aun and all of the gardens, springs and treasures owned by him and his people and that they remained there as its rulers and inhabitants, taking the lofty positions once held by this Qibṭī Fir'aun and his people. So we do not have a truthful picture from the Torah, whilst the Qur'ān confirms the truth, Banī Isrā'īl inherited the land, rivers, property and wealth—see Sūrah al-Shu'arā' (26:59)—of a Fir'aun who was from the 'Amāliqah and so did “another people” (قوما آخرين), as indicated in Sūrah al-Dukhān (44:28). This indicates very precise historical events that match with the destruction of Fir'aun and his soldiers, leading to the end of the dynasty that ruled the area starting from the coastal regions of northern Syria, then Lebanon, Palestine, the Sinai and the topmost part of eastern Egypt. After Fir'aun was destroyed, the empire crumbled and the Egyptians (Qibṭīs) who had been pushed further south, regained this land. As for Banī Isrā'īl, then they inherited the part that is Palestine and as for the Egyptians, they inherited the part that is referred to as Miṣr.



The Qur'ān does not mention “Egypt” (al-Qibṭ), rather it mentions “Miṣr” and what is known today as the state of Egypt that was ruled by the Qibṭīs was not known as “Miṣr” to them 3,500 years ago, or to the Greeks and Romans who ruled over it. In addition, the boundaries of what was known as “Miṣr” then, whatever its boundaries, size or location, are not the same as what are known today as the boundaries of the modern state of “Egypt”. But what we know is that Banī Isrā'īl inherited the land area that was ruled over by the Hyksos (ʿAmāliqah)—which was not the land inhabited by the Qibṭī rulers (who had been pushed further south in Egypt—and they (Banī Isrā'īl) were ordered to strive against the polytheists who were in that land in order to spread Tawḥīd to the nations.

**Fourth**, it is said that archaelological studies have likewise failed to show any evidence of the presence of over half a million Israelites—as is alleged—being escaping a Qibṭī Fir'aun. The Bible gives a number of 600,000 men<sup>7</sup>, which when women, children and livestock are added will at least quadruple that to well over 2 million. Such an event on this scale—where a half to a third of a country's entire population suddenly

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<sup>7</sup> This same number can be found within reports cited by Muslim exegetes and they relied upon this to explain “the small band” that they were referred to as by Fir'aun.

leaves in a long line of people stretching a few hundred miles at least—would show up in the record, historical and archaeological of the Qitbṭīs. But it is said that there is no evidence at all. This is because the numbers have been grossly exaggerated by the pens of the scribes and because the Fir'aun was an Arab Fir'aun that ruled over “Miṣr”. The Noble Qur'ān establishes that the Banī Isrā'īl who believed in Mūsā and followed him were a small number. Fir'aun said:

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ

**“Indeed those are a small band.”** (26:54).

And likewise not all of Banī Isrā'īl believed in Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) and went with him:

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّن قَوْمِهِ

**“But none believed in Musa (Moses) except the offspring (youths) of his people...”** (10:83).

Imām al-Sa'dī said in his tafsīr: “Meaning, the youth from Banī Isrā'īl, they were patient upon the fear they were upon, because of the firm faith in their hearts.” This is the view of al-Ṭabarī, which al-Qurṭubī summarised by citing Mujāhid: “None believed in him, but the offspring of those to whom Mūsā was sent from Banī Isrā'īl believed in him. Due to the lengthy time, the elders had perished and the offspring remained, so they believed”.

This clashes with the claim of an exodus of “millions”, which is an exaggerated number. The lineage of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) in Muslim sources is given as Mūsā bin ‘Imrān bin Qāhith bin ‘Āzir bin Lāwī (Levi), brother of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). It is difficult to imagine how the original twelve families that made up Banī Isrā’īl and were only seventy in number when they went to “Miṣr” could become over two million in just three generations. Likewise, the lineage of Āsiyah, the wife of Fir‘aun was given earlier, and her great, great grandfather was the Fir‘aun in the time of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). So between them likewise, are only three generations. This means that seventy people became a couple of million men, women and children in three generations. This indicates that the compilers and writers of the Torah, relating these events a thousand years later, exaggerated and altered details. In contrast, the Qur’ān or Prophetic traditions do not mention any numbers.

