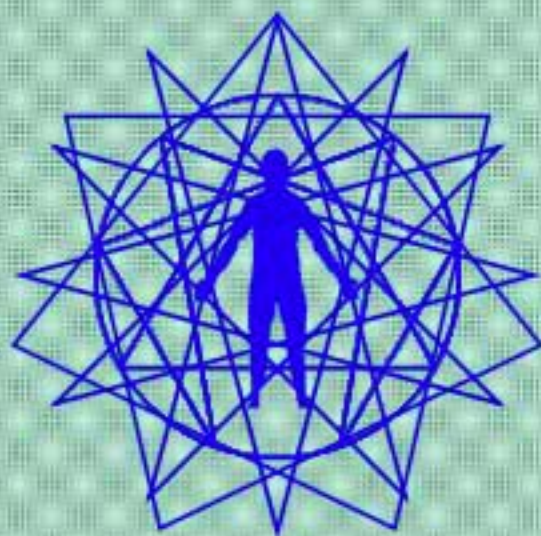


A Wholeness Foundation Publication*

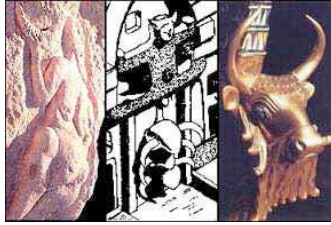
A Universal Bridge



LEVEL - ADEPT**

***We do not take sole credit for the content within we only have used our networks, which are vast, to bring it forth to humanity so they may receive the abundance of knowledge left by our Ancestors through their experiences with the Universe, Positive and Negative which to the Adept become the same thing.**

****An Adept is one who has finished the battle of opposites and is teaching their shadow by example not by the sword and scorn.**



The Venus of Laussel holds up a moon horn with 13 notches.
Pregnant goddess and horned bulls of Catal Huyuk
The Golden calf on a lyre burial chamber Ur (Campbell 1987, Mellaart, Eban).

The Origin of Sin and the Queen of Heaven

The history of the Moon God and his consort in successive Near Eastern Cultures from Sumeria through Canaan to Sa'aba and Harran.

Dedicated to my namesake and alter-ego Christine
"If it were not for you this work would have been a place of poverty"
The moon is rightly believed to be the star of the spirit
that saturates the earth and fills bodies by its approach
and empties them by its departure
the blood even of humans increases and diminishes with its light
and leaves and herbage are sensitive to it
the same force penetrating into all things.
Pliny. (Allegro 1970 70).

Preface: This is a large chapter in several sections dealing with a very long sweep of cultural change. To avoid your getting lost at the beginning, here are some links to further stages:

1. [The Origins of Sin 1: The Moon God and the Queen of Heaven](#)
2. [The Origins of Sin 2: The Sin of the Patriarchs and the Death of Moses](#)
3. [Redaction in the Decalogue: Circumcision and the Sacrifice](#)
4. [Yahweh and Asherah: On Every High Hill and Under Every Green Tree](#)
5. [Origins of Sin 3: The Lunar Passion and the Daughters of Allah](#)

Introduction

It is difficult for people living in the shadow of the patriarchal monotheistic heritage to understand how the paternal creator god we associate with the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions has evolved naturally from more ancient traditions in polytheism. The tendency is to perceive polytheistic deities as debased objects of idol worship, either empty of real content because they are false man-made gods, as mere projections of human personality, or at best representing only one aspect of primitive nature such as fertility, or astral bodies such as the moon or sun. In fact the converse is the case. Yahweh is a tribal patron form of a more ancient cosmic deity, who only regains a semblance of his original cosmic nature in the Christian form many centuries later, although now without his divine consort, and their sacred garden of immortality.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is a particular tendency to see the aniconic aspect of Yahweh as intrinsically superior to the idolised deities of polytheism, and to infer that this "true" God of his people has appeared paradoxically as a revealed "God of History", first to Abraham in the starlight and later to Moses out of a cloudy pillar. Despite clearly manifesting in Yahweh as a tribal patron god, rather than a cosmic god of all and only later being vested by pre-exilic Jewish culture with strict monotheistic attributes, this deity finally appears as a cosmic deity in the Christian and Islamic form with the full dimensions of an aniconic, monotheistic, cosmic, paternal creator deity - the "one true God of all", who has revealed his nature in ever deeper stages to his followers.

This description is patently incorrect. It is calculated to reinforce the unquestioned acceptance of the patriarchal creator deity, despite his mottled history, and mask the evolutionary nature of all deities as projections of conscious awareness and human culture. Long before Yahweh made his dubious entry onto the stage of history as a jealous patron deity, ancient astral deities had already encompassed the major advances later seen in the Christian idea of the supreme creator god, who is both the god of reality and the god of the mind.

In rediscovering the underlying nature of this "God behind God" and his complementary relationship with the Goddess, with whom he is inextricably fused in deep union, just as Shiva and Shakti, we will not only discover our true origins of deity in the joyful marriage of complements - male and female mind and body, but also our much more ancient roots in the links between the conscious mind and the immortal unfolding of fertility which were already discovered 20,000 years ago with the first developments of human culture. In a real sense these ancient traditions, far from being more primitive, capture in archetypal form realities towards which our modern scientific society is only now converging after a long period of imbalance and confusion.

In finding our true cultural roots of deity, we can finally come to a position in which we can discover in a vastly older tradition the continuity of vision that will sustain us in a closed but living ecosystem in which we have unparalleled powers of stewardship of nature.



El - the kind old fatherly God of Canaan, archetypal
of the fatherly aspect of the Christian trinity is horned (Willis).

Ancient Roots of the Moon God

Briffault notes that the Moon as a deity is in its ancient form male, the male nature complementing the natural moon-related cycle of female fertility. This can be appreciated when we consider that a common thread runs from the ancient Venus of Laussel dating from around 18,000 - 20,000 BC, with her 13 notched upheld moon horn, representing the lunar months, through Catal Huyuk with the horned Bulls and pregnant fertility goddesses, to the golden calves of Ur and of Israel and the bull-horned El of Canaan, who although no longer specifically a Moon God retains his ancient fertility symbol, the human menstrual cycle.

The association of the Bull's horns with fertility expresses in one image the virility of the bull and the moon-driven rebirth of human fertility in the blood flow of the menses. This association has also become cyclically steeped in the blood of sacrifice, for it was perceived that out of blood came new life. In this parallel truth of the fertilized soil came endless cycles of animal and human sacrifice to the fertility goddess so that the harvest would spring forth anew and nourish the agricultural peoples. The moon deity, as a waxing and waning god. This causes the moon to be associated both with the dead and the underworld and with immortal life. It also became associated with the agricultural sacrificial cycle and the resurrection on the third day of the new moon.

The period in which the Moon completes an orbit around the Earth and returns to the same position in the sky--the sidereal month - is 27 days, 7 h, 43 min. Because the Earth is moving in its orbit around the Sun in the same direction as the Moon, the time needed to return to the same phase--the synodic month - is longer: 29 days, 12 h, 44 min. This period is the time interval that, for example, elapses between two successive full moons, a period that was known within a second even in ancient times (Grollier). The natural period of the human menstrual cycle is about 28 days, the nominal month we still use of four seven day weeks. 13 such 28 day months constitute just one day short of a year, however they lose synch with the moon, as the number of synodic lunar months is 12.38 per year, enough for 13 notches, but not for 13 revolutions. A transition thus occurred in history from a 13 month year to a 12 month year and 13 became the unlucky number.

Something of the idea of how fundamental the moon deity is to our cultural evolution can be understood from the fact that 'men' - the moon is the source of both 'menses' - the blood flow of human fertility and 'mens' - the mind. The association between moon and mind thus extends from the fringes of lunacy across the entire mental realm. The moon is thus specifically associated with both fertility and the mind itself. You could say the ancient moon god was both the god of the cosmic mind and the cause of menstruation! His widespread name Sin means God of Wisdom. The collection of the major heavenly bodies, the houses of the moon, around the seven names of the week is also a lunar-centred description, emphasizing the central role played by the moon among the astronomical bodies.



The Sleeping Gypsy - Henri Rousseau

"But while the moon, as 'the real husband of all women', is thought of as a male, it is at the same time associated with the functions, not of men, but of women. It is the source not only of their reproductive powers but all their other powers, especially their magic powers. Furthermore the moon stands in primitive thought for perpetual renewal, immortality, eternity" (Briffault v2 583). The moon is the real measure of time. It is three days of darkness is the origin of myths of descent and resurrection in the new moon on the third day. "In primitive thought the eternal time-creating nature of the moon imparts to it an inexorable character, setting it above all other powers" (ibid). The resurrecting moon has an inextricable link with the serpent which sheds its skin. So intimate is this association that ... wherever we find the serpent, ... we may expect to find a lunar cult. This link is accentuated by the idea that menstruation is caused by union between a woman and a serpent. The great leviathan of the deeps is also naturally the moon tide.

"The moon is the regulator and cause of menstruation, which is frequently regarded as being the result of actual intercourse between the moon and women. ... The dangerous character ascribed to women is also attributed to that celestial body which is everywhere associated with women, the moon." Belief that the moon, or moonlight can precipitate conception is culturally widespread." (Briffault v2 585).

The moon deity thus combines an astral cosmic and mental aspect with the core principles of female fertility in a way in which the genders form a natural and meaningful complement. It is simplistic to attempt to identify the Moon God as being merely the God of the Moon, because his aspects extend into the core aspects of meaning and being.

In Anatolia and Northern Aegean the son of the Great Mother is Men, common to all Indo European languages. That in fact, and not Selene is the proper Greek term for the moon and as in all other languages it is masculine. ... In spite of the general feminization of the moon in Hellenic mythology, the primitive mystics and Homer alike refer to the moon as masculine Men. He is associated with Anaitis the moon goddess represented by Hekate, Artemis and Diana (Briffault v3 120)

Just as the fertility Goddess is one although she has many names, the Moon God comes in a variety of names which span many cultures. Nanna of the Sumerians patron of Ur, Yerah of Ugarit, Sin patron of Harran, Kusu of the Hurrians, Ilumquh of the Sabaeans of Yemen, Soma of the Indo-Aryans, Yaho and many others. Although he was the patron deity of two specific cities of the Sumerian empire, Ur in the South and Harran in the far North, his worship is astral and cross-cultural.



Four candidates for Soma: Amanita muscaria, Psilocybe sp., Peganum harmala, Cannabis (Schultes & Hofmann 1979)

Soma and the Indo-Aryan Origins

The association between the mind and the moon is very ancient and also lies at the source of Indo-Aryan myth. In the Hymn of Man, the primordial Adam is sacrificed to become the diversity of the world. Although the sun is his eye, it is the moon who is his mind. (O'Flaherty 29)

Both the Persian and Indian sources of the Indo-Aryan tradition speak of an ancient visionary drink of a ruddy complexion, pressed from a plant or fungus. Soma is at once the source of immortal knowledge and the Moon God of the Indo-Aryan mind, as portrayed in the Hymn of Man. The similarity of the eternally reproducing fruit is notable and suggests the two themes could have had a common origin. Although many plants from *Cannabis* through to a penetrating case for *Peganum harmala* (Rudgley 43), both of which are psychoactive, have been suggested, two fungi, *Amanita muscaria* and *Psilocybe* species have also been considered to be Soma. The presence of mushroom icons in both the Konja plain and Europe lends support for early use in Europe as is the case in America. *Psilocybe* species in particular have been discovered across the entire spread of temperate lands believed to be the origin of the Indo-Aryans (Stamets 64).

Soma had the first claim to all women. They only came afterwards into the possession of men (Briffault v3 239). Soma, like other Moon Gods is regarded as the sacred bull which is sacrificed. "The killing of Soma ... symbolizes the pressing of the sacred plant Soma, which causes rain, and consequently the growth of plants; Soma is the elixir of life, which after dropping to earth as rain, mounts to the moon and is drunk out of the moon by the gods, who use the moon as a cup. The animal representing the moon is the bull." (Briffault v3 130) Mithra's murder of the bull is pre-Zarathustrian myth. Ahriman replaced him in Zoroastrian times (Gershevitch 62).

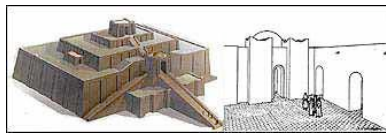
"Much controversy surrounds Zarathustra's attitude towards the drink haoma. In a somewhat unclear passage, he condemns 'the piss of this drunkenness' (Yasna 48:10) in connection with the karapans and the misrule. Indra is a deva demonized in the Vendidad. But the central ritual, the yasna, is essentially a haoma sacrifice." (Malandra 15)

"We have drunk the Soma,
we are become Immortals,
We arrived at the light,
we have found the Gods" (Wasson 1972).

Soma is the 'body' of the sacrament. The soma is the corpus.

Nannar and Ningal: The Moon Deities of Ur

The Moon God has always been complemented by a feminine counterpart. Nanna loved his consort the moon goddess Ningal. "Nanna fell in love with Ningal and she with him. It was from this joyful and impetuous union that Inanna, the morning and evening star and Utu the Sun God were born." (Wolkenstein and Kramer 141).



The Ziggurat of Nannar and the Temple of Ningal (Internet, Woolley 1954 201)

Nanna was worshipped in the ziggurat of Ur. There was also a smaller temple for Ningal the moon goddess. Nanna was worshipped both by a High Priestess and priests. Great Kings throughout history from Sargon 2600 BC to Nabonidus 550 BC had their daughters officiate as high-priestess of Nanna at Ur. The tradition begins with the first dynasties of Ur around 3400 BC and continued through to the fall of Ur around the time of Nabonidus, a period of some 3000 years. As we shall see this tradition continued for another 1700 years at Harran and still underlies the Islam of today.

It is clear that Ur-Nammu the founder of the great Third Dynasty of Ur had a female familiar spirit or shekina, which is shown in the stele below in which the King offers libations to the Tree of Life, before both Nanna and Ningal, to preserve the fertility of the garden, and that this was a central ritual in founding the great ziggurat of Ur. Ur-nammu saved the garden of fertility.

For Nannar, his King Ur-Nammu
the mighty man, king of Ur, Sumer and Akkad
who built the temple of Nannar ...
he saved the plants of the garden ...
once lodged as a king should be
Nannar will guarantee the earth's increase.



Ur-Nammu with Shekina (female spirit) offers libations to the Tree of Life to both the Moon Goddess Ningal and the Moon God Nannar (Woolley 1954 pl 22).

In the fragmentary registers on the reverse of the stone [Stele of Ur-Nammu] we have a scene of sacrifice in which a priest cuts open the prostrate body of a bull so as to read the omens on its liver; and a scene of sacrifice in which it is possible that the king himself is figured as a god. ... Ur-Nammu was deified after death if not in his lifetime." (Woolley 1954 159).

"At no time in its long history was the city of Ur so important as in the days of the third dynasty, about 2300 - 2180 BC, when it was the capital of the Sumerian empire. The founder of the dynasty was Ur-Nammu, and he founded a royal house of which four generations after him were to sit on the throne; he was a great conqueror and a great ruler, famous for his justice and his good works, whose dominions extended from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean." (Woolley 1938 80.)

Sin or Nannar "is described as a young bull (the strong bull of heaven) perfect in every part: his beard is said to be of lapis lazuli (cf Mesopotamian men); his orb is a giant self-propagating fruit. The god's horns are taken to be a reference to the crescent moon, although they are also sometimes regarded as the boat in which he skims through the midst of the heavens." An exorcist priest or ashpu joined in prayer and incantation when Sin was attacked and oppressed by demons during an eclipse. (Contenau 248, 292)

Father Nannar, lord, moon-god, prince of the gods,
 Father Nannar, lord of Uru, prince of the gods.
 Lord, thy deity fills the far-off heavens,
 like the vast sea, with reverential fear! ...
 Father, begetter of gods and men,
 who establishest for them dwellings
 and institutest for them that which is good. ...
 Chief, mighty, whose heart is great,
 god whom no one can name, ...
 In heaven, who is supreme ?
 As for thee, it is thou alone who art supreme! ...
 As for thee, thy decree is made known upon earth,
 and the spirits of the abyss kiss the dust!
 As for thee, thy decree blows above like the wind,
 and stall and pasture become fertile!
 As for thee, thy decree is accomplished upon earth below,
 and the grass and green things grow! ...
 As for thee, thy decree has called into being equity and justice,
 and the peoples have promulgated thy law! ...
 O Lord, mighty in heaven, sovereign upon earth,
 among the gods thy brothers, thou hast no rival!"
 (Dawn Civ 654)

Controversy continues over the status of the Royal Tombs of Ur, which are famous for the fact that, like several other ancient cultures, whole courts were buried with great ceremony on the death of the sacred king. Although it is suggested that these Kings and Queens may have been sacrificed priests in fertility rites, the magnificence and extensive nature of the tombs suggest they reflect a royal suttee rite, in which the whole court departed with their deified king to accompany him on his astral journey. This is consistent with the prominence of the Moon God in worship of departed ancestors.

The early archaeological remains at Ur indicate a very prominent early flood. In the King list the kings reigned before the flood for a millennium. Then the flood came [before 3200 BC.] Afterwards kingship was sent down from on high. There was a dynasty at Kish, one at Erech and then the first Dynasty at Ur.

"Nabonidus (555-538 BC), last of the Babylonian kings appointed his daughter high priestess of the moon god at Ur, and the king states that in so-doing, he was following a precedent set by Kudur-Mabug, one of the Larsa kings who had reigned some 1500 years before - about 2000 B.C. Sargon (2630 - 2575 BC) had done the same, and the limestone slab of the period of Entemena... carries the precedent further back still : all through history such importance was attached to the great temple of Nannar the Moon-god at Ur ... that the reigning king, though a foreigner, might hold it worth his while to send his daughter as High Priestess there; in one case at least a king's son was High Priest of the Moon-goddess." (Woolley 1954 216)



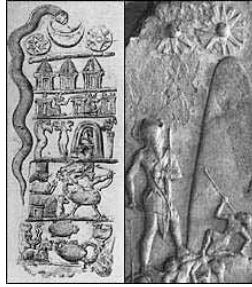
Nannar with the 'three muses' and Eternally Fruiting Orb - Ur-Nammu (Maspero 655)

Nannar "was thought to have arisen from a god of nomads and a protector of cattle, related to the masculine cult of the moon god in early Arabia. His daughter Ishtar in time overshadowed all other female deities, as did her counterpart Isis in Egypt. As father, or source, of the Goddess, it is fitting that Sin wears head gear suggestive of a mushroom. No other deity in the Babylonian pantheon has this headgear ... which is an identifier for the god." (McKenna 114) Contenau suggestively describes Sin's characteristic orb as an "eternal self-reproducing fruit", which is also identifiable with the regenerating moon.

Ningal, who in Akkadian texts is referred to as "the Mother of the Great Gods" was also Moon Goddess. Her temple was second in importance only to the of Sin. Her temple was likewise rebuilt many times. Ishme-Dagan's daughter Enannatum, high priestess of Nannar rebuilt the entire mud brick temple of burned brick (Woolley 1954, 166). Ningal laments the destruction of Ur in her lament:

I mourned the Day of the Storm, fated for me
 My burden predestined for me as a goddess
 The cause of my tears
 I could not flee the cruel violence of that day
 Its fury was greater than all the joys of my life
 The land of Ur is filled with sorrow
 Should I scream for the life of my calf,
 Cry out for its release?

When the storm subsided, the city lay in ruins
 The Temple of Nannar lay in ruins
 Where crowds once celebrated festivals
 Bodies lay in every street (Matthews and Benjamin 169).

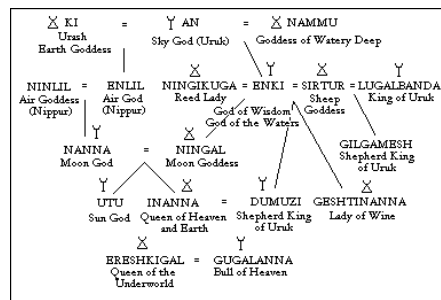


Babylonian deities surmounted by Sin,
surrounded by Shamash and Ishtar
and ascended by Nabu the wise serpent (Contineau 261).
King Naram-sin is horned as a god in victory (Mellenkoff).

The Chaldean Astrologers of Babylon

In early Babylonia the moon-cult was the national religion: the name Chaldeans means 'moon-worshippers'. (Briffault v3 79) In the bible Ur is referred to as Ur of the Chaldees.

In the Babylonian cosmology Sin, Shamash and Ishtar formed the second trinity of deities. The first trinity of gods were also absorbed into the lunar cycle becoming phases of the moon, thus giving the moon a supreme role as the connecting principle between the deities and mankind. "The moon is during the period of his visibility, in the first five days, the god Anu ; from the sixth to the tenth day, the god Ea from the eleventh to the fifteenth day, the god En-Lil" (Briffault v3 85). This trinity was also adopted by the Assyrians and the Hurrians alongside their patron deities.



The Sumerian form of the Genealogy of the Deities (Wolkenstein).

Sin (Nannar) as father of both the Sun (Utu or Shamash) and of Inanna (Ishtar) the Queen of Heaven was the central astral deity. The sun was generally a subservient deity, despite being officially recognised during the time of Hammurabi, being identified with, the hot, burning, sterile season (Briffault v3 85). This astral scheme extended to the seven "planets" of the lunar week, and the twelve signs of the zodiac, the 'girdle of Ishtar', representing the months. It is from this heritage that astronomy and astrology for which the Chaldeans became renowned developed.

