

What is the secret of the curse of the Pharaohs?

One of the topics that are connected to witchcraft and is deeply rooted in many people's minds is that which is known as "the Curse of the Pharaohs". It has been noted that many of those who have excavated the tombs of the Pharaohs or played any part in transporting their remains have been stricken by various kinds of calamities. There are many stories about this matter, and many people believe that there is a curse attached to the bodies of the Pharaohs which smites everyone who comes near them. In his book, *The Curse of the Pharaohs*, after an in depth study of the secret behind this curse, the German writer Phillip Vanderberg wonders the following:

- 1- Is this curse some kind of atomic radiation, or did the pharaohs use radioactive substances to which everyone who opens the tomb is exposed?
- 2- Is the curse a kind of poisonous gas which comes from the herbs and wood when the grave is opened?
- 3- Is there something in common among all those who discovered tombs or tampered with the wood?
- 4- Is it just a coincidence that people died when they discovered these tombs?
- 5- Do the bats in the antechambers have anything to

do with what happened to the people of delirium until they died?

- 6- Were the foreign grave robbers who died in mysterious circumstances affected by radioactive dust or plant poisons?

This writer carried on describing his confusion and astonishment at what happened in the tombs of the Pharaohs of Egypt. Then he commented:

How can we explain that whenever a Pharaonic mummy is found in a place there is inevitable a calamity that occurs in the same place? The greatest ship ever built by man, the Titanic, struck an iceberg and sank because there was a stolen Pharaonic mummy on board. What happened to the Egyptian scholars and doctors one after another?^[1]

In the same tone of confusion and surprise, Anees Mansoor says in his book *La'nat Al-Faraa'inah*:

Many scholars believe that there is something inside the pyramids and the tombs of the Pharaohs, which affects human health, but what is it? No one knows.

Then he said:

Khrushchev received a telegram warning him against entering the pyramids, so he refused to enter at the last minute. Scientists do not know how to explain this strange phenomenon, and that will continue until we find a scientific explanation, or an explanation that is more than scientific.^[2]

^[1] *La'nat Al-Faraa'inah* by Philip Vanderberg, 5-22.

^[2] *La'nat Al-Faraa'inah* by Anees Mansoor, 5-12.

What is the story behind the so-called curse of the Pharaohs? How did it start? What is the explanation for what has happened to everyone who took part in the search for the bodies and treasures of the ancient pharaohs of Egypt?

The story of the so-called curse of the Pharaohs began on November 6, 1922 CE, when Howard Carter sent a telegram to Lord Carnarvon, saying: "I have discovered something wonderful in the valley of the kings. I have sealed the doors and vaults until you come and see for yourself."

Carnarvon came to Luxor on November 23, accompanied by his daughter. Carter went ahead and broke the seals on the doors, and found the body of the king Tutankhamen where it had been lying for 35 centuries. The newspapers seized upon this news with great excitement and it spread rapidly among people. Then Carter's heart began to beat rapidly and he felt very afraid, but the treasure, gold and fame distracted him from what he was feeling.

On the day when the tomb was opened, twenty-two men gathered whom Carter had invited to attend the opening. But suddenly something strange happened. Thirteen of those whom Carter had invited to attend the opening died one after another in mysterious circumstances. Lord Carter himself was struck with a sudden fever and started to scream, "My body is on fire!" And in his delirium he said, "I can see that they are going to roll me in the sand of the desert and put fire in my mouth."

His son came from India to visit him, but he (the son)

became ill and soon died in the Continental Hotel in Cairo. After that, Carter's assistant, Walter Miss, who has been sent by the American Museum, also died as the result of severe burning. Anees Mansoor said: There are many stories of people who were connected to the excavation of the grave being affected by disasters.^[1]

Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Ja'far mentions these stories in his book *Al-Sihr*, where he says:

In the British Museum there is a finely-made sarcophagus of an Egyptian mummy who was a member of the royal family and a priestess.

The story of this sarcophagus, according to the records of the British Museum, is very strange. A Mr. Douglas Maury bought this sarcophagus from Egypt in order to bring it to his house in London, but he and everyone who had anything to do with this sarcophagus met with disaster, until they got rid of it by giving it to the British Museum.

On the day he bought the sarcophagus, whilst Mr. Douglas was cleaning his revolver, it went off and a bullet hit him in his left thigh. Surgery was required, and he died on the operating table.