**Fifth**, Egypt was not popularly known as “Miṣr” until after Islām. It was known to nations as Coptos, Aegyptus, Egypt and all of these names derive from (القبط), “Al-Qibṭ”. This is how the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) addressed al-Muqawqis, as the “Aẓīm of al-Qibṭ”, in his letter to him. Hence, given all the other evidence above, the Miṣr of the Qur’ān—in the time of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) which is around 2000 years before Islām—is not synonymous

with the borders and boundaries of the modern state of “Egypt” and could be much narrower. As for its meaning, the word miṣr (plural amṣār) refers to a location that is generally **a commercial hub** and is located on strategic trade routes. The word miṣr is used in this sense in Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:61) when Banī Isrā'īl asked Mūsā (عليه السلام) for certain forms of foods—and this was after they were delivered from Fir'aun and had already left “Miṣr”—and he told them in response:

أَهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا

“**Go to a miṣr (a township)**” (2:61).

Meaning, a township, mentioned here as an attribute rather than an actual place name (which would be ghayr munṣarif), where food can be purchased.

In the recorded history of the nations that ruled Egypt (such as the Persians, Greeks and Romans) there is no mention of “Miṣr” as the name of the place they ruled over. This would be **all over the historical record** in the records of many nations and within Egyptian history too, which is well documented. The ancient names of this land were Kemt (which means “**Black Land**”) and **Ht-Ka-Ptah** which later turned into Coptos, Aegyptus and Egypt after the rules of Greece and Rome. Thus, the Miṣr of the Qur'ān is not necessarily with all the same boundaries as the Egypt of today.

Thus, what was known as “Miṣr” was not ruled by Qibṭīs but Arab ‘Amāliqah in their particular time period. Though this is established and clear in Muslim sources of history, genealogy and tafsīr, there are Western researchers who are realising this, and they speak of the **Hyksos Amelakites**, accepting that they were of Arab origin. Exactly what all Arabic sources say, that the Fir‘auns of Ibraḥīm, Yūsuf and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) were Arabs. Hyksos means “shepherd-kings” or “desert-soldiers” because these Fir‘auns originated from the desert of Southwest Arabia.

**In summary:** Some exegetes of the Qur‘ān explain that “Fir‘aun”<sup>8</sup> was a title given to the kings of the ‘Amāliqah, an Arab tribe, just like “Chosroes” for the Persians , “Caesar” for the Romans and “Negus” for the

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<sup>8</sup> The name of “Fir‘aun” is indeclinable (ghayr munṣarif) because it is in the Syriac (Āramaic) language and not the pure Arabic tongue and has the meaning of “the top of something”, chief or leader. Ibrāhīm, Ishāq, Ya‘qūb (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) and the Banī Isrā’īl spoke this language whereas Ismā’īl (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) and his offspring spoke the pure Arabic tongue after learning it from the residents of the Hijāz. However, all of them were initially resident around the area of Makkah, whether to its north or south. They, like their father, Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ), were Arameans descending from Ārām, son of Sām, son of Nūḥ (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). From Ārām came the tribes of Arabs such as Ād and Thamūd.

Abyssinians.<sup>9</sup> However, what seems to be more correct is that it is a proper name, similar to Hāmān and Qārūn.<sup>10</sup> Jewish converts to Islām who were from their leading scholars in Yemen, such as Wahb bin Munabbih, explain, “His name is al-Walīd bin Muṣ‘ab bin al-Rayyān, his kunyah is Abū Murrah and he is from the ‘Amālīq, son of Lāwidh, son of Aram, son of Sām, son of Nūḥ.”<sup>11</sup> There was also a Fir‘aun in the time of Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) as mentioned in the Torah and Muslim sources and his name is Sinān bin ‘Alwān<sup>12</sup> and likewise in the time of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). As for the Fir‘aun of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), then he ruled over a Miṣr. This has commonly been

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to al-Māwardī (d. 450H) in al-Nukat wal-‘Uyūn, al-Qurṭubī (d. 671H) in Jāmi‘ al-Bayān in tafsīr of al-Baqarah (2:49).

<sup>10</sup> Hence, his name would be Fir‘aun [Walīd] bin Muṣ‘ab and the reason why the other five or six rulers from the same dynasty that ruled “Miṣr” for about 200 years were called Fir‘auns (Pharroahs) was that his name was taken as a label for the rest of the dynasty. So the Pharroahs of the ‘Amālīq are not to be confused with the Qibṭī (Egyptian) kings and rulers.

<sup>11</sup> As cited by al-Qurṭubī in the tafsir of al-Baqarah (2:49).