The name Sin is the Semitic form of Sumerian Enzu meaning lord of knowledge. The Mesopotamians ascribed very great importance to him. It was he who governed the passing of the months through his waxing and waning. ... The unvarying lunar cycle gave Sin a special connection with order and wisdom and with immortality. The number seven is lunar in origin and is applied to the [seven days of creation](#), the seven levels of hell and the seven great planets, Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

The Babylonian lunar calendar was said to be invented by Nabu-Rimmani (Walker 646). Nabu is the god of writing, who bears the tablets of the gods and is identifiable with Mercury. Rimmon the pomegranate is a symbol of the enclosed fruit of the Yoni, thus also representing phallic male fertility (Walker 805). Nabu is also the wise serpent (Graves 470), the soothsayer and prophet, who knew and foresaw everything and was willing to give advice on any subject. The inventor of tablets and writing (Maspero 670). The features of Sin as moon god and Lord of Wisdom naturally complement those of Nabu and they come to have a close relationship, personified in Egypt in one god, Thoth.

Yerah - The Moon God of Canaan

The theme of love between the Moon God and his consort appears in Canaan in the form of Yerah and Nikkal and their marriage ceremony, echoing with fertility. When advised to court Baal's sister by Nikkal's father the Summer King, Yerah insists on his love and rejoins "Nay but let Nikkal answer" (Gray).



Temple of the Moon God Hazor Palestine (Gray)

The Moon, the Luminary of Heaven sends
To Hrbh, the Summer's King;
Give Nikkal; the Moon will pay the brideprice-
Let the Fruitful One enter his house,
And I will give her brideprice to her father,
A thousand pieces of silver, yea ten thousand of gold;
I will send gems of lapis lazuli;
I will make her fallow field into a vineyard,
The fallow fields of her love into orchards.
These overtures are met with becoming reluctance:

Then replied Hrbh, the Summer's King:
Gracious One among the Gods,
Affiance thyself to Baal,
Wed the Plump Maiden, Daughter of Mist
I will introduce thee to her father Baal ...

Nay but let Nikkal answer me,
Then afterwards make me thy son, in law.

The Moon paid the brideprice for Nikkal,
Her father set the beam of the balances,
Her mother set the pan of the balances (Gray 113)

Sin and Ishtar: Rumbblings of Descent

The relationship between the Moon God and his daughter [Inanna](#) of the Sumerians, Ishtar of Babylon, Athirat of Canaan, [al-Uzza](#) of Arabia, [Hathor](#) of Egypt and [Hekate](#) of Greece is complex and holds the key to the gender difficulties that have accompanied the emergence of the monotheism of Yahweh, the downfall from Eden and ultimately the patriarchal tradition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Inanna, or Ishtar, although she is Queen of Heaven arose out of the sea as did Aphrodite the Canaanite Athirat and Mari the Goddess of the Sea from Cyprus, Crete and Syria, identifiable with Anath, so Sin is also in this sense God the father of the 'virgin' Mary.

Of course father and daughter indicate that an evolution took place in which the daughter underwent a resurgence, just as with El and Ba'al in Canaan. Nannar appears very early in the history of Ur, consistent with an origin as a nomadic God of the Shepherd Kings who formed a cultural complementation to the planter Queens in the emergence of the Sumerian civilization. Although associated with ancestor worship and sacred tombs, the courtship of Nannar and Ningal is not characterised by seasonal male human sacrifice. Subsequently this position shifted back towards sacrifice of the agrarian Fertility Goddess, who was originally a chthonic deity of the earth and underworld. With the rise of Uruk Inanna (Ishtar) wrested the *severme* or sacred power objects and began the descent of the seasonal sacrifice and resurrection of Dumuzi (Tammuz). In this respect, she becomes the goddess making her journey from heaven to earth and finally to the realms of death - the almighty woman of the three spheres.

"[Sin's] supreme character passed in later times to his female counterpart, who finally replaced him. When the female aspect of the lunar deity came to displace the male, the wife of the moon-god became identified with the moon itself, while the goddess Ishtar maintained her association with the planet Venus. This identification is symbolically represented by the lunar crescent, enclosing the star within its horns, which is still the [crest of Islam](#)" (Briffault v3 78).

This identification of Ishtar with the moon and the evening star throws an interesting light on the origin of goddesses. It ... derives from the common idea, ... that the morning and evening stars are the [two wives of the moon](#) . When the morning and evening star came to be identified they became in Ishtar her two complementary aspects: love in the evening and death in the morning (Briffault v3 82).

The relationship between the male and female counterpart of the moon was, however, variable. Ishtar is sometimes the daughter of the moon god. Sometimes he is her son and male avatar. In one liturgy, Tammuz is expressly addressed as the moon-god. Ishtar was horned, and was brought up out of the foam by water-gods, like Aphrodite, thus explaining her close connection with Mari, goddess of the sea. The votaries of Harran, despite worshipping the Queen of Heaven alongside the Moon God had a pertinent saying: 'if they were to honour the moon as a female they would become subject to their women' (Briffault v2 596).

This diverging relationship between the Moon God and the Fertility Goddess becomes pivotal in understanding the breakdown in relations between Yahweh and his Asherah later in Old Testament times. The Fall from Eden is specifically associated with the sacrificial cycle of Inanna and Dumuzi. Dumuzi becomes the dying Adam, doomed to mortality by the original sin of Eve, in accepting the advice of the Serpent and eating the Fruit. This re-fomented the link between male death and sex, the original sin of Eve, human sacrifice, which reverberated in the vulnerable line of patriarchal inheritance. In the above cylinder seal we see the four key components of the Eden myth, Dumuzi and the Horned Inanna, the serpent and the seven-limbed Tree of Life from which the Menorah is derived, both reflected in the seven days of the lunar week and the seven levels of the descent. The three days of the descent also represent the three days between the old and new moon. Sin himself is the chthonic 'green one' (Briffault v3 90) and is threatened by the seven devils of the underworld (Green T 196).



The 'Temptation Seal' Akkadian circa 2200 BC (Wolkstein and Kramer 3)
It is difficult to decide whether this is Sin (Naramsin) and Ningal (consort) performing the rite of the sacred tree as did Ur Nammu or whether it is Inanna and Dumuzi.
The seven branched tree echoes the menorah, the serpent Nabu.

While the story of Nannar and Ningal is the story of continuing love and marriage unto death, the descent instead elaborates male mortality in the face of the sexual fertility rites and sacrificial cycle of the Goddess. Neither Nannar nor the Egyptian Moon God Thoth approved of the descent. Nannar would not help his daughter. Thoth would not weep for Osiris. A close link is thus made between the sexual rites, male mortality and the reaction of the jealous male Godhead - banishment from the garden of fertility. Having become a root myth in the Old Testament world view, the downfall became portrayed in the apocalyptic vision many centuries later as a theme to be finally undone by the Son of Man in ushering in the Kingdom of Immortality by undoing the mortal sin of Eve. There is thus a close and intimate link between the sacrifice of Dumuzi by Inanna and the crucifixion of Jesus of Mary.



Arab Gold Necklace with Crescent and Lamb's Head (Zehren 345)

The God of the Semites

The moon was from earliest times the foundation of all theological development among the whole Semitic race, even after the Semites had become agriculturists. Moses Maimonides expressed this by saying that moon-worship was the religion of Adam; and the crescent is still the badge of Islam, as it was once the emblem of Israel. Arab women even now insist that the moon is the parent of mankind. Herodotus said "Arabs have no other divinities than Dionysius and Urania" (Ishtar or Aphrodite, both lunar deities". (Briffault v3 78)

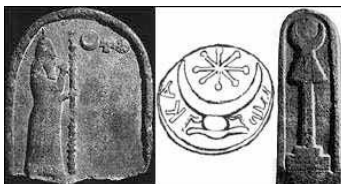
The cult of the moon-god Sinn is found in every Semitic land, and he was 'the father of the great gods, the Lord of Heaven' - the sun-god being merely an attendant deity. Numerous ancient Arabian inscriptions show the moon-deity as the most prominent object of cult everywhere, whether in the Hadramaut, Kataban or Afmaean kingdoms. (Briffault v3 79)

"In the faith of ancient Arabia," remarks Prince Teano, 'in the cult of the, moon, regarded as supreme male deity, conceived as a cause to which all worship refers, there lies manifestly the germ of monotheism, although only the Jews first, in Judaism and in Christianity, and Muhammad afterwards in Islam, attained to a clear enunciation of the monotheistic formula'. There are abundant indications," observes again Prince Teano, 'which seem to demonstrate that the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the Allah of Islam are merely transformations of the primitive lunar deity of Arabia' " (Briffault v3 106). Genesis 9:26 specifically concedes the god of Noah is the God of Shem - i.e. the universal god of the Semites and therefore Sin.

Harran, City of the Moon God

At the Northernmost end of the Sumerian empire the city of Harran likewise had the Moon Deity as patron God, under the name of Sin. From about 2000 BC to 1200 AD Harran continued an evolving tradition of Moon God worship. Harran is the place of Abraham's family and ancestors and the centre of many of the early events of genesis, including the naming of Israel. As described by Ezekiel 27:23, Harran along with Sheba and other cities were traders 'in blue clothes and brodered work, in chests of rich apparel , bound with cords and made of cedar.'

The status of Sin was so great that from 1900 BC to 900 BC his name is witness to the forging of international treaties as the guarantor of the word of kings. The temple was resoted by Shalmanester of Assyria in the 9th century BC, and again by Assurbanipal. About 550 BC, Nabonidus the last king of Babylon, who originated from Harran, rebuilt the temple of the Moon God, directed by a dream. His mother was high priestess at Harran and his daughter at Ur. Ironically his devotion to the Moon God caused a rift between him and his people and contributed to his defeat by the Persians. The worship of the Moon God at Harran evolved with the centuries. It included E-hul-hul, the Temple of Rejoicing, and a set of temples of distinctive shape and colour dedicated to each of the seven planets as emissaries of the cosmic deity. Many of the descriptions of Harran through Christian and Moslem eyes include exaggerated tales of sacrifice which are probably not factual. It was said by one writer that they sacrificed a different character or type of human to each planet. A garlanded black bull was however sacrificed in public ceremony, as the bull was at Ur, and Moslem sources refer to seasonal weeping for Ta'uz at Harran, and up to the 10th century among bedouin in the desert.



Stele of Nabonidus, Star and Crescent of Harran coin, Sign of Sin (Beaulieu, Segal 1963)

After the conquests of Alexander, Harran came to be a centre of intellectual and religious activity which continued into the Christian era. The form of the worship evolved into a philosophical tradition centred around Hermes Trismegistus - Hermes thrice-great who knows the past, present and future.

The Hermetic view is one in which god is conceived both as idea and as embodied world: he is the supra-individual source of a particular world-experience and world-configuration. The experience of the world in this manner is open to the possibility of a transcendent guide ... who is also able to provide impressions to consciousness that are palpable and manifest and in no way contradict the observations and conclusions of natural science, yet extend beyond the idea that "man stands in the world alone endowed only with consciousness that is exclusively restricted to the ability to receive scientifically-evaluated sense impressions". The Hermetic aspect is thoroughly empirical, and it remains within the realm of natural experiences of the world, ... the accidental falling into your lap - how could these be merely psychic realities? They are the world and they are one world - the one Hermes opens to us (Kerenyi 3, 46).

Orphic traditions were also popular. Harran remained solidly pagan when Edessa and other centres fell to monotheism, largely because of the unified devotion of its people to the astral deity.

Sin's powers of illumination, are revealed in his title 'the lamp of heaven and earth'. ... Illumination is not only the physical light of the moon, but also revealing the will of the gods, enlightenment, especially through oracles. In a Assyrian prayer ... in an eclipse, Sin is beseeched to give the oracle of the gods. As such, Sin becomes the Lord of Knowledge, the tablet on which Nabu, the scribe of the gods, ... writes the divine decrees. ... Because of this overlap of functions as a giver of oracles, Nabu was closely associated with Sin. His name appears as an element in the names of many neo-Babylonian kings from Nebuchadnezzar to Nabonidus. ... The stele of Nabonidus depicts the royal sceptre topped with a wedge symbol commonly associated with Nabu; He is the inventor of writing, the divine scribe, and the patron of all the rational arts. He is the transmitter of the decrees of the gods to mankind, the possessor of the tablets of destiny which fix the length of human life, and the giver of oracles that reveal the cosmic order of existence, and thus he serves as a link between the divine and human worlds. It was Nabu as scribe who recorded the destiny of the coming year at the akitu festival (Green T 33). [Nabu] came to be linked with those deities in other religious systems whose chief function was as bestowers of a revealed wisdom: the Greek Hermes, the Egyptian Thoth and the Persian Hoshang, as well as Apollo and Orpheus in the Hellenistic and early Christian periods, Enoch or Idris later under Islam (Green T 71).



Hermes staff, the Caduceus (Britannica), the entwined serpents of healing of the medical profession, is homologous with Moses staff and brazen serpent (Glueck).

"Constructed from the complex functions and nature of the Egyptian Thoth, and drawing upon the similar roles of Hermes, Nebo, Sin and other deities whose spheres of power encompassed the revelation of hidden wisdom, Hermes Trismegistus [Hermes, who knows the past, present and future] was the inspiration for, ... a vast body of literature. Treatises of philosophical and scientific revelation about the nature of the cosmos, and handbooks of practical magic, with recipes for drawing down the power of the planets and the stars, curing illness, making talismans and amulets. [He] was the source of all knowledge previously known only to the gods: the explicator of the stars, the sacred healer, the master alchemist" (Green T 85).

"Although ... Hermeticism does not begin to emerge ... until the late Hellenistic period, its origins are to be found in ... the ancient magical and religious traditions of Egypt and Mesopotamia; the quest of Greek science for the cosmic glue; the religious philosophy of Pythagoras and his disciples, of Plato and his successors, and of the Stoic doctrines of fate and universal sympathia; the rites of the mystery cults of Asia Minor and beyond; the astral and planetary worship of the Semites that found a home in both Greek philosophy and the westernized cult of Mithra, as well as the dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism; and finally, the figure of the savior-messiah that emerged within Hellenistic Judaism" (Green T 85).

"The mystical powers of Hermes exerted themselves far beyond the pagan world of late antiquity, transmuting medieval Christian and Islamic understanding of the relationship between rational knowledge and revelation. As the Greek messenger of the gods who became the conductor of the souls of the dead to the underworld, the playful child-like spirit of fertility who became the companion of triple-faced Hecate and a patron of the magical arts, Hermes had been identified by the Greeks from Herodotus on with the Egyptian god Thoth, whom Plato in the Phaedrus had credited with being the inventor of the alphabet and the art of memory. Thoth was the master of wisdom, made manifest in the moon, the divine scribe, "the tongue of ptaah," who recorded the judgments of the dead; and he thus finds his Mesopotamian counterpart in both the moon god Sin, and Nebo" (Green T 85). Hermes shares with Thoth an ancient ithyphallic fertility nature complementary to the Great Goddess.



Harran female dress was essentially unchanged from 4 th century to the 19 th (Segal 1963). Temple and relief figure with frock coat - Sumatar Harabesi. The statues show inscriptions to Sin.

An epitaph at neighbouring Edessa reads "Pleasant is the resting place of Shalman son of Kawab (star). They have answered thee and called thee, and thou hast answered them whom thou hast touched. Thou hast seen the height and the depth, the distant and the near, the hidden and the evident. And they - they know well the usefulness of thy reckonings."

In 363 the Emperor Julian stopped at Harran and took the oracle of the Moon God before being defeated in battle against the Persians. This story was expanded later to the effect that he had sacrificed the High Priestess, hung her by her hair and read her liver for an omen (Green T 51). In 545 the Bedouin Mundhir fighting for the Persians sacrificed his enemies son to Uzzai (Venus). Fearful tales also were told that they had sacrificed 400 virgins seized from Emesa and sacrificed them to the Goddess. It is unclear what credence to place in such Christian war stories, as mass female sacrifice is most unusual (Segal 145).

Ahmed ibn al-Tayyib noted "A single power, single and eternal was the primal cause of the universe. He is beyond the worship of men; and he has delegated the administration of the universe to the planets who proclaim his supremacy. He has sent prophets, Arani Agathodaemon (Seth and Orpheus) and Hermes (Idris and Enoch) to guide mankind. Sabian views on the nature of deity, natural phenomena and dreams were similar to Aristotle (Segal 1963 211). They did not accept the idea of a human prophet who could mediate between mankind and the supreme deity.

They celebrated a calendar of festivals and mystery cults to which only initiates were allowed access. "According to the Catalog, at the time that they celebrate the birthday of the Moon and the mystery to the [North](#) in II Kanun, the Harranians burn rods of pine (al-dadhi) for the gods and the goddesses. Both the pine tree and cone are, of course, symbols of eternal life, and appear in the cults of Mithra, Attis and Dionysus, among others, as the embodiment of the prize of immortality." In some of these later cults there was a Mithraic or Zoroastrian influence apparent, in which the worship of the sun in the "Mystery of the North" (Shamal) occurred at the same time as the Birth of the Moon was celebrated elsewhere at Harran (Green T 192).

Shamal may also have been a lord of the djinn. There is a reference in the Mysteries of the North to the Lord of Time. Time as Greek Chronos or Persian Zurvan can be equated with Nergal the Lord of the Underworld. Dionysus has similarly been equated with Hades. There is a compelling logic to worshipping time, for it is in time that all opportunities arise and all disasters befall. It is thus to time that we should turn to deal with the things that matter and the things which threaten. By contrast the eternal deity of heaven is lost in an unchanging constancy. In this sense, evil is entropy, the Lord of the Second Law.

The Harranians were not circumcised, avoided contagion, washed with soda, and believed procreation was the purpose of marriage. Close-relative marriages were forbidden, they were not polygamous and divorce was granted only after clear evidence of shameful behaviour. Women enjoyed equality under the law and appear prominently in archaeological records. They had a characteristic costume. The women wore high hats, the men frock coats and long hair. They had similar slaughter rituals to Islam, but were very selective in their foods, rejecting camels, dogs, pigs, chickens, fish, garlic, beans, brassicas and lentils on medical grounds. They liked wine and made wine a part of their religious life, in wine-pressing and lunar offerings.

The awe of Abraham gave Harran a special status among Christians and Moslems alike. When the Islamic conquests flowed north, Harran diplomatically surrendered without hostility and paradoxically became unique as the only pagans who were accepted by the new faith. Muhammad had, in developing Islam, reached back to the religion of Abraham whom he called a *hanif* - a worshipper of the true god before the time of monotheism. He also reserved a special place for the Sabians as people of the book along with the Christians and the Jews.

Sura 2.62: "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve."

Sura 2.135: "And they say: Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course. Say: Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim, the Hanif, and he was not one of the polytheists."

The Moon worshippers of Harran came to inherit both these titles and to retain much of their identity after the Muslim conquest. A Christian story relates they they adopted these titles as a legal defence against being executed as pagans, after the Moslem general came through telling them they could convert to Islam or a path of the book by the time he came back or all be slaughtered. Some converted and some lamented but a few took a very powerful lawyer and claimed the Qur'anic heritage: "The Harrians possessed a sacred book called the book of of the hanpe or Haniphites. True the book was concerned ... with ritual and not with ethics or law, and the prophets were legendary rather than human, but the Harranians satisfied the conditions required by Islam for recognition as a tolerated community".

The term Sabian, which is believed to be Syriac (rather than referring to the Sabaeans or Shebans of Yemen who were also Moon God worshippers) may originate from the Soba, the Syriac-speaking pagan Semites of Northern Mesopotamia, who in Sin trended towards a single supreme godhead (even if not exclusive) and an afterlife and had similar practices to the Moslems. "Hanif is in some measure a synonym of Sabian.; the latter is a member of this religious community, the former the professed beliefs of this community" (Segal 1963 214).



(a) Tell Halaf 5th to 4th millennium BC, near Harran, at the source of the Charbur, Euphrates.
2 Kings 17:6 "they carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah and in Habor"
(Zehren 154) (b) Centre of Topkapı coat of Arms, Turkey

The Harranians were centrally placed to impart the intellectual advances of Egyptian and Greek civilization to the Islamic world and became famous astronomers, alchemists and physicians at the court of the Caliph. Sabian beliefs also found their way into esoteric teachings of Islam. "There is much in the developed Shi'ite position in general, and among the Isma'ilis in particular, that is sympathetic to the Hermetic doctrine..." including the prophesy of the Mahdi (Green T 169). Harran was abruptly erased from history in the 12th century AD by the Mongol conquests.

Another group called the Subbha, (baptisers), Mandaeans (gnostics) or [Nazarenes](#) were also identified as the Sabians. They claim to be followers of John the Baptist, who migrated to Harran and adopted some Harranian practices, later moving to the southern marshes of the Tigris and Euphrates. They believe the upper world is ruled by the Great King of Light the great life. Inferior to him are beneficent and demonic spirits. The earth was created out of black waters. The light-giving powers seek to direct humans to good actions, while the spirit of physical life and the planets incite them to error through false religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Their gnostic emphasis would tend to support the idea that Christian gnosticism was also the inner path of Jesus teachings.