Before undergoing the surgery, he left instructions with one of his friends who had accompanied him on his visit to Egypt – whose name was Mr. Hopley – that if anything were to happen to him during surgery, Mr. Hopley was to hand over the sarcophagus to his sister who was living in Baker Street in London. Mr. Hopley

[1] op. cit., 12-13.

prepared to carry out his friend's wishes, so he took the sarcophagus to Port Said in preparation for shipping it to London. But when he reached Port Said he found a telegram from London awaiting him, informing him that his brother had been murdered. When he reached London, when the sister of Mr. Douglas received the sarcophagus she put it in a corner of the room. From the moment it arrived in the house, one disaster followed another. The day it arrived, her daughter was killed crossing the road to school, when she was struck by a car. One week later her husband committed suicide, broken-hearted at the death of his daughter. Her financial situation worsened, and she suffered a nervous breakdown. She summoned astrologers, mediums and spiritualists, who all agreed that the presence of this sarcophagus in her house was the cause of all these problems. She was very frightened, so she contacted the British Museum to come and take it away, as a gift from her. Whilst the sarcophagus was being transported to its new home in the museum, one of the porters started making fun of the mentality of fellow-Englishmen, who believed in the Pharaonic myths, and how they took care of what the Pharaohs had left behind, allocating a special place in the museum and appointing people to look after it like servants. When the sarcophagus was put in place, this porter experienced a sharp pain that left him writhing in agony for several minutes, then he fell down dead next to the sarcophagus.

All of those who were working with Egyptian artifacts in England took an interest in this sarcophagus. They formed a committee to research into this problem. And

this committee in turn appointed the H.A. Mansell photographic company to take a series of pictures of this sarcophagus from different angles. The company sent its representative to take the pictures, and he carried out his mission and came back to the company to start another task that awaited him. He went to do that job and when he came back, he had an accident in which he lost the fingers of his right hand and became unable to take pictures. When the pictures of the sarcophagus were developed, they found engraved on one side of it a picture of a young woman clad in the garments of a priestess, with signs of anger and evil showing on her face. When they asked everyone who had seen the sarcophagus or had anything to do with it before the pictures were taken, they all agreed that they had not seen any pictures or images on any part of it.^[1]

In fact, there are many stories that are told about the calamities that have befallen everyone who has anything to do with excavations of the Pharaonic antiquities of Egypt. Another example is the story of the Englishman Paul Britten who locked himself in the chamber of the king Khofu for a whole night. In the morning he told the world that he had seen ghosts, and he had seen a huge funeral procession in which he was the deceased. What he saw, heard and felt is exactly like what is experienced by one who takes hallucinogenic drugs; he also felt suffocated and thought he was about to die.

And there is the story of the Englishman Emery who

^[1] *'Aalim Al-Sihr wa'l-Sha'wadhah* by Dr. 'Umar Al-Ashqar, p. 113, quoting from *Al-Sihr* by Muhammad Muhammad Ja'far.

was supervising the excavations at Saqqarah (Sakkara) on March 1, 1971. The man suddenly let out a scream and started meowing like a cat, barking like a dog and howling like a wolf. His wife stayed by his side in the hospital until he died on March 11 of the following year.

And there is the story of Johatz Wimtisch, who copied hundreds of engravings from the walls and tried to interpret them, but he was struck with delirium which the psychologists diagnosed as a kind of personality split. Then there was the French scholar Champollion who deciphered the Rosetta Stone: after his return to his homeland he was struck with paralysis, which was followed by delirium and a coma.^[1]

Although what is known as the curse of the Pharaohs appears to have emerged in recent times, approximately seventy years ago, in fact the ancients also spoke of something similar. Around seven hundred years ago, Shihaab Al-Deen ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab Al-Muwayri (d. 733) wrote in his book *Nihaayat Al-Arab fi Funoon Al-Adab* stories about the building of the pyramids and their wonders, and told of some very strange accounts.

He said: One of the strange stories that is told is that when Al-Ma'moon opened the pyramid, the people started coming to it and for years they would enter and descend the chutes inside. Some of them remained healthy and others died. A group of youngsters, some twenty men, decided to enter and not to come out until they had explored as far as they could inside the

[1] Anees Mansoor, *La'nat Al-Faraa'inah*.

pyramid. They took with them food and drink, supplies for two months, and they took string, rope, candles, fuel, axes and baskets. They entered the pyramid and most of them descended the first and second chutes. They reached the bottom of the pyramid and saw bats as big as eagles hitting their faces. Then they reached a crack in the wall from which came a constant cool breeze. They went to enter it, and their candles went out. They put the candles in glass containers and tried to enter, and the crack nearly closed up on them. They felt scared, then one of them said: Tie a rope around my middle and I will go in; if the crack starts to close, pull me out. Just inside the crack there were empty vessels, and they knew that the bodies of the dead were inside that crack. They tied the rope around him and when the gap started to close, his companions tried to pull him out but they could not manage it. They heard his bones cracking, then they heard a loud scream and they fell unconscious. When they woke up their companions brought them out with great difficulty. Some of them fell down as soon as they reached the top of the chute. They came out of the pyramid and sat there in shock, and they were sitting there like that when the earth threw out their companion to them, speaking like a soothsayer, words which some of the monks in the monasteries of Upper Egypt explained as meaning: "This is the reward of one who seeks that which does not concern him." Then he fell down dead.