<sup>12</sup> The historian Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630H) wrote in al-Kāmil: “Then Ibrāhīm and those who followed his affair [of Tawḥīd] united upon separating from their people. So he left as an emigrant until he approached Miṣr and there was a Fir‘aun among the First Fir‘auns, his name was Sinān bin ‘Alwān bin ‘Ubayd bin ‘Awlaj bin ‘Amlāq bin Lāwidh bin Sām bin Nūḥ ” (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah) 1/77.

equated with modern day Egypt, though the location and boundaries of what was referred to as “Miṣr” in that time may have been different and was not actually ruled by Qibṭīs but by Arab ‘Amāliqah. The Fir‘aun of Mūsā began to feel threatened by the Banī Isrā’īl who had moved to the region of “Miṣr” in the time Yūsūf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) about 150 years earlier, and he was expecting a leader to be born among them who would put an end to his empire. They did not number in the millions, but more likely from five thousand upwards to perhaps some tens of thousands being very generous, since there are only three generations between Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). He was a disbelieving arrogant tyrant who owned gardens, rivers and treasures who—along with his family and his people—began to persecute them and kill their male-borns. It is here that the Qur‘ān first reminds Banī Isrā’īl of their past when He saved them from Fir‘aun:

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ  
 أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

**“And [recall] when We saved your forefathers from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.” (2:49).**

These revelations of the Qur'ān were directed towards the Jews present around al-Madīnah (formerly known as Yathrib) such as the Banū Naḍīr, Banū Qurayzah, Banū Qaynuqā' and many others spread throughout Arabia, particularly in Najrān and Yemen. Ṣafīyyah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) who was the descendant of Hārūn (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), brother of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) became the wife of Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and boasted to the Prophet's wives that Hārūn (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was her father (ancestor), Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) her uncle and Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) her husband. Likewise the Jewish scholar, 'Abd Allāh bin Salām (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) who accepted Islām, he was from Banī Isrā'īl, from the offspring of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). These particular Jews in Arabia were **the actual descendants of the Banī Isrā'īl**. This is a matter well-known to the learned among the Jews, especially the Jews of Yemen, in whose memory, heritage and linguistic purity lies the true history of Banī Isrā'īl from the time of Ya'qūb (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) till the last of their prophets prior to 'Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ).

As for the confusion with Egyptian (Qibṭī) kings, the primary reason for this is the reliance upon non-Muslim histories. Muslim sources give an Arab name and lineage for the Fir'aun of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and the roots of the Fir'auns lie in the Himyar of Yemen, not the Qibṭīs. As such, Muṣa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) led the Banī Isrā'īl out of the



“Miṣr” that was ruled over by these Arab ‘Amāliqah and not out of an “Egypt” ruled over by Qibṭīs.

Abu ‘Iyaad

7 Muḥarram 1440 / 17 September 2018 v1.85

## Notes:<sup>13</sup>

### Regarding the Lineage of the Fir‘auns:

Al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī (d. 350H)—a famous historian and geographer who wrote a detailed topography, history and genealogy of Himyar in Yemen titled “al-Iklīl Min Akhbār al-Yaman Wa Ansāb al-Ḥimyar”—writes under the genealogy of Jushm bin ‘Abd Shams: “They have great numbers and wealth, and it is the mighty Jushm amidst all of the Arabs. Jushm bin ‘Abd Shams gave birth to Mu‘āwiyah, Ya‘dān, Raymān, ‘Urwān, **‘Alwān**, Ḥumlān, Sa‘rān and Shu‘ūb...” Then he explains, “As for **‘Alwān**, then he enters into ‘Amlāq bin Lāwidh [bin Sām bin Nūḥ], **and he gave birth to some of the Fir‘auns**. Ḥimyar and the people of Ṣan‘ā’ say: **‘Indeed, there came out of the Valley of Ḍahr [a valley ten miles north of Ṣan‘ā’] seven Fir‘auns.**”<sup>14</sup> The Fir‘auns

<sup>13</sup> These notes are added to clear any confusion from an earlier version of this article which was absent details that provide a more rounded picture of the subject area. Updated 6 Muḥarram 1440 /16 September 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Iklīl (Ṣan‘ā 1425H), (2/94). The Egyptian historian Abū al-Barakāt Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Ibn Iyās (d. 930H) wrote: “It is said that the Fir‘auns were seven, and what is well known is that