The "ram in the thicket" found at Ur (right Woolley 1954). "And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son ... but an angel of the Lord said you have shown your fear God ... and Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw a ram behind him caught in the thicket ... and offered him up in stead of his son." Gen 22:10 (Empoli- Uffizi).

Alilat Ibrahim: The Elohim of Abraham

A tradition reported by Eutychius runs as follows: " At the time of Abraham there reigned Shabib (Sheba), the wife of Sinn, priestess of the mountain, who built Nisib and Edessa and surrounded them with walls. She founded also the sanctuary of Harran, and made an idol of gold, called Sinn." Al-Kindi reports in the tenth century the tradition that Abraham lived with his people four-score years and ten in the land of Harran, worshipping a deity famous in the land and adored by the men of Harran under the name of the moon (Briffault 3:108). Al-Kindy claimed this was al-Uzza, but in Harran, Sin was supreme, although it has been stated that moon became female in much later times.

Many components of the genesis mythology, including the Garden of Eden, and the flood myth, indicate a significant link with Sumeria. Sumeria has its own flood myth and there are relics of a major flood early in Ur's history. The "ram in the thicket" is also a motif found at Ur (Woolley 1954 3). Genesis 11:31-12:2 states that Abraham originated from Ur and journeyed with his father Terah to Harran, setting out for Canaan only after Terah died. Ur is near the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates, Haran is in Southern Turkey, the northern limit of the valley of Mesopotamia, suggesting this journey was a meaningful one related to the common deity of the two centres. Many of his relatives and ancestors lived in the vicinity of Harran. Several key names in Abraham's family, Terah (compare Yerah of Canaan), Laban, Sarah and Milcah are derived from worship of the Moon Deity (Bright 80, 91).

The dedication of Ab-ram, which in the earliest documents is a synonym for Ab-Sin (Briffault 3:108) is consistent with the ancestor worship associated with the Moon God in Aramaic cultures in which rites were regularly held to worship ancestors in cities stretching from Mari to Canaan. The Alilat Ibrahim, or religion of Abraham, was widespread among Semitic peoples. He was worshipped at the Ka'aba (Briffault v3 108).

The pattern of the two venus wives of the moon pervades the patriarchs and continues through Jewish and Canaanite history. Abraham had two wives, Sarah and Hagar who departed. Jacob also had Rachel and Leah. El courted two goddesses of the sea by roasting a bird for them, presumably Athirat and Anat. Similarly, the Hebrew god Yahweh was worshipped at Elephantine with two wives, (Briffault v3 82) apparently the same two goddesses (Kraeling 88). Adam was the husband of both Eve and [Lilith](#), two particularly challenging women. Moses was known both for the Cushite princess Tharbis (Silver 76) and Zipporah the Midianite.

And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. Numbers 12:1

Much later, Jesus is the Christ-messiah anointed of two Marys, Bethany who anointed his feet to his delight and Magdala who anointed his head to his doom. His crucifixion is celebrated at the full moon.

[Triptych](#) Sarah Maitland (A Myth of Hagar, Sarah and Abraham).

Harran continued to play a central role in the lives of the patriarchs. Jacob returned to Haran and spent fourteen years there (seven for each wife). He gained the name Isra-El (struggles with god) while at Harran. The twelve sons of Jacob who represent the 'amphityony' - the confederation of twelve tribes are lunar and astral in origin, representing the twelve months or zodiacal signs, in a rotating stewardship of the sacred sanctuary.



Aramaean King surmounted by lunar crescent (Oxford Bible).
Deut 26:5 "A wandering Aramaean was my father [Jacob]"

At Mari, despite having another patron deity, Dagon (the fish), there was a royal ancestor cult devoted to Sin. Ancestor worship was commonly performed through the Moon God in a *akisipim* ceremony. "At the new moon and full moon I regularly placed before him his pure bread and precious water. Sin release them [the ghosts of the ancestors] to eat their bread and drink their water." Responsibility for dead ancestors fell on the guardian of heir, who would receive the father's deities. Conversely, by stealing her father's gods, Rachel was stealing Laban's inheritance.

A *akisipim*-like ceremony is mentioned in 1 Samuel 20:18 "Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty [at the king's table]. And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself" which lingers to this day in Israeli folklore. In Isaiah 8:19 we also read "should not a people seek unto their God (ancestral spirits)? for the living to the dead?" It was also common practice in Israel and Phoenicia to lament for the dead with cuttings of hair.

Many of the names of the early tribal deities indicate a close link between ancestor worship and the deity, in which the god becomes patron of the clan deified in the person of the ancestor. We thus have the Mighty One of Jacob and in Gen 31 when Laban pursues Jacob, each swear by their gods, Jacob by the God of Abraham by the fear of his father Isaac and Laban by the God of Nahor.

At Mari, in the first quarter of the second millennium BC, a social continuum developed between the city dwellers and the nomads in the outerlying areas. The Benjamins were a tribe noted at Mari which had specific associations with Harran. The names Abi-ram (Abraham) Yasmah-El (Ishmael) Yaqob-El (Jacob), a name also shared by a Hyksos chief and El-Laban (Laban) all appear at Mari. The root *mlk* denoting melech king or in its sacrificial form Moloch is also found. Another word at Mari in this time which will come to have significance in Islam is *ummah* or "mother" unit of the nomadic tribes (Malamat 31, Bright 70). Mari despite its patriarchal culture was noted for the independence of its women, who officiated prominently as priestesses (Dalley 97, Batto). Nuzi texts also indicate special provision for daughters to inherit "as sons".

Malamat (54) comments further that the unusual genealogy of Nahor in Gen 22:20-24 suggests that Abraham was originally one of the wandering sons traditionally listed as children of concubines (Ishmael etc.) in the Old Testament. It is clear that the children of Israel are the wanderers from Aram-Naharaim on the upper Harbur. This is ironically the same place the ten tribes were later [deported](#) to by the Assyrians. Such pastoral migrations were noted at Mari.

Nahor occurs in the Mari texts as Nakhur a town in the vicinity of Harran (Gen 24:10) governed in the eighteenth century BC by an Amorite prince, and later Assyrian texts mention a town after Terah's name (Bright 70) and names derived from the same roots as Gad (fortune) and Dan.

Early history suggests that [the matriarchs were actually more important than the patriarchs](#).

Before the time of the Exodus, the deities were worshipped collectively as the Elohim, the many forms of 'deity'. El meaning simply 'god' is also identifiable with the kind old grandfather god of Canaan, who is horned like Sin but expresses more specifically the primal male fertility characteristics of inthyphallic gods Nabu and Hermes. As heavenly scribe, these are both also bearers of the covenant. El's many forms include El-shaddai - the Lord of the

Mountains; Bethel 'the house of god' is mentioned in Jeremiah 48:13 as a god. Baityl, like El is one of the four founding Canaanite deities (Kraeling 88); El-Elyon - god the most high; The Elohim even included two forms of the Great Goddess as shown in the blessing of Jacob.

The **Blessing of Jacob** for the twelve tribes (Genesis 49), probably the oldest passage in the Bible (Freedman 1987 322) , specifically blesses Joseph "Even by the god of thy father who shall help thee, and by the Almighty (El - shaddai_ who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above (Sin), blessings of the deep that lies under (the underworld, the primal chaos - Tiamat, Shekina) , blessings of the breast and womb (Asherah - the creatress of living things) prevailing from the everlasting mountains to the eternal hills. This emphasis on the eternal is characteristic of the resurrecting moon deity of immortality.

A particular form of the Elohim worshipped until the destruction of the sanctuaries in 622 BC was the "Host of Heaven" the very astral deities surrounding the Moon God. Abraham left shrines at many high places and in many natural sacred sites, including the oak groves of Shechem and Mamre, which many centuries later was still a noted pagan shrine (Walker 5). A old tradition associates the Oak of Mamre with a vision by Abraham of the Son of Man.: Gen 18:1 And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."

Gen 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

Abraham's line were buried before Mamre. "And the field of Ephron in Machpelah, before Mamre, the field, and the cave therein, and all the trees in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field ... And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; ... there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people and his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah."

Jacob leaves the strange gods at the oak of Shechem and becomes Israel at Elbethel. Gen 35:2 "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean ... And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. ... So Jacob came to Luz, that is, Bethel, and he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. ... And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel."

The astral form of the amphyctony of the twelve tribes, which is also paralleled in Greece (Gottwald 376), meeting and probably officiating in rotation at the tabernacle is consistent with the astral worship noted among Semitic nomads starting from the time of Hammurabi around 1750 BC (Briffault 3/85), although this may have postdated the time of Abraham.



Seti I giving offerings to Thoth and to Hathor (Pritchard 1954, Willis)
Moon Eye of Horus or Udjat (inset Willis)

Thoth and Hathor: The Balance of Wisdom and Fertility

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with god and the word was god: "Thot the god of [Egypt whose sacred city was Khemenu, also called Hermopolis by the Greeks after Thot's alter-ego Hermes], represented as ibis or baboon, was essentially a moon god, who measured time, counted the days, numbered the months and recorded the years. Lunar divinities, as we know are everywhere supposed to exercise the most varied powers : they command the mysterious forces of the universe; they know the sounds words and gestures by which these forces are put in motion, and not content with using them for their own benefit they also teach their worshippers the art of employing them. Thot formed no exception to this rule. He was the lord of the voice, master of words and books, possessor and inventor of those magic writings which nothing in heaven, on earth or in hades can withstand. He had discovered the incantations which evoke and control the gods; he had transcribed the texts and noted the melodies of these incantations; he recited them with that true intonation which renders them all powerful, and every one, whether god or man to whom he imparted them, and whose voice he made true became like himself the master of the universe. He had accomplished creation, not by a muscular effort to which the rest of the cosmogonical gods primarily owed their birth but by means of formulas or even of the voice alone, the first time when he awoke in the Nu. The articulate word and the voice were believed to be the most potent of the creative forces, not remaining immaterial on issuing from the lips, but condensing so to speak into tangible substances, into bodies which were themselves animated by creative life and energy" (Maspero 143).

Thoth was an ancient deity going back to the earliest dynasties who remained outside the solar Heliopolitan ennead, and instad had his own cult center at Hermopolis. He is renowned for his wisdom, speaking the sacred words of creation, and for healing the moon eye of Horus. He is thus associated with the origin of written and spoken language, science and medicine and the power of magic. As scribe of the gods he is also the legislator of social order and justice, the Lord of Laws. I Thoth am the protector of the weak and of him whose property is violated, just as was Yahweh.

He is the protector of the goddess Ma'at who personified cosmic and earthly order. He is the leader of the sky, the earth and the nether world, Lord of Heaven, the silver sun, the brightly shining, Lord of Time the Reckoner (of time), and very anciently the Chief of Heaven. He that increaseth time and multiplieth the years. He that looketh through bodies and can read the secrets of men's hearts. He is the means by which all sacred rituals are achieved, without whom nothing can be furthered.

He gives to mankind, not only knowledge, but the very faculties of mind. He is the donor of human far-sightedness and astuteness. His wisdom is of such a nature that it will lead to resolution and satisfaction of all disputing parties. Both Thoth and Sin are described as "he who soothes the heart of the gods". "He is the Lord of Friendliness", "God of exceptional goodness among the gods". The merits of Thoth for the human community can best be characterised by calling him a "culture hero".

"Thoth thou sweet well for someone
who suffers thirst in the desert.
He is closed for him who speaks
and he is open for him who is silent."



Serabit in Sinai. Temple of Hathor. Statue with early Hebrew script (below) "Ba'alim" (Flinders-Petrie).

Thoth has a complex relationship with the Goddess Hathor (the house of Horus). Both are primal deities who have no formal consort. Their relationship extends far beyond the simple roles of Nannar and Ningal to a complementary relationship of independent creative deities. Thoth represents the principles of cosmic order and harmony, while Hathor represents fertility, creativity and inebriety. Both are ancient primal deities, which have neither consort nor parent. Thoth goes back at least as far as the third dynasty and Hathor to the first.

"Praised be thee Thoth, Lord of Hermopolis,
who hath created himself,
he was not born, the sole god."

They are both deities of the underworld who are favourites in prayers of the deceased. Thoth is the psychopomp who takes the deceased to heaven on his wings and initiates the deceased into his secret wisdom. Hathor will offer the deceased a precious drink from her tree and will let him sit beside her under her tree. "I sit under the branches of the tree in the vicinity of Hathor". "The wings of the sky-doors will be opened for thy beauty (person). Thou risest up. Thou seest Hathor." The butchers who have to prepare the sacred offering are told "move your arm for the consecrated gift for the Lord of Eternity (Thoth) and to the Mistress of Inebriety (Hathor), so that they might receive him who brings this (gift) as a blessed one (in the hereafter)". (Thoth and Hathor). Hathor is also the Asherah, the vegetation Goddess who is present in her sacred sycamore tree, and gives nourishment from the midst of her tree even in the underworld.



Hathor offers a drink of sacred waters from her sycamore (Cook).

Each is involved in different myths in healing the sacred moon eye of Horus which was struck out by Seth. Hathor heals the eye with the milk of a Gazelle. Thoth in restoring the moon eye to fullness is the healing magician who can make whole what has been already destroyed. The eye becomes a symbol of eternal regeneration which resurrects the dead Osiris in the underworld, thus identifying Thoth-Hermes with the cult of eternal life. Hathor makes a journey to Heliopolis "bearing the writings of the words of Thoth" - the so-called Book of Thoth, which is regarded as the secret book of magic power, in modern times to become a title for the Tarot. Both are pivotal in the life of Egyptian kings. It is Thoth who permits Re to fertilize the Queen and Hathor who suckles the young King.

The legends of Thoth and Hathor include a charming and pivotal myth of historic rapprochement between God and Goddess. Hathor as Tefnet, the savage lioness, was in the Nubian desert, in her militant angry form, devastating humanity as the angry searing sun eye. To save humanity, Thoth was sent to Hathor. He spoke his sacred words of wisdom to her calming her and inviting her to come willingly to the land of Egypt to become the joyful Goddess of fertility, dance, song and particularly inebriety - sex, drugs and rock and roll! The Maternal *mysterium tremendum* is thus accommodated to the human condition, despite retaining the essence of her tumultuous nature. It remains part of Thoth's duty to calm down Hathor each day. "Hathor is the divine being who daily brings good fortune to man whom Thoth wishes may have a rich and sound life" (Bleeker 48).

Thus shall Thoth again speak these sacred words to bring the Goddess of Fertility back from the brink of ecocrisis to become an eternal principle of unfolding evolutionary splendour!

Hathor leaves the sacrificial cycle to Isis and Osiris and despite being liable to volatile emotions remains the loving creatress. "The gods play the sistrum for Hathor, the goddesses dance for her to dispel her bad temper." As the joyful Goddess of fertility, dance, song and inebriety Hathor personifies - sex drugs and rock and roll - the very spirit and energy of the modern age. Her festival of inebriety was no mere drunken debauchery, but a state of ecstasy engendered in honour of the goddess - pacifying her and the participants alike.

She is the beloved of her people:

We gladden Thy majesty daily
And Thy heart rejoices when Thou hearest our songs
We rejoice when we behold thee
Every day, every day.

For thou art the mistress of jubilation
the mistress of music, the queen of harp-playing,
whose face shines each day,
who knows no sorrow.

Our hearts are uplifted by the sight of thy majesty.
For thou art the possessor of the garland of flowers,
the leader of the choral dance
The bestower of inebriety that knows no end!
(Bleeker 1)



Hathor as Qadesh the Syrian fertility goddess
with phallic Min. Note the Hathor crown and headdress.
She stands on a lion, holding a serpent and ears of grain (Graves 1946, Pritchard 1954)

Hathor's dimension of love extends beyond sexuality to foster the affection of the heart by which two young people come together:

"I send a prayer to my goddess (Hathor)
That she may give me the present of my sister (my love)".

"O Golden One, let it be in her heart,
Then I shall hasten to the brother (loved one)
and I shall kiss him in the presence of his comrades
Brother, O I am among the women
destined for you by the Goddess".

The Golden One has destined her for you, O my friend.
I prayed for her and she heard my prayer.
She destined my mistress for me.
And she came of her own will to see me.
How tremendous is that which overcame me.
I rejoice, I exult, I am very proud,
since the moment when it was said:
"See here she is".
(Bleeker 41)

She is the goddess of the nocturnal sky (netherworld) - "She who loves silence". "Dedicate all beautiful good things to Hathor, mistress of inebriety, to Hathor ruler of the desert." The Greeks also called Hathor Aphrodite-Urania so she is al-Uzza, just as she is identifiable with Ishtar. She has stars at the point of her horns, ears, on the forehead and on her body. "May the golden give life to thy nose, may the ruler of the stars be united with thee". As the "golden one", Hathor is the sky-cow who bears the sun eye between her horns and nurses the infant Horus-Re.

Hathor maintained a special presence in Sinai on the high places such as Serabit, where the nomadic mining tribes worshipped her. (Maspero 354, Petrie 85). In Egyptian inscriptions, "Qadesh beloved of Ptah" appears as the Syrian and Canaanite fertility goddess known from terra cotta figurines from many sites in Palestine. Hathor is also known as The Lady of Byblos and is thus Ashtarte or Athirat. The twin curled headdress is characteristic of all three goddesses.

Hathor is the sacred cow of heaven. In the excavations at Gezer, in Palestine, a number of figures of bulls have been found, the usual representation of Yahweh, and with them the corresponding figures of cows (Briffault v3 187), consistent with Hathor assuming the role of consort of Yahweh as the Queen of Heaven.



Timna: Hathor Egyptian period, Phallic Teraphim and 'Nehustan' from Midianite period. (Rothenberg)

Musa: High Priest of the Moon God?

Musa or Moses is traditionally described as the monotheist who is the bearer of the tablets of Yahweh's law. Flinders Petrie claimed the name was derived from Thutmose, Ahmoses etc. meaning "unfathered son of a princess". His origin in the bullrushes has a precursor in Heracles of Canopus and Sargon of Akkad (Walker 676). Miles (97) notes Moses has an Egyptian rather than an Israelite name, and his father is not named in the Tanakh, a highly exceptional omission. Does this omission suggest that Moses was illegitimate? That he had an Egyptian father? ... the voice from the burning bush subsumes "the God of your father," whoever Moses' father was". One suggestion is that Moses' mother was coopted as a surrogate slave wife by the Pharaoh's daughter to sire from her husband because of her own infertility in precisely the manner of Hagar.



Akhenaten c 1350 BC (Willis 52).

The mythology of his origin in the bullrushes and his high rank in Egypt led Sigmund Freud to suggest that Moses was a follower of the monotheistic sun god Aton of the period of Akhenaton around 1350 BC. This pharaoh instituted an aberrant culture which had unusual creative arts, but rejected previous cults with the exception of the Pharaoh as the son of the Sun God, representing an evolution of the beneficent aspect of Ra. Akhenaten embarked on a severe repression of all other gods. There is an inscription "O thou only God, there is no other God than thou." Freud took this to be a fore-echo of "Schema Jisroel Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echod" - "Hear Israel, our Lord God is the only God." The influence of the monotheistic idea is of significance and Aton clearly does have a place in the cultural origins of monotheism, but the worship of Aton was a cultural aberration which did not survive its founder and messianic embodiment the Pharaoh himself. Aton is also not associated with a moral order in the same way. It is more likely that Moses' Egyptian influence came from deeper more long-lasting cultural roots. Other historical analyses contradict the timing of this origin and place the Exodus at the time of Ramesses II.

There is in fact nothing in the Biblical accounts nor the ten commandments which indicate that Moses was historically an exclusive monotheist. The extensive rewriting of history that occurred after the apocryphal re-discovery of the Deuteronomic texts, some 600 years later and again by the Priestly redactionist make it difficult to get a genuine picture of Moses teachings. The circumstantial evidence is consistent with Moses being a priest of the high Moon God, by the name of Yahoo.

To put a gloss on the discussion, I will describe the story of the cultural hieros gamos of Moses as a transforming 'priestly messiah' who transforms the religious paradigm in a similar shocking manner to Jesus by reinterpreting the most abstract of Egyptian religious and Hapiru desert experience into a new articulate social force of historical redemption through 'literacy' - the logos. In this Moses figures similarly to Jesus in his complex relationship with women.

The Pharaoh's daughter Meroc, the wife of Chenephres, ruler of the delta lands, is barren. She adopts Moses. It is possible that, in the manner also traditional to Abraham, she offers her handmaiden to her husband to secure an heir, which would ironically make Moses a Jew by maternal descent only. The episode of the bullrushes may have been a ritual aspect of Moses' adoption by the Princess, gaining his name 'drawn from water' as a spiritual title. Infanticide of male Hapiru children may well have also occurred. It is also a myth already told about Sargon of Akkad a millennium before "My priestly mother conceived me, in secret she bore me. She set me in the basket of rushes. With bitumen she sealed my lid" (Time 14 Dec 98). Horus is similarly described.

Exodus of course claims Moses as a semi-incestuous, full-blooded Levite: 6:20 "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years."

Moses thus grows up as the son of an Egyptian princess, as the Bible recounts, and learns from the inside the intellectual dimensions of current Egyptian thinking. He is brought up as the interpreter of sacred wisdom. He becomes a priest of Thoth who is an Egyptian manifestation of the God of Abraham. He discovers how the intellectual tradition of Thoth makes it possible to use sacred language as a vehicle for religious and ethical understanding.