And he tells us that some people entered the pyramid and descended to its lower part, where they went around and found something like a footpath. They

followed it and found a dome beneath which there was a pool into which water was dripping; it would spread then vanish, and they did not know what it was. And they found a place like a square room, the walls of which were stone with amazing colours. One of them broke off a stone from it and put it in his sleeve, whereupon his ears were blocked with the wind, and the wind kept blowing for as long as the stone was with him.

And they found a place like a huge fountain in which were gold coins, weighing nearly one hundred *Mithqaal*. They took some of them but they were unable to move until they put them down again.

And he narrated that during the time of Ahmad ibn Tuloon, some people entered the pyramid and found a bottle of thick glass on a ledge in one of its chambers. They picked it up and left, but then they noticed that one of their number was missing, so they went back to look for him. He came out to them naked, laughing, and saying, "Do not look for me." Then he fled back into the pyramid, and they realized that the jinn had taken control of him. Their story became well-known, and they took the bottle and people were barred from entering the pyramid. And he tells of a man who entered the pyramid with a woman in order to commit immoral actions with her inside the pyramid. They both fell unconscious, and they remained insane and well-known until they died.

He tells of a group of people who entered the pyramid with a person with whom they wanted to commit indecent acts. When they wanted to do that, a

beardless black boy appeared to them, with a stick in his hand with which he started to beat them. They ran out, leaving behind their food and drink and some of their clothes.

He also tells many strange and wondrous stories about the building of the pyramids and of the sorcerers and kings, which we cannot go into here.^[1]

There are many stories, which by virtue of their sheer numbers may reach the level of *Tawaatur* (i.e., they were told by so many people to so many that it is inconceivable that they could all agree upon a lie). This has led many people to believe that there is a curse connected to the bodies, which afflicts everyone who has anything to do with research and explorations concerning the bodies, relics and treasures of the Pharaohs. But this belief is false. There is, however, a question which presents itself here: Does a dead person have the ability to affect and influence those who are around it? The dead person does not possess any ability or power to affect those around him either by causing harm or bringing benefit, by giving or withholding, whether this is the body of a pharaoh or of anyone else. Allaah says concerning the idols and the dead who were worshipped by the *Mushrikeen* during the *Jaahiliyyah* :

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ○ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

“Those whom they (Al-Mushrikoon) invoke besides

^[1] *Nihaayat Al-Irab* by Al-Nuwayri, 15/19-20, published by Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyyah, Cairo.

Allaah have not created anything, but are themselves created. (They are) dead, not alive; and they know not when they will be raised up."

(Al-Nahl 16:20-21)

And He says:

﴿ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ ۝ إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعْوَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ﴾

"Such is Allaah, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmeer (the thin membrane over the date stone). If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you (O Muhammad) like Him Who is the All-Knower (of everything)."

(Faatir 35:13-14)

﴿قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا نَحْوِيلًا﴾

"Say (O Muhammad): 'Call upon those – besides Him – whom you pretend [to be gods like angels, 'Eesa (Jesus), 'Uzayr (Ezra) and others]. They have neither the power to remove the adversity from you nor even to shift it from you to another person.' "

(Al-Isra' 17:56)

﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ

لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٣﴾

“Yet they have taken besides Him other aalihah (gods) who created nothing but are themselves created, and possess neither harm nor benefit for themselves, and possess no power (of causing) death, nor (of giving) life, nor of raising the dead.”

(Al-Furqaan 25:3)

﴿قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَتَأْتخذُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا﴾

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?’ Say: ‘(It is) Allaah.’ Say: ‘Have you then taken (for worship) Awliya’ (protectors) other than Him, such as have no power either for benefit or for harm to themselves?’”

(Al-Ra’d 13:16)

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ○ أَمْواتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

Those whom they (Al-Mushrikūn) invoke besides Allāh have not created anything, but are themselves created. (They are) dead, not alive; and they know not when they will be raised up.

(Al-Nahl 16:20-21)

Although some commentators interpreted those referred to in these Verses as the idols, in fact these Verses refer to everything that is worshipped instead of Allaah, whether it be an idol, a rock, a grave or a tree. Muhammad Naseeb Al-Rifaa’i says, commenting on the Verse.

These are not the attributes of inanimate objects and

rocks, rather these are the attributes of those deceased *righteous people, because Allaah describes them as* rational and intelligent, using the plural form of the verb (*wa ma yash'uroona ayyaana yub'athoon*); if they were inanimate objects He would have used the singular form, but He says "And they know not when they will be raised up". So it is understood that what Allaah is referring to here is those righteous people in whose image those statues and idols were made. The mushrikeen of our own time are no better than those; all they have done is substitute graves for idols, and perhaps being misguided about graves is worse than being misguided about idols.^[1]

I say: this has to do with the bodies of the righteous, so how about the bodies of people who claimed to be gods and told their people to worship them? The dead person has no power to cause harm or bring benefit to himself, as the Prophet ﷺ said in the *Hadeeth*:

« إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ . . . »

"When the son of Adam dies, all his good deeds come to an end..."