mentioned here include the Fir'auns of Ibrāhīm, Yūsuf and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). He also says: "And from the offspring of Dān are the Fir'auns of Miṣr, and it is well-known that they are the 'Amālīq. From them are **al-Rayyān bin al-Walīd**, and it is said, al-Walīd bin al-Rayyān, and he is the king in the era of Yūsuf. And **al-Walīd bin Muṣ'ab** who was in the time of Mūsā, to whom he was sent. And among them is **Sinān bin 'Alwān**."<sup>15</sup> This Sinān was the Fir'aun in the time of Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). All of these Fir'auns have their origins in what is known as the region of Ḥimyar, Yemen. **They are Yemeni 'Arabs** and **not** Qibṭīs (Egyptians) at all. This is why there is no trace of an "Egyptian (Qibṭī) Pharaoh" to whom the story of Mūsā relates. This is why the historian and geographer al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346H) stated: "I asked a group of Qibṭīs of Miṣr—[note that this is after Islām, when al-Qibṭ became popularised as "Miṣr"]—from al-Ṣa'īḍ and other places in the lands of Miṣr from the specialists about the explanation of the word 'Fir'aun' and they were not able to tell me its meaning, and I was unable to acquire it from their language."<sup>16</sup> The reason he could not trace this name and

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they are from the 'Amālīqah. The first of the Fir'auns in Miṣr was the Fir'aun of Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). From them is al-Rayyān bin al-Walīd, and he is the Fir'aun of Yūsuf (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). And from them is al-Walīd bin Muṣ'ab, the Fir'aun of Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ). And from them is Sinān bin 'Alwān." Nuzhat al-Umam Fil-Ajā'ib al-Ḥikam (p. 27).

<sup>15</sup> Al-Iklīl (Ṣan'ā 1425H), (1/106).

<sup>16</sup> In Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Asriyyah 1425H), 1/274.

get an explanation of its meaning is clear, Fir‘aun comes from the ‘Amāliqah, whose origins are the Arabs of Yemen, and the name Syriac, Arab in its origin, not Qibtī.

### The Origins of the ‘Amāliqah Fir‘auns From Yemen

These ‘Amāliqah, from their origin and base in the Ḥimyar of Yemen—which was a major international trade hub and would have allowed the amassing of tremendous riches—migrated and conquered other areas in the North and East of Arabia, up into the Sinai and over into its Mediterranean coast and parts (not all) of what is modern Egypt today. This area, or empire, from its seat, was known as “Miṣr”, which would be a cosmopolitan area. The name can be found given to other areas as well. In his history of Yemen “Al-Yaman al-Khaḍrā’ Maḥd al-Ḥaḍārah”, Muḥammad bin ‘Alī al-Akwa‘ al-Hiwwālī writes: “The sixth area which is known as the green region and in ancient time, the provinces of al-Saḥūl, al-Kalā‘, and Ja‘far.... and this is what is known as the Surrah of Yemen and it is also called **the Miṣr of Yemen.**”<sup>17</sup> So this refers to a developed, cosmopolitan area, located around trade routes. He also writes—in the context of speaking about Banū Qaḥṭān who spread out from Yemen and conquered other places (and it is from their offspring that Ismā‘īl (عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ) marry into and

<sup>17</sup> Ṣan‘ā’: Maktabah al-Jayl al-Jadīd 1402H, p. 114.

learned the pure Arabic tongue)—: “It is apparent that the ‘**Amāliqah**... descended upon Yathrib and other places, and from them are the **Fir’auns**. And what can be used as evidence to support this view [of their origin in Yemen] is that there are [archaeological] remains whose presence is noticeably evident. For there is to be found in the Sirr Valley, a valley called ‘The Valley of Fir’aun’.”<sup>18</sup> Likewise, there are references to fortresses of the Fir’auns in Yemen which al-Hamdānī refers to. For example, “Khutā, it is the fortress of the Fir’auns”, and also “Jabā, and it the fortress of the Fir’auns”.<sup>19</sup> This ties in with the given Arab genealogy in all the Muslim sources of history, that the Fir’auns of Ibraḥīm, Yūsuf and Mūsā (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) were from the ‘Amāliqah Arabs who originate in Yemen. The Fir’aun of Mūsā ruled over “Miṣr” (that does not necessarily equate to the full geographical region of today’s state of Egypt) and the Banī Isrā’īl were delivered from him after he was drowned and destroyed by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). Then the Banī Isrā’īl inherited his lands, rivers, treasures, properties and possessions and were then ordered to fight against the polytheists in order to spread Tawḥīd. This was performed by Yūsha‘ (Joshua) but then after him, the Banī Isrā’īl deteriorated and fell into shirk, bid‘ah and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 434.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Ikīl (Dār al-Kalimah) 8/120.

purusing lusts and desires, until Sulaymān and Dāwūd (عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ) and these prophet-kings have been lied upon by the pens of the scribes who put the Torah into writing and given an ugly picture for whatever reasons and motives those scribes had.