Black and white ibises were illustrated by Jules-Cesar Lelorgne de Savigny, a founder of morphology. His book on the natural history of the ibis notes that the white ibis, venerated for protecting their land from serpents never eats snakes. Ancient embalmers respected and conserved the myth however, by placing snakes in the stomach cavities of the birds they mummified (Sci. Am. Sept 94).

As a young prince, he is commissioned to lead a military expedition to pacify Nubia, in which the ibis is used to secure a safe passage through snake-fled desert and founds a camp called 'Hermopolis' and marries the Nubian princess as a ritual consecration of the treaty he secured in fulfillment of the legend of Thoth and Nubian Hathor.

Moses subsequently becomes the victim of a court intrigue, and flees for his life to the Eastern desert. There he discovers the complementary aspect of his cultural identity, the fellow kinsman of his Hapiru side. He meets Zipporah drawing water, marries her and becomes a shepherd for her father Ruel or Jethro, a Midianite priest. While leading the flocks he has the visionary shamanic experience of the burning bush and the snake. This episode could have been a lone vigil at a mountain tent shrine similar to those found at Serabit and Timna. Moses takes off his shoes. The God is abstract, nameless - almost Vedantic.

Moses resolves to lead his Hapiru clansmen out of their predicament into a new life of wisdom and unity, imparting to them the full dimensions of the ethics and good judgement that are the hall-mark of both Thoth and Moses teachings. He returns to Egypt, later sending back Zipporah to her Midianite father. He becomes a key figure in the period of social turbulence which follows, culminating in the Exodus.

As a priest of Thoth, Moses in one person fulfils the roles of both Sin the God of Wisdom and Nabo the Heavenly Scribe. His journey in Sinai is a symbolic journey between the mountains of these two gods. Moses received the covenant on Mt. Sinai, the Mountain of Sin, (also called Horeb and Har Elohim) after passing through the wilderness of Zin. Sinim is the mythical place of spiritual belonging. Isaiah 49:11 "And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." He died on Mount Nabo.

Lydus expressly asserts that "the Chaldeans called their god Yaho". A Babylonian text reads "The god Ib is my god Yau" (Briffault 3:108). The real names of gods were often kept secret. Yahweh told Moses he was the God of Abraham but under another name, and said instead "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh - I am that I am" (Exod 3:14) - he was "god whom no one can name" just as Nannar was (above), as was the tabu in Old Testament times (Lev 25:16). This

statement is traced to the Elohist author writing after the separation of Solomon's kingdom (Flanders et. al. 76). Yaho is also referred to by Diodorus Siculus, the Valentinian gnostics, the Kaballa and Yahuq among pre-Islamic Arabs. A stele from Byblos, specifically cites Yaveh-Melck, 'Yahweh the King', [who] worships the Queen of Heaven. "It may well be that, ... the name of the god of the Levites as it appeared in their cult cry Hallelu Yah was the true name of the semitic god in all his local forms.... The first part of this cry is still used as a salutation to the new moon among the Bedawi and in Abyssinia" (Briffault v3 110).

A list of Amenhotep III (1402-1364 BC) also mentions the land of the nomad tribes of Yhw and the names Seir, Laban and Samati the Qenites of the House of Rechab who were affiliated with the Midianites (1 Chr 2:55). One from Rameses III specifically links Yahu with the name Reuel, the same as that of the priest of Midian, Jethro, Moses' father in law", whose flocks he was tending when he saw the burning bush (Num 10:29, Exod 2:18). During the Exodus Jethro visits Moses, pays his respects to Yahweh, offers advice on judgement and goes his way, just as Hobab his son does later. Exodus 18:1: "When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, ... then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took **Zipporah**, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back." And with her two sons Gershom 'an alien in a strange land' and Eliezer 'god is my help' went to visit Moses. ... "And Moses let his Father-in law depart and he went his own way." Ruel's sons are also called Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah - rising, descending, here and there suggestive of astral worship (Bartlett 89).

Thus, although there is a close link with the Midianites, the Bible also emphasises their separateness. There are also further complexities in the violent episode of Baalpeor (Num 25:3) attributed to the wives of the Midianites. In this episode a plague is stayed by violently attacking the whoredom of the men of Israel with the women of Moab. Phinehas runs a copulating couple through with a javelin. This is regarded as a turning point of the whole exodus for Moses. Ba'al peor means "Lord of the Cleft" (Walker 86). It represents the fertility rite between the phallic god of the Phoenicians and the cleft of the Asherah.

Moses was a renowned magician and prophet. He carried the staff of the serpent (Num 21:8), a characteristic of both god and Mercury, and standard as the uraeus crowning the heads of Egyptian deities and pharaohs. The serpent staff of magic he received in the epiphany of the burning bush (Exod 4:4) strengthens this association. The term law'u or Levite means serpent. The leviathan only later, like Tiamat, became the dark forces of the underworld, like the dark moon. The brazen serpent he bore before him, crafted by the Midianite miners, called Nehustan was only destroyed many centuries later in the reign of **Hezekiah**. The costume of Levite priests included a crescent moon on the head dress. The concept of the sabbath day is implicitly lunar. Briffault notes that the association between the serpent and the moon God is common to Ur, Babylonian pictography and South Arabia (3/108).

Syrian Rue is widespread and specifically found on Jebel Musa, one candidate for the Mt. Sinai of Moses. The 'burning bush' and the mana from heaven was derived from an **acacia**. The combination may have given Moses access to a potent visionary preparation know later to the Bedouins of al-Lat.



Three representations of an Exodus High Priest.
Bible Venice 1489, Denmark 1589, Zohar 1706. (Mellinkoff)

A copper serpent was the only votive object at a Midianite tent shrine at the copper mines of Timnah, atop an older temple to Hathor, which had suffered an earthquake and been deserted by the Egyptians towards the end of the 12th century BC. (Weinfeld 1987, Rothenberg 1972). The temple was cleared of its votive objects to Hathor and refashioned as a 'tabernacle' defacing stones used in their standing pillars. Two phallic idols were also found with a pile of offerings outside. The association between the serpent and male fertility and inheritance is characteristic of ithyphallic gods Hermes and Nabu. Hermes carries the caduceus and Nabu is the serpent. Like Thoth they are the scribes of the covenant with god and of the logos.

At Serabit, particularly before the sacred cave, the Egyptian worship of Hathor is overlayed on even more ancient Semitic worship of the Goddess "in the high places" of a type which would form a source for later Israelite ritual (Petrie 186-192). Shelters on the hillside are also consistent with night vigils reminiscent of Jacob's (Gen 28:10) before anointing the stone at Bethel (Petrie 68). Later desecration has also occurred here.

Just as Naram-sin and Ishtar were horned, so it appears that Moses became horned when he ascended Mt. Sinai, met god face to face and returned with the tablets. Exod 34:29: "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."



Images of Moses display a horned hat and then horns: Aelfric 1025 AD, Moses with serpent 1225, Sluter 1404, Michaelangelo 1513, Freud 20th century (Mellinkoff).

St. Jerome's commentary states : 'Moses also went up into a cloud and a fog in order that he might contemplate the mystery of God, which the people left behind could not see. Finally after forty days the common people with their clouded eyes could not look at Moses' face because it had been "glorified," or as it says in the Hebrew, "horned"'. Jerome had two different translations for the Hebrew *qeren* - available to him: "glorified" (shining) in the Septuagint, and "horned" in the Aquila version.' Familiar with both (he drew material from many different sources'), perhaps in his scholarly search for what he believed to be the original word, he chose "horned." Jerome's own comments make it eminently clear that he made a conscious choice, not a simple translation error; and furthermore, that he thought of "horned" metaphorically (Mellinkoff 77). The alternative definition of *qeren* is rays of light. These are also portrayed emanating from Moses.

shining + horned = moon

A variety of archaeological, historical and mythological evidence from Egypt suggests Moses was a priest of the moon god Thoth associated with the ibis the snake-killing sacred bird (Silver 74-81). Modern scientific investigation however questions this role of the sacred ibis in nature. Arpanus notes that Moses was adopted by the princess Merce, who was barren, and that he was called *hermes* - interpreter [of the sacred texts]. This would precisely explain the birth of the teachings of Moses in the form of the word of god - the logos. Josephus states that Moses, as the Prince of Egypt he is described to be, leads a force into Nubia. He chooses a circuitous and dangerous inland route, infested with snakes and releases flocks of tame ibises to secure a safe passage (just as his brazen serpent did in Sinai). He then makes a treaty with the defending capital and marries the princess Tharbis - the Cushite wife despised by Aaron and Miriam: Numbers 12:1: "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the **Ethiopian** woman (Cushite) whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman." The journey of Moses to Nubia, which is also confirmed in Arpanus's account, can thus also be seen as the journey of the priest of Thoth fulfilling in real life the myth of the homecoming of Hathor.

Documents from a temple precinct of a temple to Yahweh at Leontopolis in Egypt destroyed after the Jewish revolt, referred to the fact that it was consecrated on a previous site which had many animal mummies, consistent with having been the old site of a previous temple which claimed the privilege of Isaiah 19 "In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord inside the land of Egypt - and it shall serve as a symbol and reminder". This suggests that it was built on a more ancient temple of Moses' followers who worshipped and mummified the sacred ibis, as is common in temples of Thoth (Silver 85).

Miriam, whose name is the title of the sea goddess Mari-anna (Graves 397, Walker 584) appears to have originally been a female priestess on a par with Moses. It is Miriam who celebrates when the Egyptians are swallowed in the Reed Sea: Exodus 15:20 "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." "Moses sister, later thought to be Miriam in Num 26:59 witnesses the discovery of the baby by Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2:4) and thus becomes the mother of his second birth" thus resembling Isis (Haskins 47). From the hostility expressed by Aaron and Miriam to Zipporah, it might appear that Zipporah and Miriam were competing high priestesses.

This is however seen in a different light by taking into account Jewish midrash. Here a picture emerges of Miriam as founding prophetess of Moses life, who prophesied his coming and left him incomplete on her death leading to his striking the waters at her well of Meribah. Micah reveals a deep secret of the origin of Zion when he says "And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam," confirming Miriam as the founding prophetess of Zion.

- **Miriam the Prophetess Dies - Francine Klagsbrun**

One also has to bear in mind that Tacitus says that the Hapiru were exiled from Egypt because of a disfiguring skin disease (Walker 677), rather than escaping over the Reed Sea through divine intervention. The episodes of the Exodus are plainly wracked with such skin disease. Miriam caught this disease for a week immediately after uttering against Zipporah: Num 12:10 "And behold Miriam became leprous white as snow." Thaumaturgic revenge on the prophetess.



Moses was declared tabu after smiting the rock at Merbah freeing the waters of Kadesh (Qadesh) Num 20:11, after dissention among the people of the Exodus who had to depend on mana from heaven for food and scarce and bitter waters. Very significantly this is where Miriam died linking her again to the sacred waters and their dearth. He was committed to death on the sacred mountain while still in full possession of his faculties, because he had not sanctified the spring of the Goddess in the name of Yahweh: Deut 32:48 "And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, get thee up unto mount Nebo in the land of Moab, over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel."

Horned Moses and the sacred water (Old Test).

This is not without irony because Wellhausen (Smith WR 181) has shown that the oldest Hebrew tradition refers the origin of the Torah to the divine sentences taught by Moses at Kadesh. The term En-Mispat 'waters of controversy' refers to the drinking of 'holy water' to test a person, instead of casting lots (Smith WR 181). Hagar in Gen 16:7 herself flew from Sarah to the 'fountain of judgement' between Kadesh and Bered where she knew from the deity 'thou seest me' of the birth of Ishmael.

One cannot but lament at Yahweh's fit of jealousy by the springs of the goddess Qadesh, but likewise one cannot but marvel at this journey of Moses from the Mountain of Sin to the Mountain of Nabo as being as graphic as Abraham's journey from Ur to Harran, regardless of occasional conjecture that these place names could have derived from later Assyrian conquests.

The tradition teaches that for the sake of their refusal to give their jewelry to the making of the Golden Bull-calf at Sinai, the women of Israel were given by God an exemption from work on Rosh Hodesh - the renewing of the moon at the beginning of the Jewish lunar month. ... The first four chapters of Exodus lay out a female-male rhythm of the first stage of the liberation of the Mitzrayim in which women are crucial. It is they who take the initiative and teach men the process of freedom, because they know the mysteries of birth. Thus the midwives save the baby boys; Miriam and Pharaoh's daughter Moses; Moses must flee to seven women and a well, marry Zipporah, and have a child before he can experience the Burning Bush; and Zipporah must complete the birth by teaching him to circumcise his son before he can reenter Egypt to become the liberator. Zipporah was not Jewish. Was she a celebrator of the moon? (Note her association, like that of Rivkah and Rahel, with a well.) (Waskow 265).

As Freud has pointed out, this disconnection indicates a fracture of the tradition, corresponding to an overthrow of the religion of Moses by a nascent tribal cult, probably worshipping a form of Baal or Hadad, a more Zeus-like Ba'al-shamin (Lord of Heaven), thunder god of the skies and mountains, an event which continues to contribute a strange angst to the Hebrew psyche.

It is signal that the actual site of Mt. Sinai is debated and there was no tradition of pilgrimage to the founding spot of the covenanting prophet. In this overthrow, the cosmic Moon deity of the logos, Yaho, devolved into the patron deity of the Hapiru, retaining his aniconic astral aspect, while moving closer to features both of El, the gentle Canaanite father deity and Ba'al the impetuous storm god of Canaan, who thunders on the mountains and vanquishes the turbulent waters of the abyss.

Psalms 81

Sing aloud unto God our strength: shout for joy unto the God of Jacob.
Raise a psalm, and sound the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lyre.
Blow up the trumpet in the **new moon**, at the **full moon**, on our solemn feast day.
For it is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. ...
Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee;
I answered thee in the secret place of thunder:
I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

In a Talmudic tradition, the moon complains to Yahweh that he has lost his pristine importance. "O Lord of the world, Is it not possible for two kings to wear the same crown?" But Yahweh says "Begone and become thou smaller" (Briffault v3 77). Jewish tradition still celebrates the new moon by commemorating dead ancestors as in the tradition of the Moon God with the saying "David, King of Israel is alive and flourishes" (Malamat 106). Jewish women are not forgetful of the immemorial object of Semitic cult, and when the new moon appears they recite reverently a prayer, saying: "May God cause thee to increase and mayest thou be enabled to bestow upon us a blessed month" (Briffault v3 117).

- **Rosh Hodesh Blessing the New Moon** - Francine Klagsbrun
- **The Shabbat Queen** - Francine Klagsbrun

[When God created the sun and moon, the two great lights], the moon said to the Holy One, "Sovereign of the Universe! Can two rulers wear one crown?" He answered, "Go then and make yourself smaller!" ... R. Simeon ben Lakish declared, "Why is it that the he-goat offered on the New Moon [for a sin-offering] is distinctive in that there is written concerning it, 'unto the Lord'?" Because the Holy One said, "Let this he-goat be an atonement for Me [for My sin] in making the moon smaller." (Hullin 60a)

R. Akha said to R. Ashi: In the West, they pronounce the following blessing: "Blessed be the One Who renews the moons." Whereupon he retorted: "Such a blessing even our women folk pronounce." [Let there be added] . . . "The moon He ordered that she should renew herself as a crown of beauty for those whom He sustains from the womb, and who will someday, like her, be renewed and magnify their Maker in the same glory of His kingdom" (Sanhedrin 42a).

"The light of the moon shall become like the light of the sun." Isaiah 30:26



Babylonian Sin and the dying moon parallels Talmudic tradition (Briffault v3 112).

Yahweh: God incorporating all deities

The nature of Yahweh underwent one of the [most advanced literary inflations](#) to occur in human history. This happened early as a core part of the religious tradition and lent Yahweh multidimensionality lacking in pre-literate deities.

Many verses in the Psalms describe God in ways which clearly identify him as a God of thunder and of weather and the oceans. A stormy god which strides forth in thunder and bathes the land in spring showers. Vengeful and verdant as Ba'al was.

Psalms 77

The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee;
the depths also were troubled.
The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound:
thine arrows also went abroad.
The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven:
the lightnings lightened the world:

the earth trembled and shook.
Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters,
and thy footsteps are not known.

These characteristics broadened to that of a creator deity of the Earth and heavens, still significantly imbued with the storm god character with clouds as chariot, chambers in the waters and a voice of thunder.

Psalms 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great;
thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment:
who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters:
who maketh the clouds his chariot:
who walketh upon the wings of the wind:
Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:
Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

In earlier verses Yahweh is clearly identified as merely the Lord of Hosts of the community of deities, not as the sole God not without which there is no other.

Psalms 82

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.
How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness:
all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Yahweh was also identified strongly with Canaanite El in later apocalypses from Daniel to Enoch in which God becomes the Ancient of Days with white hair like wool.

Daniel 7:9 "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

This passage indicates old man El clothed in the fiery chariot of the Sun god. By later centuries, particularly after the Persian era, Yahweh was to adopt all the characteristics of the Sun God drawn across the skies in his chariot, as in Isaiah.

Isa 66:15 "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire."

The patriarchal ascendancy thus accomplishes by syncretic assimilation into one deity all the manifestations of Sin, Nabu, the ancient Canaanite gods El the grand old man and Ba'al the god of the mountains and weather, who rides in a storm cloud and a verdant shower of rain and the Persian sun-god of light of which Ahura Mazda forms the archetype. However this deity is not god manifest on earth in history, but rather a series of unashamed cultural assimilations accruing to one male godhead all the diverse powers traditionally ascribed to the many ecosystemic parts of the polytheistic assembly.



Yahweh's name is on this coin 4th century BC near Gaza, depicting a sun-chariot figure holding his sacred eagle (Graves 1946 33).

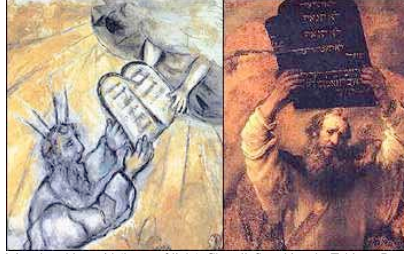
2 Kings 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

This identification with the sun God continues from the Persian to the Essene and finally Johannine dichotomies of light versus dark principles. The Essene calendar is also predominantly solar as opposed to the lunar calendar, although despite its pretensions to the founding tradition, dates to no earlier than 600 BC. As the sun of righteousness, Jesus is the son of the sun. As the light of the world, he is likewise.

The cost has been specific - the loss of virtually all the feminine attributes, particularly in regard to fertility sustainability and the physical responsibility for the continued nurturing and welfare of existence. Despite the fact that Yahweh variously portrays himself as a [wifely, or even a fatherly-motherly](#) god, these attributes are generally by analogy only and definitely not a presentation of the female as a manifestation of divinity.

Redaction of the Decalogue: Circumcision and the Sacrifice

It is difficult to disengage the actual core of Moses' teachings from the subsequent overlays of Priestly and Deuteronomist authors. The destruction of the sanctuaries accompanying the book of Deuteronomy is dated to 612 BC, but the Priestly author noted for Exodus 25:31 and 35:40 is dated to the late exilic period around 550 BC (Flanders et al. 78). The Yahweh-only emphasis of Exodus has thus passed through the Priestly redactor long after the time of Moses and with a very different perspective in mind. The myth surrounding the covenant of the commandments and the golden calf are permeated with Yahweh-only rhetoric and violence characteristic of the later revision in Judea.



Receiving the tablets with 'horns of light'- Chagall. Smashing the Tablets - Rembrandt
Numbers 12:3 "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Yet he is portrayed as smashing the tablets of God and setting the Levites about killing all who would worship the golden calf.

1: The Decalogue

The decalogue as it stands is one of the later constructions of the Bible and cannot be construed to be Moses teachings. The opening commandments of the decalogue concern God: (1) Thou shalt have no gods before me. [This does not mean no other gods at all, just primacy]; (2) Thou shalt make no graven image of the heaven, earth or waters under. Do not worship other idols for I am a jealous god who will plague the children of unfaithful parents unto the fourth generation, [a standard era of ancestor worship]; (3) Do not take the Lord's name in vain; (4) Honour the Sabbath.

The rest regulate human relationships: (5) Honor one's father and mother.

Do not (6) kill, (7) commit adultery (possess another's spouse), (8) steal, (9) bear false witness, or (10) covet thy neighbour's house, wife, servants, or cattle (a wife having intermediate status between cattle and property).

One should note the Decalogue applies only to relations among the chosen. Not only murder, but genocide of the nations was standard:

- [John Hartung on the Decalogue and Genocide](#)
- [Genocide of the Nations](#)

Nevertheless many Jews take Decalogue as clearly defining abolition of blood sacrifice and avoid blood in the diet even following the [Genesis 1](#) prescription of vegetarianism.

- [Precepts of the Zohar](#)

Jealousy and monotheism: Most monotheists pride themselves in the notion that their god is the ultimate real god, and see this very aspect of Yahweh as the revelation of the true god of creation in history to his chosen people, without reflecting on whether the deity really has the 'right stuff' to be cosmic. A god cannot be jealous unless: (1) they are egotistical and (2) there are other gods or goddesses. If they really are the cosmic real one, it is wisdom and wisdom alone that will prove the difference. Jealousy never will.

There follows a long description of the performance of ceremony, including the use of oracles of chance, the Urim and Thummim, lots cast to invoke Yahweh's judgement on unclear issues.