So the claim that there is a curse attached to the bodies of the Pharaohs or that they are able to harm everyone who comes near them is a false claim which is rejected by the Qur'aan and *Sunnah*, and propagating this myth in newspapers comes under the heading of misleading people.

[1] *Tayseer Al-'Aliy Al-Qadeer* by Muhammad Naseeb Al-Rifaa'i, 2/577.

So what is the explanation for the things that happened to those who excavated the tombs of the Pharaohs?

In the chapter on witchcraft we stated that there are some types of witchcraft whose effects may last for several days, and other types whose effects may last for weeks or months or centuries or millennia, if the spell is not cancelled out. The period of time for which the magic lasts depends on how long the substance on which the spell is written lasts. If the spell is written on a piece of paper or cloth, or on a picture of a person, and this paper or cloth or picture is destroyed or burnt, then the spell is cancelled out.

Hence sometimes you find that the witch (may Allaah curse him) puts his spell in a container of copper and seals it with molten lead in order to protect the substance used. The ancient Pharaohs of Egypt were among the most knowledgeable of people with regard to witchcraft. Allaah describes the witchcraft they tried to use against His Prophet Moosa (عليه السلام) as being "great", as He says:

﴿قَالَ أَفْقُوا فَلَمَّا أَفْقُوا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَأَسْرَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ﴾

"He [Moosa (Moses)] said: 'Throw you (first)!' So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them, and they displayed a great magic."

(Al-A'raaf 7:116)

Historical and archaeological studies of Pharaonic Egypt have established that the pharaohs were among

the most skilful of people in the use of witchcraft. It is clear from the Verses which tell the story of the sorcerers of Pharaoh with the Prophet Moosa (ﷺ) that the people had no religion other than the worship of their kings who claimed to be gods. Pharaoh claimed to be the "lord most high" and to be a god. Allaah says of Pharaoh:

﴿قَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى﴾

"Saying: 'I am your lord, most high.'"

(Al-Naazi'at 79:24)

﴿وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي﴾

"Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "O chiefs! I know not that you have an ilaah (a god) other than me."

(Al-Qasas 28:38)

Hence these sorcerers devoted their skills to the service of those kings during the lifetimes and after their deaths, and the kings sought to bring the most skilled sorcerers close to them by giving them gifts. The king Rameses III (1197-1165 BCE) gave the high priest of his time 88,789 prisoners as a gift, leaving him free to sell them or kill them with no one to check on what he did. He also gave him 32 tons of gold.^[1] In the eleventh century BCE the priests of the god Amun were given 2400 farms, 83 ships, 46 harbours and half a million sheep.^[2]

So the relationship between these sorcerers and their kings was very close. Hence the miracle of the Prophet of Allaah Moosa (ﷺ) was of a type commensurate

[1] *La'nat Al-Faraa'inah* by Anees Mansoor, 56.

[2] *Ibid.*

with the area in which they were most skilled. Their challenge to him and their defeat before the divine miracle is mentioned in the Qur'aan. As the Pharaohs and their kings believed in resurrection and eternal life, and they believed that they would be raised from death to find their possessions, treasures and servants, they ordered their sorcerers to use their skills of witchcraft to mummify their bodies and to protect them and their tombs and treasures with spells that would withstand the ravages of time and last for a very long time. So the sorcerers engraved their spells on solid rocks. It seems – and Allaah knows best – that the engravings that have been found in the tombs of the Pharaohs include magical charms which are aimed at protecting the tomb or the treasure. The sorcerers also used iron on which to engrave their charms and spells. Pieces of iron in the form of amulets have been found among the jewels and treasures, or around the necks of the bodies inside the sarcophagi. When the body of the king Tutankhamun was discovered, they found 143 precious stones around it. What confused the scientists was the fact that among these jewels they found a strangely shaped piece of iron which was engraved with hieroglyphics.

When they looked for its meaning in the Book of the Dead, they found out that it was a warning: "Every hand that touches you will be cut off; every nose that smells you will fall off; every eye that sees you will be extinguished (go blind); get up calmly, your majesty."

Thus it is clear that what is known as the "curse of the Pharaohs" is nothing more than subjugation of the jinn to guard these bodies and treasures by using powerful

magic, and the jinn who inherited this task from their forefathers would not allow anyone to come near to these places without harming them.

The words used by the doctors to describe what happened to everyone who explored the tombs of the pharaohs—coma, hallucinations and personality split, etc—refer in fact to nothing but cases of jinn possession.