While Moses sojourns with God, the people below are deviating: Exodus 32: "The people brake off their gold earrings and gave them to Aaron and he fashioned it into a golden calf. And they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And they rose up early on the morrow and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." ... Despite the obvious existence of Nehustan, we are expected to believe that Moses was so enraged by the Golden Calf, another symbol of the Moon God that: "When Moses saw that the people were naked; he said unto the Levites: 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.' And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."

The passage in Exodus 32:4 "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," is echoed almost verbatim in 1 Kings 12:28 "behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The entire passage can thus be deduced to refer to later Judean outrage at the golden calves of Bethel and Dan. There is of course another interpretation of this golden calf as the cow of the golden one, Hathor who is the patron Goddess of Sinai. As noted, both cows and bulls were found at [Gizeh](#), so the portrayal of Moses as the virulent enemy of Hathor could be an instrument of redaction set to underline his death at Nabo for any deviation.

Having broken the precious tablets of God, Moses returns to the mountain and receives the final condemnation of the faithless whoring of Israel and her subjects to be: Exod 34:12 "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be a snare in the midst of thee: Ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, **whose name is Jealous**, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."

A series of probably older commandments are then 'appended' to the decalogue, including **first-born male sacrifice**: (11) All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle that is male. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. Thou shalt keep: (12) The feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. (13) Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee. (14) Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. (15) The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. (16) Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk - a cryptic reference to Orphic sacrifice "Like a kid I have fallen into milk" (Graves 1948 218).



Egyptian circumcision (Pritchard 1954)

2: Circumcision

Both male circumcision and before it female circumcision have been an ancient custom among Semitic peoples from very early times (Briffault 3/323), however Jewish circumcision did not assume its present form until as late as the Maccabees (165 BC). Previous to that time it was so minor (possibly merely an incision) that "the jibes of the Gentile women could be evaded, little trace of the operation being perceptible" (Briffault 3/331).

It is notable that the Harranians were not circumcised. This casts doubt on Abraham's circumcision as an invention of post-exilic Jewish writers, although it may be considered a sin offering for male fertility to the phallic god: Gen 17:9 "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Snaith (81) comments "There is no reference to circumcision in the earlier laws and the rite is nowhere enjoined before the Priestly Code as having any particular significance."

Circumcision is not part of the decalogue. Moses did not yield so easily to circumcision, specifically postponing it in the case of his second son, and it was probably neither a practice of Zipporah. Exod 4:24 "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, 'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me ... because of the circumcision.' "

One of the most bizarre episodes of purported circumcision is the 'second circumcision rite' in Joshua 5:2 "At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. ... Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, they had not circumcised. ... And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day". However the longer Greek version tells us that the very flint knives used were buried in his grave at Timnath-serah and remained there 'unto this day'. However artefacts discovered there in 1870 date from the stone-age casting the whole episode as one of fantastic myth invented at the sight of the artefacts (Fox R 230).



Female circumcision Egypt. Male circumcision Israel (Circle of Life).
I am circumcised and I can live with it, but I have immense sympathy for women who have the "cruellest cut" in the interests of making them 'good mothers'.

- **Female circumcision and infibulation:** Strabo claimed that "the Egyptians circumcised their boys and girls as do the Jews". The Virgin Mary was likewise said to have been circumcised (Briffault 3/324). Islamic tradition also says it was practised by Sarah on Hagar and that afterwards both Sarah and Abraham circumcised themselves by order of Allah. Circumcision is not provided for in the Qur'an, although Muhammad is supposed to have pronounced circumcision to be "an ordinance for men" and "honourable for women" for whom he is supposed to have said "reduce but do not destroy" in the face of severe practices of female circumcision and infibulation (Briffault 3/323). There is no evidence that any of Muhammad's wives or daughters were circumcised. Men and women of Egypt and the horn of Africa for God's sake stop it! It is an unspoken and unspeakable cycle of oppression. 127 million girls worldwide have undergone some form of mutilation and 2 million a year are at risk. As disapproval of the practice mounts, girls at ever younger ages are being subjected to circumcision.

In the face of male (and occasional female) sacrifice, castration, gruesome female circumcision and infibulation and male circumcision, which is sometimes also accompanied by debilitating and very painful mutilation and flying.

A simple civilized commandment: "Thou shalt not mutilate another person, nor encourage nor allow genital or other self-mutilation for religious sexual or moral purposes".

Please - the 'sunna' is not necessary. Muhammad actually said 'Do not destroy'. If a Jew is really keen to make a blood sacrifice to the God of Virility let him cut himself, but leave no visible scar as a reminder of the shame, that by this act some other person may justify clitorctomy.

- **Abrogating Religious Laws which permit Violence to the Female**
- **Islamic abrogations**
- Help me **abrogate violent laws** in ancient texts by supporting the **Renewal**.

"There's a book by Alice Walker called Possessing the Secret of Joy, and it's about mothers taking their daughters to the butcher to have their genitalia removed. That's what the [cornflake girl] is about too. It's like cutting a penis off. Now if we lined all the boys up and cut their penises off, I don't think it would be lunch as usual! I think they'd have something to say about it, and yet the mothers are the ones that take the daughters to do this! Obviously the whole society is involved, but **when is a generation of women going to rise up, not to fight, not to war, but to honour themselves and each other?**" Tori Amos

Tori is right - for the details see [Fighting for their Rites](#).

- **[The Female Genital Mutilation Resource Page](#)**
- **[To Mutilate in the Name of Jehovah or Allah](#)**

In Edessa the Bishop had to go even further. To stop self-castrations to the Goddess he ordered anyone who castrated themselves should also have their hand cut off! (Segal). Christian Sharia!

To all those who would consider female circumcision I would say only this, and I don't mean divorce - only circumcision: "**What the Elohim has joined together let no man cast asunder**".

The path of life is the path of the clitoris. For the last 100,000 years, the sexes have been approximately the same size, indicating cooperativity and the protection of the family have been key factors in our living emergence. The female orgasm is central to female fertility, helping to ensure the woman conceives by the man she loves. That is why the female as well as the male have evolved to have an orgasm. Female sexuality is not something to fear or destroy. It is something at once the same and different. Mysterious and unbounded. We do not need to cut up or stitch up our partners' vagina' for her to be faithful to us. What joy can there be in conception if you don't have the sensitive tissue the goddess gave you or you get [stabbed in the vagina](#) every time you get pregnant?

A shrine to a young martyr: 26th August 1996 "A 14-year-old girl died yesterday after an operation to circumcize her. Amina Abdelhamid Mohammed did not wake up after the surgery." Some Egyptians claim the procedure is based on Islamic teaching, but it has ancient traditional roots and also practised by Christians, and throughout the horn of Africa.



Carthaginian shrines of newborn sacrifice

3: Human Sacrifice

- **Family Planning in the Ancient World**
- **Infanticide, Abortion, Contraception - Uta Ranke-Heinmann**

The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (1st century B.C.) reports that once (in the year 310 B.C.) a great disaster was threatening the city of Carthage. The people ascribed their calamity to the anger of Cronos, to whom they once had sacrificed their best children, but then offered him only bought or weakly children. Thereupon the Carthaginians sacrificed two hundred children from the best families. A child was laid in the arms of a bronze statue of Cronos and would then roll off into a burning oven (Library XX, xiv). Philo of Byblos, who wrote a History of the Phoenicians around A.D. 100, reports that child sacrifice was customary among the Phoenicians. In times of national danger, 'The Phoenicians sacrificed their dearest children in a mysterious fashion.' Cathage similarly has a reputation for the sacrificial burning of children sometimes, according to Diodorus even with a great scaffold in which a many-armed sculpture in the form of a god tipped the child sacrifices into a flaming pyre (Ranke-Heinmann 286, Smith R 363, 374).

Recently, doubts have been voiced about such reports of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians. Sabatino Moscati stresses that neither in cosmopolitan Carthage nor in the Phoenician city-states were the gods' favors courted by the systematic burning of children. Child corpses in the children's cemeteries (Tophets), which have often been viewed as sites of child sacrifice, showed no sign of violence. The skeletons were of fetuses, stillborn babies, or children dead from sickness who had been interred in the sacred precincts. Moscati thinks the reports of child sacrifice among the Phoenicians are hostile propaganda by Greek and Roman historians, at least as far as any regular sacrifice of children is concerned." (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 286-8.)

Although there are many passages in the Old Testament condemning child sacrifice among other practices, it is often unclear whether this is for humanitarian reasons or purely because these sacrificial rituals are directed to other gods and particularly the other nations. Deut 18:9 "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

The basis of firstborn sacrifice in the **covenant of the Exodus** is spelt out more clearly in Exodus 12:51: "the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ... the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine", echoed again in Numbers 8:17 "For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself."

Ezekiel 20:25 goes so far as to admit that child sacrifice was both **ordered by Yahweh** and as a punishment for the fact the Hebrews **did not destroy the other nations**, but mingled with them: "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord."

There is much debate both about whether the Israelites practised first-born sacrifice traditionally to Yahweh at Tophet outside Jerusalem and whether killing or mere consecration to the god is required. Moloch simply means king - *melech* - with a more ominous intonation and cannot so easily be passed off exclusively to the practices of Ba'al or the Queen of Heaven. Smith (372) comments: "It is plain from various passages of the prophets that the sacrifices of children among the Jews before the captivity, which are commonly known as sacrifices to Moloch, were regarded as oblations to Jehovah, under the title of king, yet they were not presented at the temple, but consumed outside

the town at Tophet" - which means pyre. As the Jews did not burn their dead, the ceremony appears to be related to the burning of the god as was the case of Melkarth at Tyre.

Michah appears to consider child sacrifice as a meaningful, if ultimate sacrifice to Yahweh 6:7: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

This casts clear light on the emphasis of many of the condemnations of child sacrifice, in that the supreme sacrifice is made, but to the wrong deities. One can also see a clear conflict between the aims of Yahweh in Jewish reproduction and any methods of population control or contraception: Gen 15:5 "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." 28:14 "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Old Testament attitude to child sacrifice as a purely sexual practice is indicated by Lev 18:20 "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."

Gezer contains evidence of both adult sacrifice in which people are literally divided in two at the ribs in very much the same way as Abraham's sacrifice under the stars. Gen 15:10 "And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not." Newborn children are also found apparently buried alive head-down in jars in a manner associated with sacrificial offering (Zehren 189).

Although the Yahwistic account of Gen 22:10 of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is read as a symbolic account negating first-born human sacrifice except as sanctifying to god, Yahweh actually commends Abraham for offering his son in sacrifice. Gen 22:16 states: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven."

This question of whether the firstborn are mine means sacrifice or just 'sanctifying to God' as claimed by some historians gains poetic momentum with Luke's account of Jesus 2:22 "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." The sacrifice of such doves is also characteristic of Aphrodite and ironically Jesus later meets just such a sacrificial death.

The effectiveness of child sacrifice in dire circumstances, particularly of the high-born offspring of kings is illustrated in 2 Kings 3:26 "And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land."

The story of the **Daughter of Jephthah** mingles the reality of first-born sacrifice to Yahweh, particularly in times of disaster with a tradition of goddess worship in the high places which lingered ever after: Judges 11:30 "And Jephthah vowed unto the Lord 'If thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.' So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. ... And Jephthah came unto his house, and his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; And he rent his clothes, and said, 'Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back'. And she said unto him 'Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows'. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. At the end of two months, she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year."

As is usual with the disguise of seasonal cult in the Old Testament, the **sacrifice of seven men to the barley harvest** after a three-year famine is described in terms of political history with heart-wrenching overtones for Rizpah the concubine:

2 Samuel 21:1 "Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. ... And [the Gibeonites] answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead ... and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. ... And after that God was intreated for the land."

Hiel of Bethel (9th century B.C.) "built Jericho; he laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub" (1 Kings 16:34). They may however have died accidentally in fulfillment of a curse hovering over the site (Josh. 6:26) Ahaz, the king of Judah (8th century B.C.): "even burned his son as an offering, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel" (2 Kings 16:3). The same is told of King Manasseh (7th century B.C.) in 2 Kings 21:6.

Such child sacrifices took place primarily in the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, which is still called the Valley of Fire today, and which gave its name to the New Testament Hell, Gehenna. Some of these may be exaggerated accounts by opponents of the syncretic practices of the monarchy. ... But not all the Old Testament reports on child sacrifice are based on hostile propaganda, and not all child sacrifices are rejected as Gentile abominations. ... The Old Testament author reports [Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter] without a word of blame; and in the New Testament Jephthah is praised along with Abraham as a hero of faith (Heb. 11:32; 11:17).

The Passover and Jesus as the Sacrificed Firstborn of God

The passover, the greatest Jewish rite is a commemoration of a great first-born sacrifice of God, who in passing over the blood-spattered doorposts of the Hebrews in Egypt spared their first-born but sacrificed the Egyptian children. Jesus in turn commemorates his own sacrifice as first-born of God in a passover crucifixion.

"As far as sacrificing one's own children goes, however, an interesting shift takes place in Christianity: The charge that had generally been leveled at one's enemies is now applied by Christians to God. Pre-Christian atrocity stories turn into the good news of Christianity: God sacrifices his first-born, only Son. From the Christian standpoint, the joyous new feature of this teaching is supposed to be this: God sacrifices his Son not for his own advantage, but for ours. Thus he is seeking nothing for himself but for humanity. The most that man ever did for God is what God now does for man. In Christian terms this is also called grace. In the Old Testament the story of the binding of Isaac is told to show that God rejects child sacrifice (a ram is sacrificed instead of Isaac). But in the New Testament, God slaughters his own Son instead of a lamb, and Abraham is seen as the precursor of such filicide.

The progress from Judaism to Christianity is obvious. God, 'the Destroyer of the first-born:' as he is called in the Letter to the Hebrews (11:28) because he slew the first-born of the Egyptians, now slays his own first-born.

This God with bloody hands has his priests repeat the bloody sacrifice of atonement ... for all Christians the core of Christianity. ... The idea that one should sacrifice to God the dearest thing of all, namely, human life, is as alive among Christians as it was among pagans. Ernst Bloch described the insanity of this central Christian tenet: "But the ultimate source of the doctrine of sacrificial death is not only particularly bloody, but also particularly archaic. It derives from the most ancient form of sacrifice, the kind so long avoided, human sacrifice...." (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 291).



Newborn Sacrifice: Gender, Morality and Diversity

To minimize abortion:
Promote contraception
Provide foresight education

The sacrifice of newborn was a common practice in the ancient world, which may have served the social purpose of population control, as it does in primitive societies from the Amazon to Africa, particularly if the mother has another nursing child. The first-born rule may have thus evolved as a solemn practice which indirectly helped maintain a sustainable population.

The debate concerning abortion today covers the same difficult ground. While opponents equate abortion with infanticide, defenders stress the need for women to have personal choice over their own fertility and its consequences. The invective against the Queen of Heaven is partly one about the very same issues as in the abortion debate today.

A good many civil rights were bound up with a flawless genealogy, as Joachim Jeremias points out, for example, in the chapter 'The Civil Rights of the Full-Blooded Israelite' in *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu* (1969, 332). The most

important privilege was this: Such a person's daughters were allowed to marry priests. Furthermore, all important public offices of honor and trust were reserved to the full-blooded Israelite. That included membership in the higher courts of justice, that is, the Sanhedrin, as well as any one of the twenty-three-member criminal courts and the seven-member local executive boards of the Jewish communes, and so forth. In all these cases the genealogies were scrutinized before conferring an office on anyone. As part of this system, which placed such value on the noble chain of blood relationships, the choice of a wife played a major role. One of the main reasons for this was precisely the fact that any dubious birth could not, as it is in modern Western countries, be integrated into the ancestral succession by means of adoption" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 65).

Twice every year, on the 5th of Ab (around August) and on the Day of Atonement, there was a dance of the virgins of Jerusalem in the vineyards surrounding the city, a sort of bridal show. Only women took part in it (mixed dancing was unknown), including the daughters of the leading families, even the daughters of the high priest. The young girls wore borrowed white garments so that those who didn't have suitable dresses wouldn't be put to shame. Obviously wealth was not supposed to be the principle of selection-nor beauty either. Significantly, the song that the girls sang as they danced ran: 'Young man, lift up your eyes and look carefully to what you are choosing, turn your eyes to the family tree! Charm is mutable, beauty is a fleeting breath, a woman who fears the Lord will be praised' (Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash (1965, II, 381)). Even a wife whose birth was as good as her husband's and who had a good pedigree could prove to be a blot on the escutcheon through external circumstances. If, for example, she became a prisoner of war (where rape was always a possibility), she could no longer guarantee a pure descent" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 65-6).

"Jewish girls usually got engaged when they were twelve or twelve and a half years old. ... An engagement was the first phase of getting married, which was followed after somewhat more than a year by the bride's being taken to her fiancée's home. Engagement counted as marriage, not de facto but de jure: The fiancée was already the man's wife. If the man died before bringing her home, she was already his widow.

Infidelity by the fiancée was considered adultery. If the husband demanded that she be taken before the court and punished, a harsh sentence loomed ahead: A girl between twelve years and a day up to twelve years and six months would be stoned along with her lover. An older girl would be strangled; a younger one was considered a minor and went unpunished.

Deut 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

Fortunately, the scribes had added on so many conditions to the penal provisions for adultery by the fiancée that the punishment was scarcely possible anymore: At least two witnesses had to prove that they had warned the adulterous pair about the consequences facing them, and that the couple had nevertheless continued in their sin (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 35-6).

Yet executions did take place. An engaged daughter of a priest - according to Lev 21:9 harsher penalties were in order for priests' daughters - was burned to death for adultery. Rabbi Eleazar ben Zadok (born shortly after A.D. 35) witnessed this scene as a young boy (Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalemzeit Jesu [1969], 201). This execution occurred in the reign of King Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44).

Although women were allowed to read the Torah at congregational services they were forbidden to read lessons in public in order to 'safeguard the honour of the congregation'. In the first century AD Rabbi Eliezer said 'Rather should the words of the Torah be burned than entrusted to a woman. It was for much the same reason that in the Synagogue women were seated apart from men. ... Their exclusion from the priesthood was based on their supposed uncleanness during menstruation as defined in Leviticus 15, a taboo which extends into the Christian church. A priest according to Lev 21.22 was to be clean and holy at all times to enter office (Haskins 12).

Patriarchal Violence at Baalpeor

One can trace a variety of episodes which attest to the repression of female reproductive choice. At Baalpeor it was a Midianitish woman, but Moses himself had a Cushite wife, so the problem is not nationality but 'whoring': "And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly" (Num 25:6).

The Renaissance of the Queen of Heaven

In agricultural Canaan the Queen of Heaven eclipsed the male god. Adon, the Lord was the son of the Queen of Heaven, and a subordinate deity by her side. ... But to the more conservative elements among the Hebrew tribes those agricultural forms of the Semitic cult were an abomination. "So completely had Yahweh become assimilated to him that not only were the two cults confounded, the Jewish women celebrating the 'lamentations' of Tammuz in the national temple, but the very names had become inextricably blended ; Yahweh was as often as not spoken of as 'The Lord,' Adon", or Adonai who is also the Syrian [Adonis](#), born from a tree (Briffault 3 109).

"When the Hebrew tribes under the leadership of the votaries of the god of Sinai came out of the 'land of drought' into a land flowing with milk and honey of the Queen of Heaven, they found their own race there and their own religion but modified by the effects of agricultural civilization ... The Queen of Heaven, under whatever name, she may have been worshipped - possibly Miriam, ... the high-priestess among the Levites, - belonged from time immemorial to Jewish cult ... The Host of Heaven - the very Elohim of the astral deities was a notable component of this worship. ... The temple of Jerusalem was simultaneously dedicated to Yahweh and the the Queen of Heaven. Before it stood the asherah, symbolic trees that are throughout Semitic lands associated with the female aspect of the deity" (Briffault 3 110)

The Period of the Judges

In the time of the Judges, the role of women was parallel in power and respect to that of men. Judges 4:4 "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment."

The **Song of Deborah**, one of the oldest passages in the Bible, illustrates the continuing strength of women even in times of conflict. The passage also mentions Anath and rings with the echoes of Ba'al. Judges 5:1 "Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. ... Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel."

There is also a severe warning in Judges 19 in the tale of the fate of the concubine who 'whored' by going back to their father-in-law for four months. When the Levite returned to claim her the father-in-law kept saying to stay a little longer for six days. When they journeyed and turned in at Gibeah of the Benjaminites, men of Belial ask to 'know the man within'. The host offers his daughter to which they refuse. Then the man offers his concubine. She is raped and abused and dies on the doorstep. He then cuts her in 12 pieces and sends them to all the coasts of Israel. This story stands as a glaring affront to those patriarchal traditions which expected the son-in-law to stay with the wife's family as Jacob did.

The [sacrifice of the daughter of Jeptah](#) of Judges 11, itself a tale of great irony, also seems to have led to an odd tradition of celebrating her fate by daughters of subsequent generations by visiting the high places: "And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains."

The Period of the Kings

During the era of the Kings, a period of syncretic integration with the settled agricultural Canaanites of the cities began. This was probably a consequence both of the unification of the agrarian and nomadic populations under one rule, and the somewhat more cosmopolitan perspective of the monarch's.



Idol with bull's head and phallus - Palestine (Zehren).
Cake mould for the Queen of Heaven - Mari (Malamat).

It is noted below that David danced in front of the Ark in a manner consistent with frank sexual implications. The above idol with bull's head and phallus is likewise consistent with this interpretation, as are the phallic teraphim from Timna.

Sacred kingship was intrinsically a fertility kingship as is evidenced by the termination of the aged David's reign when he is unable to consort with Abishag 1 Kings 1:1 "Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not." ... And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldst thou? And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not" thus ensuring that the Queen Bathsheba's choice became king in his stead.



This was the same Bathsheba whom David had taken for himself after watching her in the bath 2 Sam 11:2 "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house; and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness; and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child." Uriah the Hittite, though faithful to David's military cause was then intentionally exposed in battle and slaughtered at David's command.

David's son Absalom had already attempted to usurp the throne by the fertility route 2 Sam 16:22: "So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel" at the counsel of Ahitophel which was "as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God". The principal competitors and their counsel were slain after failing to keep David's commands, Absalom by [hanging in a tree](#) in an aition of ritual sacrifice of the sacred king accursed, as Jesus was, under Deuteronomy 21:22..

[Solomon](#), was also a sacred king who was renowned for building the Temple at Jerusalem, but equally reviled for also following the deities of his many wives and building sanctuaries to them on the high places round Jerusalem. The temple of Jerusalem was simultaneously dedicated to Yahweh and to the Queen of Heaven. The pillars Jachim and Boaz were said to stand for the sun and moon. Before it stood the 'asherah,' the symbolic tree [or post] that [was] throughout Semitic lands associated with the female aspect of the deity" (Briffault). The son of Solomon, went further and moved the image of the goddess into the Temple itself.

In Samaria, Jeroboam installed the golden calves at Bethel and Dan 1 Kings 12:28 "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said "behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." As Gen 28:17 refers to Bethel as "the house of god" and "the Gate of Heaven", this is consistent with the worship of Yahweh as much as any Ba'al.

Afterwards Asa did have a partial removal of the idols, but they did not extnd to the high sanctuaries: 1 Kings 15:11 "And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days."

However Azaz and returned the equilibrium to the syncretic worship of the nations: 2 Kings 16:2 "Ahaz ... did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God... But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."



Bull 12 th - 5 th cent Palestine, Fertility Goddess plaques, one Hathor/Qadesh
Incense holder from Taanach, with symbols of Inanna and Hathor
surmounted by a radiant calf. Terracotta Asherah 11th - 6th cent BC. (Gadon, Pritchard 1954)

At Gezeh remains of sacrificed cows and bulls are found consistent with worship of Yaho and Hathor (Briffault 3/110). At Kuntllet in the eighth century BC Yhwh gives a blessing with his Asherah, identified with Canaanite Athirat (McCarter 143). Among the Jews of Elephantine as late as the fifth century B.C., Yahweh was associated with his goddess, and the names of the Elohim were blended, as Anath-Yahu (Kraeling 88).

The Woman at the Window

Several Biblical episodes are aitions for ritual events in the worship of Adonis and the Queen of Heaven as Astarte or Aphrodite. One classic ritual image is that of the Lady at the Window 'prospiciens' who, according to Ovid is turned to stone while looking out at the funeral processionof her rejected lover. More traditionally she is a smiling Goddess Astarte with braided hair and jeweled headdress who may have appeared as a statue in an opened window as part of the ritual of the mourning for Adonis. However the same Aprodite was also described as a shooting star falling into the water and one who leapt from the Leucadian promontory after the death of Adonis (Smith R 373). There are also associated with this rite haunting images of the death of the priestess of the Goddess. In the legend of the death of Dido who leaps from the palace heights into a funeral pyre. Two episodes in the Old Testament specifically portray women at windows who look out to their doom, Michal on David and Jezabel on Jehu (Robertson).

2 Sam 6:13 "And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. ... And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. ... And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death."

2 Kings 9:30 "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." One should note that, Ahab Jezabel's husband was a strong king while Jehu is depicted fawning in tribute at the feet of the Assyrian king.



Obelisk of Shalmaneser king of Assyria (828-814 BC) showing Jehu kissing his feet. This man who exterminated the seventy sons of Ahab, the forty-two sons of Ahaziah, a 'great multitude' of the followers of Ba'al, and had Jezebel thrown into the street ffrom an upstairs window, trampled by horses and devoured by dogs did not protect Israel but bowed to the Assyrian yoke (Continueau). Josiah raped the sanctuaries and within two decades Israel was taken into exile in Babylon. Not a good track record for the Yahweh-only movement's firebrand against the feminine.

Hosea's Plight and Jeremiah's Lament

The first clear signs of sexual division of the prophets begin with Hosea in the eighth century BC. He took it upon himself to purchase an unfaithful wife who thus represented the archetype of Israel, who was thus the unfaithful wife of Yahweh. 3:1 "Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love ffigons of

wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:"

He is clearly siding against the whoring of the Goddess which acts to disrupt the male inheritance lines of the patriarchal supporters of Yahweh 2:2 "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. " And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

Hosea 4 9 laments the wine and whoredom of the high places and the good shade of the sacred groves"and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom and not increase: because they have left of to take heed of the LORD. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart. My people ask counsel to their stocks ... and they have gone a whoring from under their god. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shaow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom and your spouses shall commit adultery. " Yet he has Yahweh yet be tolerant in a way which becomes lost later 4:14: "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall."

Jeremiah likewise laments Israel as the unfaithful wife2:1: "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." This refrain continues ... 3:1: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord".

Jeremiah at 3:8 makes a more specifically social warning of vengeance: "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. ... Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not keep anger for ever."

His discourse at 3:2 has a fascinating slant on bedouin life of the times: "Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the [Arabian in the wilderness](#); and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness." This acknowledges the involvement of Arabian culture in Israel's cultural life, something that should not be forgotten in the context of Jesus.

The second Isaiah echoes this theme again at50:1: "Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away".

The Violent Legacy of Monotheism: Regina Schwartz

- [Polluting the Land](#)
- [Whores in Exile](#)

The Revision of Hezekiah

The worship of the Queen of Heaven continued alongside that of Yahweh through the time of the Kings until the fall of the Kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians. The colonization of Samaria was perceived by the more conservative Judaeans as a sign that the ways of tolerance of the Northern Kingdom had led to disaster. Thus in about 720 Hezekiah led a fundamentalist revision: 2 Kings18:4 "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan".

However Jeremiah 44:16 notes the continuing popularity of the Queen: "As for the word thou hast unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not harken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and poured out drink offerings to her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we alone make her cakes or worship her or pour out drink offerings to her, without our menfolk?"

His next passage in 7:15 is prophetic of what is to come. "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."



Supposed ivories from Ahab's time (Avi-Yonah)

However again Manasseh brought the pendulum back: 2 Kings 21:1 "Manasseh ... did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for [Baal](#), and made a grove ([Asherah](#)), as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the Lord said ... will I put my name for ever".

The Destruction of the Sanctuaries

But it was with the destruction of the sanctuaries in 622 when Hilkiah persuaded King Josiah that a "hidden" text in the temple revealed the "true faith" of the "Yahweh only" movement, that the principal devastation came. This is arguably the point where 'no other gods before me' became strict monotheism - no other gods at all! Much of the Old Testament has been subsequently recomposed to portray the earlier history as monotheistic.

Kings 22:14 "Then Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched."

2 Chron 34 4-5 "... and in the twelfth year [Josiah] began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars"

Here is the complete episode from2 Kings 23:3 as an epitaph to religious intolerance and the destruction of an entire cultural ecology on the basis of an apocryphal tract: "And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, ... to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. ... And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, ... to bring forth out of the temple all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove (asherah) from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.



The Mensa Sacra at Petra and the great high place at Khirbet Tannur (Browning, Glueck)

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the [fire to Molech](#). And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, ... and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah and Manasseh had made, did the king beat down, and cast the dust of them into the

brook Kidron.

And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh [Shamash the sun god] the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men. [Yahveh was in his origins precisely such a local god of a people - not the only God, of reality, but a jealous one].

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam had made he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him. It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Not only were the Ba'al destroyed, but so was Yahweh's own consort. Instead of the diverse natural forms of Yahweh worship as portrayed in Exodus 20:24: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto these and bless thee", there was only one legitimate form and one place of worship - the Temple at Jerusalem. Just as Marduk slew Tiamat, so the Yahweh movement attempted to destroy the Asherah of fertility.

Deut 12:1: "These are the statutes and judgements ... Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye possessed served their gods, upon the mountain and on the high hills and under every green tree. And ye shall overthrow their alters and break their pillars and burn their groves with fire ... But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes ... thither thou shalt come. Take heed of thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest, but in the place the Lord shall choose in any one of thy tribes." What is significant here is that Deuteronomy 12 confirms its identity as the concealed text in its specific concurrence with these invocations against the Asherah. What is also clear is that it is this Yahweh-only tract which has declared Judaism in the ending of the Hebrew practice of small shrines and tabernacles dotted throughout the towns and countryside from time immemorial. It is thus clear that the Asherah was a Hebrew goddess of the many shrines and not simply an alien Canaanite entity as some modern Jewish commentators endeavor to make out.

This is echoed again in Exodus with specific undertones of feminine seduction of the sons of Israel indicating Exilic revision 34:13 "But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."

Although this would sound like the sad end of the story for the Queen of Heaven, it was only to be some 36 years later that Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians And the entire country was returned to being the vassal of a pagan civilization. Besides this Edom had continued to worship the Goddess and her consort, particularly in the high places such as Khirbet Tannur. With the emergence of the **Nabataeans**, a whole stream of worship of the Queen of Heaven and her consort Duchares grew to prominence to the east of the Jordan complementing the Jewish outlook.

The Separatist Sentiments of the Exile

The exile brought with it a new sense of alienation and separation, as is characteristic if a small people in another culture adopt exclusive ways to protect their separateness and maintain it against the greater flux of 'foreign' ideas and genetic influences. Effectively the exile thus cemented what was to become the separatist path.

Ezekiel writing during the exile laments at the things he suspects are going on back home in the temple: 8 1 "And I beheld and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his loins even downward fire; and from his loins even upward as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber. And behold the glory of the god of Israel was there. Then I lifted my eyes ... and behold at the gate of the altar was the image of jealousy. Son of man seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel do here that I should go far from my sanctuary? In the temple 'he saw every form of creeping things and abominable beasts and the idols of the house of Israh-el portrayed on the wall round about... and there stood before them seventy men of the ancients... and a thick cloud of incense went up.' At the north door 'there sat women weeping for Tammuz' ... and in between the porch and the altar 'five and twenty men with their backs toward the temple facing the east and they worshipped the sun... Therefore shall I deal in fury : mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity.'

He continues in this vein concerning cultural pollution 20 27: "Your fathers have blasphemed me...For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there they made also their sweet savour and poured out their drink offerings... Wherefore say unto the house of Israel Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

Later in chapter 23 he relates the downfall of such women: "there were two women, the daughters of one mother [Aholah of Samaria and Aholibah of Jerusalem]; and they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed and they bruised the teats of their virginity ... and poured their whoredom on her ... And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, the assyrians and her neighbours, which were clothed with blue ... with all their idols she defiled herself, neither she left her whoredoms brought from Egypt ... And Aholibah sent messages unto them in Chaldea ... and the Babylonians came to her in the bed of love... therefore I will bring [thy lovers] against thee on every side ... because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen and because thou art polluted with their idols... and with the men of a common sort were brought Sabaeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets on their hands, and beautiful crowns on their heads ... and so they went in".

Israel After the Rains

When the Jews returned from the exile they were dismayed to find those who had stayed in the Holy Land had reverted to their old ways and and intermarried with Canaanite wives. Those returning disregarded the cultural accommodation of their compatriots and unilaterally imposed their own form of exilic separatism on Israel. Nevertheless the urban population was not so easily to be suppressed and invectives by Nehemiah indicate the post-exilic reforms were slow to take effect.

Ezra arrived in 397 BC and in the pouring rain delivered a diatribe and judgement that every man should sever his ties of love and marriage with the Canaanite women 10:9: "Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do."

Miles (379) notes "There follows in this tenth and final chapter of Ezra a mass divorce and expulsion of children. Scores of Jewish man are listed by name, each of whom had married a non-Jewish woman and in some cases had children by her. All of these women and children are driven out."

However Jonah, Ruth the Moabitess lover of Boaz and not least the second Isaiah opposed this move to separatism 56:3: "Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree." Ben-Sira of Ecclesiasticus admits no distinction between Jew and Gentile as such 10:22: "sojourner and stranger, foreigner and poor man their glorifying is in the fear of the Lord."

By contrast Tobit 4:12 declares "take first a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange wife which is not of thy father's tribe: for we are all sons of the prophets". The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs echoes this "take therefore thyself a wife without blemish or pollution, while yet thou art young and not of the race of strange nations". The Book of Jubilees goes so far as to proscribe death by stoning for an Israelite who would give his daughter or sister to a Gentile, and the woman is to be burned to death, indicating the conservative position of the Essenes in the face of Greek influence in Jerusalem. However the Testament of the Twelve in the first century BC concedes a stem from which "shall grow a rod of righteousness to the Gentile to judge and save all that call upon the Lord" suggestive both of integration and Jesus' gentile mission.

Under Every Green Tree (Frazer 1918 3/30-61)

"Among the sacred trees of the ancient Hebrews the oak and the terebinth seems to have held a foremost place. Scarcely any tree figures more largely in Biblical narrative and poetry than the oak although many commentators also identify these references with the terebinth. The Hebrew words *elah* and *allon* are indiscriminate and hard to identify precisely. The vowel differences appear to come from Masoretic scribes of the middle ages. Of the oaks the most abundant is *Quercus pseudo-coccifera*, the prickly evergreen oak, in *Arabisindian*, which covers Mt. Carmel and the west flanks of Anti-Lebanon. The deciduous Valonia oak *Quercus aegilops* is scattered over Carmel, abounds on Tabor and in Bashan. *Quercus infectoria* also occurs in abundance near Kedes the ancient Kedesh Naphthali. The terebinth *Fristacia terebinthus* is a deciduous tree from which a pure turpentine is made."

"In the nineteenth century many of the ancient oaks still remained. In the plain of Sharon were vast park-like oak glades, the largest and most impressive oak forest in western Palestine - the enchanted forest of Tasso. The strong arms of these trees spread out so near the ground that one cannot walk erect beneath them. Such forests also extended east of the Jordan. Of the ancient Batanea it was said "The mountains are well-wooded with forests of evergreen oaks, and the sides terraced". "The trees were often of great size ... somewhere a little to the east of us was fought the battle with the rebellious Absalom, and by just such an oak was he caught. "And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak." How we realized the statement "For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

"The oaks which thus abound ... are still often regarded with superstitious veneration ... almost every village in the wadys and on those mountains has one or more of such thick oaks which are believed to be inhabited by Benat Ya'kob - daughters of Jacob, seemingly an ancient pre-Islamic idolatry. In Syria there remained at Bludan an ancient temple of Ba'al with a grove of ancient oaks beneath it and at Barado two groves of evergreen oaks which are wishing places where the peasants will break a crock or lay up a new stean in the little cave beneath a rock. Connected is the custom of burying their holy men under those trees and erecting domed shrines Wely to them there. Many of these are ancient high places which have become groves of the saints, stations of Mukams. The wood of the sacred trees is not supposed to be burned for fuel."

"A similar association of tombs with trees is to be found at Tel el Kadi "the mound of the judge" the ancient Dan where the springs of the Jordan take their rise. The place is a natural mound of limestone rock some eighty feet high and a half mile across. On the western side are an almost impenetrable thicket of reeds oaks and oleanthers with the largest single fountain in the world. On the eastern side overhanging another feeder of the Jordan stand a noble holm oak and a terebinth, shading the graves of Moslem saints. Their branches are hung with rags and trumpery offerings. At the site of ancient Shiloh is a large and noble oak tree called Balutat-Ibrahim - Abraham's oak - one of the 'inhabited trees' which the local inhabitants are afraid to sleep under."

"The terebinth is not in forests but in open spaces, relieving the monotony of the rolling downs in ancient Moab and Ammon. Many terebinths remain to this day objects of veneration in their neighbourhood, often covered in rags and againa favourite burying place for local sheiks. In the warm dry climate of Moab the terebinth is the principal tree while in the cooler rainier districts of Gilead and Galilee the oak flourishes more."

"Trees may grow near a sanctuary or solitary near a spring or on a hill and are nevertheless revered as having a spirit who is in effect circumscribed by the grove or tree, unlike the saints in the shrines who can transport themselves to where they are invoked. "Woe to the Arab who would dare to cut a branch or even a leaf" Under its shade the sick go to be healed of their infirmities. The mere touch communicates to them the virtue of the tree. Fastening a cloth fastens the sickness from the patient to the tree. Hair may also be left shorn in veneration for the tree as in ancient worship of Astarte."

We have mentioned how Hosea, Ezekiel have denounced the sacred groves and high places. Isaiah is even more specific: "For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen" - perhaps the gardens of Adonis. And the second Isaiah "Ye that inflame yourselves among the oaks under every green tree, that slay the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks" appears to refer to the sacrifice of **children to Moloch** which is simply 'king' with an ominous intonation. This has been variously identified with Yahweh himself at Topet, with king worship and with Astarte. Jeremiah says again "Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the soul of the innocent poor : I have not found it at the place of breaking in but on every oak" It thus appears that the blood of the sacrificed children was offered to or smeared on the oaks before they

were burned in the fire.

But if in later times of Israel, the worship of the oak or terebinth was denounced by the prophets as a heathenish rite, at an earlier time they played an important part in the history of the Hebrews and Yahweh himself was associated closely with them. In Genesis, His first recorded appearance to Abraham (12:6) is at the oracular oak or terebinth of Shechem where Abraham built him an altar. Abraham dwelt beside the oaks or more probably terebinths of Mamre at Hebron and also built an altar to the Lord and here in the heat of the day God appeared to him in the likeness of three men who under their shade took sustenance with Abraham (13:18).

We similarly have an event with Gideon and an angel (Jud 6:11) and the oracular oak of the augurs also near Shechem (Jud 9:37) which may have been used in a druid-like way to interpret from the rustlings of the leaves and the bird calls. "The beautiful vale of Shechem, embosomed with olives, orange-groves and palms and watered by plenteous rills still presents perhaps the richest landscape in all Palestine and of old it would seem to have been a great seat of tree worship. At all events in its history we meet again and again the sacred oaks and terebinth. Thus Jacob took the "strange gods" of his household together with the amulet earrings and buried them under the oak or terebinth at Shechem (Gen 35:4). Under such an oak at Shechem Joshua set up the stone as a witness (24:26) and at the oak off the pillar in Shechem that Abimelech was made king (Judg 9:6) and later Josiah 19:26 we hear of the 'king's oak' on the border of Asher. Rebecca's nurse Deborah was buried under the oak of weeping (Gen 35:8) and Saul was buried under the oak at Jabesh (1 Chron 10:12). Saul shortly before his coronation also met three men with loaves (1 Sam 10:3) suggesting a ritual role akin to Abraham's three men and cementing his burial again as a sacred kinly cycle associated with the oak.

Josephus tells us that in his day many monuments of Abraham were at Hebron and that six furlongs from the town grew a very large terebinth which was said to have stood there since the foundation of the world. Eusebius confirms this stood until the 4th century AD. The middle of Abraham's three guests Eusebius identified with Jesus himself. All three angels were worshipped by the local people. Constantine wrote to him stating "The place which is called 'at the oak of Mamre' where we learn that Abraham had his home is said to be polluted by certain superstitious persons in various ways; for it is reported that most damnable idols are set up beside it and an altar stands hard by and that unclean sacrifices are constantly offered". "There every year a famous festival is still held by the people of the neighbourhood as well as the inhabitants of the more distant parts of Palestine and by the Phoenicians and Arabians. Very many also assemble for trade, to buy and sell; for everyone sets great store on the festival

The Jews do so because they pride themselves in Abraham as their founder; the Greeks do so on account of the visit of the angels; the Christians do so because there appeared at that time to the pious man One who in after ages made himself manifest to the Virgin. ... and all of them here refrain from women ... although the women beautify and adorn their persons and show themselves freely ... for there is no lewd conduct though the sexes camp together and sleep promiscuously. No water is drawn from the well for some set lamps there, pour wine or cakes money, perfumes or incense.

Thus it appears that at Hebron an old heathen worship of the sacred tree and the sacred well survived in full force down to the establishment of Christianity. After the Jewish war and the last siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Hadrian in 119 AD there sold a vast multitude of captive men and women were sold into slavery. The end at the same spot as the beginning.

The tree, or its successor is still shown in a grassy field a mile and a half to the west of Hebron. It is a fine old evergreen oak. The trunk is 23 feet in girth, the span of its boughs is 90 feet. There is not a single terebinth in the neighbourhood of Hebron.

The Song and the Wisdom



Lovers in the Lilacs - Chagall (Chagall)

Singing the Song of Life

- [Black Rose](#) Hear Niño sing the Song of Songs in mp3 as a disquieting unravelling

Blood Roses: The Canticle of Canticles

- [The Song of Songs as Eden and gender relationships restored](#) Carol Meyers
- [Passover Sabbath and the Song of Songs](#) Klagsbrun and Podwal
- [Meinrad Craighead's vision of the Song of Songs](#)

Rabbi Akiva had this to say in espousing the Song of Songs into the Jewish canon:

*"The whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel
for all the writings are holy but the Song of Songs is the holiest of the holy".*

The Song of Songs, which is to be read at the Pesach Shabbat, is the ultimate love song on many levels, the song of sexual love, the song of the mashiach, the song of the soul, the song of the nation Israel, the song of humanity, the song of the universe and the song of God and Wisdom together.

Now this is a truth and the Song of Songs is our salvation and the redemption of the Earth and the principle of the Song of Songs is the reunion and recognition between the two genders and each - Solomon giving the Queen of Sheba all that she desired is the key to Wisdom. The Wisdom of Solomon is what gave him the six hundred and sixty six talents and six hundred and sixty six, 'here is Wisdom' is Homo sapiens. Sapiens is Wisdom. The mark of the beast Homo is sapiens, Sophia or Hockmah - Wisdom.

The sacred marriage is not simply worshipping the female in an epoch of dominion, and does not involve [tungsten wedding bands](#), "but it is the [relationship](#) of reconciliation between the two sexes and between humanity and [nature](#). And light and darkness are represented in the sacred marriage. "I am black but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem" The Queen of Sheba is the Shulamite, she's the darkened one of the enclosed [garden](#). She also represents the repressed feminine principle. In Luke it says "The Queen of the South shall return and judge the men of this generation" and that is the sacred marriage principle returning and it is the feminine principal returning and what apocalypsis means - the term 'apocalypse' is an unveiling and it is traditionally the unveiling of the bride - it is the feminine gender in Greek.

The Song of Songs expresses for all time the fertility of sexual love in its full abundance. Through the love and passion of the young king and queen for one another, the living world springs forth anew, the plants bursting into flower and fruit, the wilderness into wild splendour and the herding flocks pregnant with offspring. The "Canticles" sits paradoxically in the Old Testament, being transparently a celebration of the hieros gamos of the the Summer King 'Salmaah, the Kenite Dionysius, making love to his twin', the Flower Queen, "the May bride of Shulem". It was accepted into the Bible only after the time of Jesus by Akiba the rabbi who pronounced the Zealot Bar Kochba Messiah..



Villa Nouilles, Grasse. Jennifer Potter 1998 Secret Gardens,
Conran Octopus London ISBN 1-85029-962-5

The song reverberates with the sexual erotica of the goddess of the **enclosed garden**. "A garden concealed is my beloved" ... "Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its pleasant fruits" ... "Open to me my sister, my love ... for my head is filled with dew".

Although it is attributed to Solomon, its date is much more recent, (circa 200 BC). Robert Graves (1948 261) notes: "The Canticles, though apparently no more than a collection of village love-songs, were officially interpreted by the Pharisee sages of Jesus's day as the mystical essence of King Solomon's wisdom, and as referring to the love of Jehovah for Israel; which is why in the Anglican Bible they are interpreted as 'Christ's love for his Church'.

Although the Canticles ring with the sensual joy and longing of the sacred marriage and abounds like no other tract of writing before of since with the sheer abundance of fertility of garden, wilderness and flock alike, the undercurrents of human sacrifice are never far away. Although, as in the joyful courtship of Inanna, we delight in the abundant fertility - "Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins and there is not one barren one among them," we also find "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. " The thorns of male sacrifice thus remain lurking among the sisters, for whom the red lily is also a symbol of sacrificial blood, and the beloved is none other than the dying vegetation God Tammuz - Adonis or Lord:



"Blood lilies" on Lake Genesaret (Galilee). The anemone blooms at Easter (Wilson I).

"The 'lilies' are the red anemones - the wind flower - that sprang up from the drops of blood that fell from Adonis's side when the wild boar killed him (Graves 261), sprinkled with nectar by the mourning goddess. The name anemone appears to be derived from *Naaman* - darling, an epithet of Adonis (Frazer v4/1 226).

The rose also received its present hue from this fatal event, for as Aphrodite ran barefoot through the woods to the aid of her lover, the thorns of the white rose-briars, the damask rose, tore her delicate skin and the flowers were henceforth tinged with red (Henderson 119).

The apple is the Sidonian (i.e. Cretan) apple, or quince, sacred to Aphrodite the Love-goddess, and first cultivated in Europe by the Cretans. The true apple was not known in Palestine in Biblical times and it is only recently that varieties have been introduced there that yield marketable fruit" (Graves 1948 261).

The Song of Songs

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine.
Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth,
therefore do the virgins love thee.
Draw me, we will run after thee : The king hath brought me to his chambers:
we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine:
the upright love thee.



Sabeen Votive Offerings with a black Shulamite (Doe)

I am black but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me;
my mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards;
but my own vineyard I have not kept.
Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest
where thy flock to rest at noon:
for why should I be one that turnest aside by the flocks of your companions?

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
and feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.
I have compared thee, O my love to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sent forth the smell thereof.
A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
My beloved is to me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.
Behold thou art fair my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast dove's eyes.
Behold thou art fair my beloved, yea pleasant: also our bed is green.
The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.



Anemone parvonia "blood lilly" of Adonis and the Damask Rose of Aphrodite
Adonis's is in rich full flow. Aphrodite's is lightly tinged with her foot pricks.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the valleys.
 As a lilly among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.
 I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
 He brought me to his banqueting house and his banner over me was love.
 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.
 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
 that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.
 The voice of my beloved!
 behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills
 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall,
 he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself forth through the lattice.

My beloved spake and said to me, Rise up my fair one, and come away.
 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing of birds is come
 and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
 and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell,
 arise my love, my fair one and come away.

O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs,
 let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
 for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.
 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lillies.

[Note: The little foxes are reputed to be [magic mushrooms](#).]

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not.
 I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways
 I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not.
 The watchmen that go about the city found me : to whom I said, Saw ye whom my soul loveth?
 It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth:
 I held him, and I would not let him go until I had brought him to my mother's house
 and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke...
 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.
 He made the pillars thereof of silver and the bottom thereof of gold the covering of it of purple,
 the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.
 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown
 wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals,
 and in the day of the gladness of his heart.



Jewish bride from Sheba (Yemen) in traditional costume (Uris)

Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon:
 look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,
 from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse
 thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with the chain of thy neck.
 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!

and the smell of thine ointments than all the spices!
Thy lips, O my spouse drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue
and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranites, with pleasant fruits; camphire, spikenard, and saffron;
calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of franscense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:
A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.



Ilford manor, Wiltshire (Potter)

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden,
that the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh and my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk:
eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

I sleep but my heart waketh : it is the voice of of my beloved that knocketh,
saying open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled :
for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.
I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
My beloved put his hand in the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.
I rose up to open to my beloved and my hands dropped with myrrh,
and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.
I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone:
my soul failed when he spake : I sought him, but I could not find him;

I called him, but he gave me no answer
The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me and they wounded me;
the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.
I charge you , O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?
what is thy thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold, hislocks are bushy and black as a raven.
His eyes are as the eyes of doves ...
His mouth is most sweet yea he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

My beloved is gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices,
to feed in the gardens and to gather lillies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lillies.

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.
Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me:

thy hair is a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins
and there is not one barren one among them.
As a piece of pomegranite are thy temples within thy locks.

There are three score queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.
 My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother,
 she is the choice one of her that bear her. The daughters saw her and blessed her;
 yea the queens and the concubines and they praised her.
 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
 and terrible as an army with banners?

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley,
 and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranites budded...
 Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.
 What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies...



Venus and Adonis - Lemoine (Bailey)

I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof:
 now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.
 And the roof of thy mouth, like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly
 causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.
 I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me.
 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish,
 whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranites bud forth:
 there I will give thee my loves.
 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits,
 new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?
 I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth:
 she that brought thee forth that bare thee.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
 for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave:
 the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.
 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:
 if a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
 it would be utterly contemned.

We have a little sister and she hath no breasts:
 what shall we do for our sister on the day when she shall be spoken for?
 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver:
 and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.
 I am a wall and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one which found favour.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard to the keepers;
 every one of the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.
 My vineyard, which is mine is before me: thou O Solomon must have a thousand
 and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.
 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions harken to my voice: cause me to hear it.
 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

The Song of Songs as a Mandala of Love

Pondering the way the words of the Song of Songs have held so powerfully true in our tangled dilemmas of love and life I suddenly wondered ... "who wrote the song of songs", from the love strong as death to the "passion fierce as *Sheol*" and the utterly flowing tenderness of feminine sexual arousal echoing through the verses?

The book is also called the Song of Solomon because the first verse appends the words *li-shlomo* to the phrase "song of songs." Depending on one's interpretation, *li-shlomo* can either be "by Solomon", or "for Solomon." Was the author then a woman, or a man? Was it written by one person or many? At one time, or over many episodes? How come such a nakedly lubricious sexual piece made it into the Jewish and hence the Christian bible and whence did it come anyway ... if not from the alleged hand of Solomon?

The answer to how it gained entry to the Bible is itself intriguing. At the 90 A.D. Council of *Jamnia*. Jewish Rabbis from across the spectrum of Judaism assembled in order to close in Jewish Canon. The Palestinian rabbinical school of *Shammai* stood in the fore of the opposition for canonization of Song of Songs. They argued that nothing could be considered scripture that was being employed in lewd, barroom songs. Notably, like Esther it does not mention god explicitly. Fortunately the cause of Song of Songs was championed by the less stringent Babylonian rabbinical school of *Hillel*. *Akiba* said: "The entire universe is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs are the Holy of *Holies*." Lead by the defense of Rabbi *Aqiba*, the *Hillel* school succeeded in maintaining the *canonicity* of Song of Songs. The inclusion of the Song of Songs within the canon is at some level an affirmation of the essential created goodness of *sex*, as if the Rabbis appreciated the goodness of human love, and realized the importance of canonically affirming

it.

Hillel was a very enlightened benefactor of Yeshua's teachings. Hillel said "***Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you***" a more protective inverse of Yeshua's assertive "***Do unto others what you would have them do to you***". Akiba is also famous for anointing the Jewish Zealot Bar Cochbah as mashiach shortly afterwards, for which his detractors said "***grass will grow out of your jaw***" because it led to the final destruction and diaspora of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

Now coming back to the Song of Songs, we find, despite their attribution to Solomon, they are redacted much more recently perhaps around 400-300 BC. The presence of Aramaic, Persian, and Greek words in the text means that the work antedates the sixth century B.C. All internal evidence considered, the best dating available places the compilation of Song of Songs between 400 and 300 B.C.

Many writers attribute the Song to being simply a collection of pastoral love poems which have been drawn together over many years into a larger piece. The variety of explanations of the Song's allegorical or ritual meaning shed a fascinating light on its long and tortuous history.

Midrash, Targum, and Medieval Jewish commentators state that the intended message of Song of Songs is an allegory of God and Israel. The succession of events flows from the Sinai Covenant through subsequent events. Later, the early church fathers adapted this view to Christianity by changing the role to the love of Christ for the Church. This allegorical view is parried by the natural perspective, given its direct sexual overtones that the song is simply a song of heady infatuation or at best a series of insights in the nature of love as a spiritual teaching.

But there are references in the Song which point to much earlier times and to the lost traditions of Northern Israel. The naming of the city of ***Tirzah*** in 6:4 is evidence that compilation must have occurred sometime before 876 B.C. This is because ***Tirzah***, compared to Jerusalem in the verse, ceased to be the capital of Israel in 876 B.C. when ***Omri*** moved the Northern capital to ***Samaria***. This could place some of its early compilations back to the time of Solomon.

Running through the Song are a series of motifs shared by rituals and customs of Palestinian and Syrian wedding ceremonies. Parallels with Syrian wedding songs written in Arabic have been noted for centuries. Other authorities have suggested they may be related to ancient Mesopotamian and Canaanite ceremonies uniting divinities in marriage. This would place the development of the Song of Songs as something preceding Israelite religion and stemming from the most ancient sacred marriage celebrations throughout pastoral Mesopotamia, from ***Inanna*** and ***Dumuzi*** and ***Tammuz*** and ***Ishar***, continuing all the way to rural Israel-Palestine in ***Yeshua's*** time.

In addition, the Song presents a dramatic cycle either involving the romance of two lovers or an eternal triangle composed of Solomon, a rustic maiden and the maiden's shepherd lover. This brings us back full circle to the celebration of the sacred reunion as a dramatic rite of renewal in world fertility, uniting in turn with the marriage traditions to generate a primordial wisdom literature expounding the mysteries of sexual love in reunion, with all the spice and coals, apples and thorns of love, fertility and tragedy woven in - a teaching of the cumulated poetry of sexual fertility manifest in all the cultures from Jericho and ***Sumeria***, through Israel, echoed again in the medieval arts of courtly love. The Queen of southern ***Saba***, who is also the bride of the scented garden, is notably a black but comely ***Shulamite***, thus personifying the black ***madonna, Kali***.

The Song of Songs has thus become the consummate cultural evolutionary mosaic of the ***hieros gamos*** or sacred marriage, weaving into its themes, from a succession of cultures, not only the joys of love; but sacrificial motifs - the love who had withdrawn himself and was gone, the rose among the thorns, the smiting and wounding of the bride; and all the dimensions of sexual love's paradox, from the select one and only love undefied amid the many wives and concubines, to the male competition for the female hinted at in the king and shepherd lover - "Is the male lover the same as the king, with king just being love language, or is the king in competition with a rustic lover?" In its dramatic movement, the unmistakable message of the book is the complexity and power of human love.

Perhaps this begins to give some explanation why the Song of Songs has no parallel for sheer fertility in the midst of the sap and dew of erotic consummation and for the deep lessons it provides of the paradoxical dilemmas of love and the source love provides for cosmic awakening in perpetual fertility.

In celebrating the sacred marriage, we become direct inheritors of all the paradoxes these lines contain. This is why we face the dilemmas we do. It is part of the mystery into which we enter as a key.

- **Sheba - The Power of Wisdom** - Elizabeth Fiorenza



The Golden Legend - The Meeting (Lavin)

Nikaulis and Solomon : A Cultural Hieros Gamos

The mythical and possibly historical pilgrimage of the Queen of Sheba, Nikaulis to Josephus, Bilqis to Muhammad (pilgessh - concubine Heb) and Makeda in Ethiopia to King Solomon celebrates a rare union of the genders, each in their true power, a cultural hieros gamos between a great Goddess Queen and a great King of the Father God, each of whom is master and mistress of their own domains and destinies, and never a mere consort of the other. They celebrate the confluence of their lives as two independent figures in history each on their own journey.

Solomon is renowned for the splendour of his reign, his wisdom, the power of the magic of the Key of Solomon, and his appreciation for and understanding of nature. "And Solomon's wisdom excelled all the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the children of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men ... And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and fishes. And there came all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom". His palace in the cedars was twice the size of that in the capital.

Solomon's beautiful black bride the Shulamite, reflects the Goddess of darkness Zulumat, the fertile garden-paradise of the Oriental kings. The queens of Sheba had a capital Mariaba with king consorts forbidden to leave the temple on pain of stoning (Walker 946). It is also related that Solomon feared she had animal feet like Lilith and arranged to view her feet reflected from beneath her long skirt in a still pool of water, finding to his relief, that she was fully human, if a little hairy. The term Shayba 'old woman' is an epithet of the Great Goddess.

"Now when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she *came in* to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he did not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, 'The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard.' "



Solomon seizes Makeda : An Abyssinian illustration (Pritchard 1974).

"Happy are your men! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness. Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. ... Moreover the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almu wood and precious

stones. And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord, and for the kings house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day" (1 Kings 10:8)

"And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba *all that she desired* , whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land, with her servants" (1 Kings 10:13).

The terms *come in* and *all that she desired* are taken to mean that Solomon and Nikaulis were lovers and that she sought a child by the king. It is said that their meeting took place in terms of an ancient prophecy of the messiah king, and that Bilquis was coming as a queen of the ancient race to see if this was really the case. A passage in the Midrash ha-Gadol begins by referring to Genesis 25:6: 'But to Abraham's sons by concubines Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and he sent them away.. 'Among those thus sent away was Jokshan, father of Sheba (Genesis 25:3). They were, the story continues, to remain apart from Isaac and his descendants until the messiah had come. Now in the days of Solomon, the situation was so favourable, as 1 Kings 4:25 reports, that it seemed as though the Messiah had come (Pritchard 68): ... However, when it was recognized that Solomon was not the messiah, the concubines' descendants returned home to await his coming. The passage concludes: 'And they are destined to return in the days of the Messiah, may it come quickly and in our days, for it is said in scripture: ' (Isaiah 60:6) "the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee ... all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense".

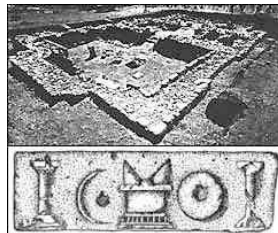
The idea that Solomon was the messiah was justified, for his reign was one of both splendour and peace: 1 Kings 4:21 "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. ... For he had dominion over all ... the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. ... And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

Jesus stands on the tradition of this myth when in Matthew 12:38 he claims to be messiah, by prophesying the arrival of Nikaulis, at the same time as refusing to confirm his miraculus nature, offering only the ritual of the descent of the three days of darkness: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, 'Master, we would see a sign from thee'. But he answered and said unto them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ... The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.'"



The Judgement of Solomon (Uffizi).
The swordsman is about to divide the contested child.

Solomon's accession to the throne has all the hallmarks of a traditional sacred king. He is appointed through the wiles and power of his mother, with the more than coincidental name Bath-Sheba, after his half-brother Absalom is hung in a tree after challenging David by going to his concubines in the sight of all Israel and his brother Adonijah makes a similar display of assuming power over Solomon after the failure of the old and feeble King David to perform the sacred act with the comely Shunnamite Abishag. Adonijah is temporarily forgiven when he holds on to the horns of the altar. However when he then makes a play for Abishag's hand, thus attempting to assert virility rites over the young regent, Solomon has him killed. Solomon then receives his wisdom from God in a dream at Gibeon and demonstrates it to the two women fighting over an offspring, by threatening to divide the child in two.



A temple from Hazor on the same plan as Solomon's temple of the 10 th century (Pritchard 1974).
A horned altar with crescent moon and (lunar) disc and twin pillars - Jordan (Zehren)

His temple is notable for its male and female symbolism. 1 Kings 7:15 " For he cast two pillars of brass, ... And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, ... And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work ... And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates ... two hundred in rows round about ... and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz." The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz were "he shall establish" (the sun) and "in its strength" (the moon), consistent with worship of the heavenly host. The pomegranate *rimmon*, was a symbol of both the womb and fertility of the seed (Walker 805).

Solomon's diverse Religious Exploits

Solomon is also renowned for his love of his diverse wives' deities. "And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her unto the city of David". He built a temple to Yahweh to replace the tabernacle tent, and the many sanctuaries in the high places. "And the Lord said if thou wilt walk before me as David ... then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever". "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of the Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites" let alone the Shulamite Queen of Sheba. "Solomon clave unto these in love" And he had **seven hundred wives**, princesses, and **three hundred concubines** ... For it came to pass that when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods ... Astoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites ... Chesmosh of Moab, Molech of Ammon ... and likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burned incense and sacrificed unto their gods. ... And the Lord was angry with Solomon". "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee ... but will give one tribe to thy son for David thy father's sake" (1 Kings 11:1) However the fall of Solomon's empire resulted from a previous escape of Hadad the Edomite from his initial patricide and thus predated Solomon's transgressions.

The **very large numbers of wives and concubines** is consistent with the models of sacred kingship based on spermatogenic fertility, characteristic both of many national leaders up to the 20 th century in the case of Mao Tse Tung.

Although the riches and bounty of Solomon's era as King of Israel is famed in the Bible, the Sabaeans possessed a long-lived culture lasting from 1700 BC to 400 AD, which has left significantly greater evidence of its richness than the kingdom of Solomon, of which there are few archaeological records. While Solomon made good trade in minearls and chariots, Sabea wealth was based on the spice trade in frankinsense and myrrh.

Solomon's Kingdom: The Archaeological Evidence

"Archaeology has been able to recover sizeable portions of three cities of the tenth century BC, cities prominent enough to have been mentioned in the Bible as cities which Solomon built. Each is extremely modest in extent: Megiddo (after which Armageddon is named) is no larger than 13 acres; Gezer measures approximately 27 acres; and the area of the higher mound at Hazor, half of which was encircled by the tenth-century casemate wall, is only 30 acres. These 'cities', even by the ancient Near Eastern standards, ... were far from what one might call urban centres; they were more like villages. ... Artefacts of bone, stone, clay, an occasional metal tool or weapon, ... suggest a cultural level which was apparently lacking in both artistic sophistication and wealth. As yet no evidence has been found for the use of chariotry or for the metal trappings for the harness of horses. As for gold and other precious metals, its occurrence is limited to an occasional earring or other article of personal adornment. ... Solomon is mentioned in no Egyptian, or Mesopotamian, or Phoenician document. Only from the Bible do we learn that he lived" (Pritchard 1974 17).

In contrast to the picture of life in the tenth century is that derived from 1 Kings 3-11, a life that might be termed a 'Golden Age'. Mentioned are huge amounts of gold, ivory carvings, bronze in abundance, woods imported from distant lands. Since it was obvious that Palestine was a relatively poor land and gold was not indigenous to the area, the author took pains to identify its source, Ophir, a distant land reached by the navies of Solomon and Hiram. In one verse the figure of 420 talents ... is mentioned; in another, it is said that 666 talents - more than 38,000,000 gold dollars flowed into the treasury of Solomon each year (1 Kings 10:14). Yet there is nothing to indicate what was exported in exchange for this gigantic income.

"When we compare this account of his age with that of the Court History of David in II Samuel 9-20 and Chapters 1-2 of 1 Kings, which has been almost universally acclaimed by biblical scholars ... for its candid objectivity, here there is but one mention of the precious metal: the crown of Milcom, king of Ammon, conquered by David's forces, contained but one talent of gold (2 Samuel 12:30). In the Court History of the king who conquered the vast kingdom over which his son Solomon ruled this one talent, as far as we are told, constituted David's entire assets of gold" (Pritchard 1974 35).

Archaeology of the Realm of Nikaulis

Diodorus Siculus notes: "This tribe [the **Sabaeans**] surpasses not only the neighbouring Arabs but also all other men in wealth and in their several extravagancies besides. For in the exchange and sale of their wares they, of all men who carry on trade for the sake of the silver they receive in exchange, obtain the highest price in return for things of the smallest weight. Consequently, since they have never for ages suffered the ravages of war because of their secluded position, and since an abundance of both gold and silver abounds in the country, . . . they have embossed goblets of every description, made of silver and gold, couches and tripods with silver feet, and every other furnishing of incredible costliness, and halls encircled by large columns, some of them gilded, and others having silver figures on the capitals. Their ceilings and doors they partitioned by means of panels and coffered made of gold, set with precious stones and placed close together, and have thus made the structure of their houses in every part marvellous for its costliness; for some parts they have constructed of silver and gold, others of ivory and the most showy precious stones or of whatever else men esteem most highly" (Pritchard 1974 44). Their sculpture and **votive offerings** were refined.

Strabo noted that the king of Saba who "presides over the court of justice and other things" was not permitted to leave the palace, for if he did "the people would at once stone him, in consequence of a saying of an oracle" (Pritchard 1974 66).



Sabean jewelry in gold carnelian and onyx (Doe).
Statue, Sabean script, and a decorative panel in marble (Doe).

While her tomb and documents of her time have yet to come to light, and remains of the tenth century BC are still largely unknown to archaeology, the recovery of a small amount of contemporary evidence together with a considerable amount of material from only three or four centuries later enables us to reconstruct a general outline of the Queen of Sheba's culture with considerable probability. She would have lived surrounded by the accoutrements of an affluent civilization: a thriving trade that brought unparalleled prosperity; an irrigation agriculture that provided ample subsistence; a distinctive architecture in stone that was second only to that of Egypt in the ancient Near East in its execution and variety of ornamentation; a richness in metallurgy and stone carving as well as an abundance of artists and artisans who pursued these vocations; a high degree of literacy among the people, who had a keen appreciation of the importance of a written language and of their beautiful alphabetic script; and an art that is representational in a symbolic archaic manner (Pritchard 40).

Sabean religion was astral with a prominent moon deity '**Humqub**. The sun-goddess was the moon's consort; she was perhaps best known in South Arabia as Dhat Hamym, 'she who sends forth strong rays of benevolence'.



The hoopoe visits Nikaulis to entice her to Solomon (Lassner).

The Demonization of the Queen: Nikaulis the Judaic Lilith

The Targum sheni of the early centuries AD describes an allegory of Ahasuerus' banquet, recounted in the Book of Esther. There was a great feast which Solomon gave for 'all the kings of the East and of the West'. Not only were the kings summoned but 'the wild beasts, the birds, the reptiles, the devils, the demons, and the spirits' who danced before him 'to show his greatness'. When the roll was called, all had assembled but the cock-of-the-woods (hoopoe). Solomon was not to be thus insulted and gave the order that the bird be brought before him under threat of death. The hoopoe then in defence, relates the tale of Kitor (Hebrew ketoret means smoke of incense) 'Now, if it please my lord the king, I shall gird my loins like a mighty man, and shall rise and go to the city of Kitor, in the land of Saba, and shall bind its king and governor in chains of iron, and shall bring them to my lord the king' (Lassner 64)

'Of course Solomon was delighted with the prospect and dispatched a letter of demand together with an armada of birds so great as to obscure the sun and cause the queen such consternation that she 'took hold of her clothes and tore them in pieces'. ...The queen's counsellors were unimpressed: 'We do not know Solomon nor do we esteem his kingdom.' Womanly intuition, however, overbore their advice. She gathered a great fleet, loaded it with 'presents of pearls and of precious stones' That the queen was in haste to visit Solomon is evident from her letter of reply: 'Although the journey from Kitor to the land of Israel is of seven years, yet owing to the question I have to ask thee, I shall come in three' (Lassner 74)

The Targum Sheni merely reports that the queen thought that Solomon was sitting in the midst of water and so, in approaching him, raised the hem of her garments, and disclosed that her feet were hairy. The king remarks: 'Thy beauty is the beauty of women, and thy hair is the hair of men; hair is becoming to men, but to a woman it is a shame.' The queen ignores his unseemly remark and turns at once to her 'hard questions' (Lassner 75).

The very brief mention of the visit in Alphabetum Siracidis reports that the queen was hairy all over and that Solomon, quite intent on possessing her but apparently somewhat finicky, sent her various depilatories that proved effective. The Tale of the Queen of Sheba' has a somewhat different focus, for it alone reports that the queen is a 'demon' - a matter to which we shall return at length. In 'The Tale of the Queen of Sheba' it is part of a plan on Solomon's part, for he wishes 'to lie with her'-he knows, of course, that her husband is dead - but is repelled by her hairiness which was considered a demonic characteristic.

The queen propounds riddles to test Solomon's wisdom. There are many versions of the riddles. Here is a typical set:

1. The Queen: "Seven cease, nine begin. Two offer drink, one drinks." Solomon: "It is the days of menstruation and the months of pregnancy, the two breasts and the one child."
2. The Queen: "A woman says: 'Your father is mine, your grandfather is mine, you are my son and I am your sister'." Solomon: "The daughters of Lot"
3. The Queen presents identical looking boys and girls. Solomon gets them to eat nuts and grain and watches their movements.
4. The Queen presents circumcised and uncircumcised boys. Solomon opens the Ark and the circumcised bow down.

The Targum to Job calls her **Lilith** the Queen of Demons, who strangled infants in their cradles (cot death syndrome), could be summoned with magic charms, and as a succubus coupled with men. (Lassner 65)

In the Zohar the Queen asks Solomon the arts of sorcery, in particular the handling of the snakes of the bones of the heathen seer Balaam. It is said that Solomon didn't need to make shoes for her, because she was **ademon**.

Ben Yosef relates that The mother of the queen was a beautiful **djinn** who save the future king from an unsolvable riddle. The gifted daughter then married the king who and reigned in his stead after his death as queen of both the djin and Sabaeans (Pritchard 1974 81).

Bilqis the Sun-worshipper of Islam

Pre-Islamic poetry describes Solomon as a king of universal kingdom of men, djinn and winds etc. nine angels stand before him. He built the castle al-Ablaq near Taima.

"The great civilization of South Arabia was little known to the Arabs of Muhammad's time [although] any of the Arab tribes of Muhammad's day still had a tradition that they had lived in South Arabia before taking to the desert when the old civilization declined." Some tribes retained a memory of being settled there before conditions worsened, apparently connected with the Marib dam bursting and a return to nomadic life. Restorations were known to have been carried out in 450 and 542 which puts a final date on the demise (Pritchard 1974 88).

Sura 34:15 states: "Certainly there was a sign for Saba in their abode; two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a good land and a Forgiving Lord! But they turned aside, so We sent upon them a torrent of which the rush could not be withstood, and in place of their two gardens We gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees."

Sura 27:15-44 relates many of the episodes already found for example in the Targum Sheni, a further indication of the familiarity Muhammad had with details of Jewish literature outside the Pentateuch. Rather than Bilqis being portrayed as a demon, Solomon is portrayed as a great man of God and master of the Djinn to whom Bilqis submits in acknowledgement of al-Llah. The story of the Hoopoe is told. The people of Sheba are said to be sun-

worshippers. Her throne is disguised and placed before her as a test. She says "It is like it" evasively. As she walks on to the palace: 44 "She thought it a pool and uncovered her legs. Solomon said 'It is a place paved with glass.' She said 'I have wronged myself to God, Lord of the worlds, with Solomon I make submission.' "



Solomon catches the thirsty Makeda and possesses her (Pritchard 1974).

Makeda the Founding Heroine of Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the tale of Solomon and Sheba is central to the Ethiopian monarchy which traces its line back to Menelik II the son of Solomon and Makeda the Queen, complete with an entry in the constitution concerning the 'oil of kingship' - the messianic anointing oil.

The Kebra Nagast a medieval romance. Relays the meeting as a consequence of trading relations. Solomon is very overwhelmed by Makeda and becomes determined to take her. She poses a question "What in the world is most valuable?" He offers a great banquet with highly seasoned food and at the end of the evening ask her to stay in his tent. She accepts provided he doesn't take her by force. He accepts on condition she takes nothing. During the night she is thirsty and takes a drink. He stays her hand. She learns that water is the most precious thing. From the lesson of the water Makeda returns to Saba to build the Marib dam and irrigate.

Solomon takes her by force under the pretext of the broken promise. He then has a dream that the sun will depart from Israel and stand forever over Ethiopia. Makeda returns to the Land of Saba bearing his infant son. Menelik later journeys to Solomon and returns with the Ark (the Shekina). In the illustrations, the Queen is pictured full-face (good) while Solomon is profile (evil). Like the Qur'an and probably derived from it, she thus abandons Sun worship for the god of Israel.



The Queen kneels before the sacred wood (Lavin).

The Legend of the True Cross.

Adam before he died persuaded Seth to return to the garden and plead for the oil of mercy. Gabriel gave Seth the branch of the original tree from which Adam and Eve ate. This tree had blackened and withered away when they had committed their "happy sin" or Felix culpa, but had burst forth anew when Michael promised man's future salvation.

But Adam had died when Seth returned, so he planted the branch on Adam's grave, where it lasted until Solomon's time as a mighty tree. Solomon cut it down to build, but it always changed shape and was thrown down as a bridge. When the Queen came to cross the water, she knelt in adoration at the sacred wood and prophesied that it would be used to nail a world saviour who would defile and end the Jewish heritage. In a related tale she has a goose-foot deformity which is cured as she wades across the stream (Pritchard 121).

Sophia of Solomon

The Wisdom, Chocmah or Sophia of Solomon is similarly a late work, which dates from long after Solomon's time. It is characteristic however of wisdom literature in which wisdom, or Sophia is imbued with the feminine gender, which is in other places recognised as a cryptic name for the goddess and her wives: Proverbs 9 - "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars... she hath sent forth her maidens : she crieth on the high places of the city" ... and *as for* him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

- [Crucifixion passage from the Wisdom: The "righteous man"](#)

Proverbs 8

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?
She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.
She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.
Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. ...
Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.
By me kings reign, ... and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. ...
I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.
My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. ...
The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. ...

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face ...
When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment:
Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men...
Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways...
For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.



Solomon's Pool (Uris)

The Wisdom of Solomon dates only from the first century BC, long after Solomon.

From The Wisdom

I myself also am a mortal man, like to all,
 and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth.
 And in my mother's womb was fashioned to be flesh in the time of ten months,
 being compacted in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that came with sleep.
 And when I was born, I drew in common air, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature
 and the first voice I uttered was crying which all others do...
 For all men have one entrance to life and the like going out...
 Wherefore I prayed, and understanding was given me:
 I called upon God and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
 I preferred her to sceptres and thrones...
 Neither I compared her to any precious stone,
 because all gold in respect of her is as little sand,
 and silver shall be counted as clay before her.
 I loved her more above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light:
 for the light that cometh from her never goeth out.
 All good things came to me with her and innumerable riches in her hands.
 And I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom goeth before them:
 and I knew not that she was the mother of them...
 For she is a treasure unto men that never faileth;
 which they that use become the friends of God,
 being commended for the gifts that come from learning.
 God hath granted me to speak as I would,
 and to conceive as is meet for the things that are given me:
 because it is he that leadeth unto wisdom and directeth the wise...
 For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely,
 to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements:
 the beginning, ending and the midst of times;
 the alterations of the turning of the sun and the changes of the seasons...
 The natures of the living creatures, and the furies of wild beasts:
 the violence of winds and the reasonings of men;
 the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots.
 And all such things as are either secret or manifest, them I know.
 For wisdom, which is the worker of all things taught me:
 for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtil, clear ...
 not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good ... ready to do good.
 Kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power ..
 For she is the breath and power of God ...
 For she is the brightness of the everlasting light,
 the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness
 and being but one, she can do all things
 and remaining in herself she reneweth all things
 and passing into holy souls from age to age
 she maketh friends of God and the prophets.
 For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above the order of the stars
 being compared with the light, she is found before it
 for after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome Wisdom.

I loved her and sought her out from my youth,
 I desired to make her my spouse and I was a lover of her beauty...
 If a man desire much experience, she knoweth things of old,
 and conjectureth aright what is to come : ...
 she forseeeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times.
 Therefore I purposed to take her to live with me,
 knowing she would be a counsellor of good things and a comfort in cares and grief...
 Moreover by means of her I shall obtain immortality,
 and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to those that come after me...

Praise of Wisdom

Now I like a rivulet from her stream,
 channeling the waters into a garden, said to myself,
 'I will water my plants, my flower bed I will drench';
 and suddenly this rivulet of mine became a river,
 then this stream of mine, a sea.
 Thus do I send my teachings forth shining like the dawn,
 to become known afar off.
 Thus do I pour out instruction like prophecy
 and bestow on generations to come.
 Ecclesiasticus Yeshua ben Sirach 24

The Gnosis of Sophia

Sophia (Sapientia) continues to have a pivotal in later [gnostic writings](#), where she plays both the role of the divine feminine principle of wisdom unfolding true understanding where the jealous male God has withheld it, and as wisdom which has attempted to preempt the creative Logos of the paternal deity, as illustrated in the passages below from Elaine Pagels (Gnostic Gospels 75-78).

"In addition to the eternal, mystical Silence and the Holy Spirit, certain gnostics suggest a third characterization of the divine Mother: as Wisdom. Here the Greek feminine term for 'wisdom', sophia, translates a Hebrew feminine term, hokhmah. Early interpreters had pondered the meaning of certain Biblical passages - for example, the saying in Proverbs that 'God made the world in Wisdom'. Could Wisdom be the feminine power in which God's creation was 'conceived'? According to one teacher, the double meaning of the term conception - physical and intellectual - suggests this possibility: 'The image of thought [ennoia] is feminine, since ... [it] is a power of conception.'

"The Apocalypse of Adam, discovered at Nag Haminadi, tells of a feminine power who wanted to conceive by herself: '... from the nine Muses, one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent time seated there, so that she desired herself alone in order to become androgynous. She fulfilled her desire, and became pregnant from her desire...'"

"The poet Valentinus uses this theme to tell a famous myth about Wisdom: Desiring to conceive by herself, apart from her masculine counterpart, she succeeded, and became the 'great creative power from whom all things originate', often called Eve, 'Mother of all living'. But since her desire violated the harmonious union of opposites intrinsic in the nature of created being, what she produced was aborted and defective; from this, says Valentinus, originated the terror and grief that mar human existence. To shape and manage her creation, Wisdom brought forth the demiurge, the creator-God of Israel, as her agent' ".

"Wisdom, then, bears several connotations in gnostic sources. Besides being the 'first universal creator', 'who brings forth all creatures, she also enlightens human beings and makes them wise. Followers of Valentinus and Marcus therefore prayed to the Mother as the 'mystical, eternal Silence' and to 'Grace, She who is before all things', and as 'incorruptible Wisdom' for insight (gnosis)".

Some gnostics taught that genesis narrates an androgynous creation. Others attributed to Sophia the benefits that Adam and Eve received in Paradise. ... When the creator became angry with the human race because they did not worship or honor him as Father and God, he sent forth a flood upon them, that he might destroy them. But Wisdom opposed him... and Noah and his family were saved in the ark by means of the sprinkling of the light that proceeded from her.



Athirat as Sea Goddess with Hathor headdress and El (Internet)

The Tragic Fertility of Canaan

Ba'al devours children.

To understand the evolving nature of the Old Testament notion of god, it is essential to look closely at the wider and more ancient field of Canaanite deities of Syria-Palestine, for in these, we will find, not only the "god behind God", the Ancient of Days worshipped by Abraham and Jacob and revived by Daniel and the apocalyptics, but also the continuing archetypes which take us all the way back to the primal fertility Gods and Goddesses from which our concepts of deity originally stem.

The Semites are broadly divided into the Eastern, represented by the Assyrians and Babylonians and the Western divided between the Southern in Arabia and Ethiopia and the Northern in Palestine and Syria. The term 'ca-na-na-um' was used by the inhabitants as early as 3500 BC (Aubet). The Hebrew 'cana'ani' meant merchant, but the original meaning may have come from Akkadian kinahhu - red-colored wool, which may have in turn given their descendants the name Phoenician.

Central to the Semitic notion of deity is El, the old fatherly creator god and his consort, Athirat or Asherah. "Both were primordial beings, they had been there always." El, whose name simply meant 'god' was the creator and procreator, overseer of conception, who sired the gods, thus being also called 'Bull El' in continuity with the ancient bull god of fertility. Asherah and El thus form a creation hieros-gamos of male and female, representing the bull and the earth goddess we see emerging from the ancient continuum at Catal Huyuk. El is supposed to have gone out to sea and asked two Goddesses, one presumably being Athirat and the other possibly Anath to choose between being his spouses and being his daughters. They chose the former. Their offspring are Shaher and Shalem, the morning and evening stars, from which Lucifer, the light-bearer, takes his name.

Many of the archetypes we now perceive in Yahweh have their origin in El. He is an original creator god - the 'Creator of Created things', which definitely includes fertility, but may also include the creation of Heaven and Earth as with the Mesopotamian Marduk and Tiamat, whose own mythology may be partly derived from the older Canaanite myths. El was the proverbial old man who is both a father and judge. He was a kingly and kindly figure, benevolent but not uninvolved. He was the god of decrees and the father of the reigning king. "It was his responsibility to ensure that equilibrium was preserved among all the conflicting and competing powers within it." He thus was respected by the other Gods - "Your decree El is wise, your wisdom is everlasting." "It was not for nothing that El was called 'the kindly and compassionate' - a design strangely reminiscent of 'Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate' in Islam. Not that El was incapable of anger; transgressions in the community ... could provoke him - and then he would prompt neighbouring powers to invade and conquer. To avert such calamities the king had to perform rites of expiation and offer sacrifices" (Cohn 1993 119)



Asherah (Gray)

Asherah, the Semitic name of the Great Goddess, whose origin differs from Astarte, was "in wisdom the Mistress of the Gods", called by the Sumerians Ashnan "the strength of all things", a "kindly and beautiful maiden." The Canaanites called her "She who gives birth to the Gods" and as the "Lady who traverses the Sea" she is Goddess of both the Sea and Moon. In the Old Testament she is identified with her sacred groves.

Although Canaanite mythology varies from city to city, the discovery of extensive records at Ras Shamra of the city of Ugarit, gives us a uniquely detailed view of Canaanite Gods and Goddesses, dating from the author Elimelek around 1370 BC. Kings traditionally ruled as intermediaries of the Gods in maintaining the fertility of the land.

Despite siring the Gods and Goddesses, El and Asherah, no longer remain the only key players in the cosmic drama. As with Sumerian and many other mythologies a cosmic struggle for supremacy arises in which mortal combat occurs. This weaves themes both of maintaining the cosmic order against the turbulent waters of chaos and the barren season of death and of combat associated with new deities arising from social and political change.

In the Canaanite myth, a new and possibly Akkadian outsider, whose name is Ba'al Haddad or Lord enters the situation in hated competition with Asherah and her children by El. He is a young, warlike god of wind and thunderstorms and thus fertility itself. Unlike El, he is not judicious, frequently figuring in situations from which he must be saved. In this respect he displays a significant parallel to Dumuzi (Tammuz) among the Mesopotamians, which will prove to be of significance. He also has the hideous attribute of devouring his own children, consistent with infanticide practices of several semitic patron gods.

Initially Ba'al and Anat are members of El's court. Ba'al attacks El by surprise and castrates him, assuming the power of his fertility. In effect, Ba'al becomes the central intermediary of paternal cosmic order ... "it is Ba'al's responsibility to ensure El's benevolent intention is realized", but he does not replace the primal creative power of El.

El, who loves all the Gods, now calls on his children as chaos gods to avenge his displacement. His son Yamm, Lord of the Sea and the mythical ocean of chaos lying beyond the ordered world, terrorizes the gods into giving up Baal. But Ba'al refuses and conquers Yamm, Ba'al now emerging as the God who overcomes the waters of chaos.

Mot, the next offspring, who is Lord of the Underworld and the barren season then defeats Ba'al, enraging Ba'al's consort Anath, who ironically in the Ugarit form of the myth enters the fray as a Death Goddess upholding the paternal order. When Mot refuses to revive Ba'al, Anath kills and dismembers him, scattering his remains over the land. Baal, now revived, undertakes a full-scale war against all the other gods, who are now referred to as the "Sons of Asherah," and is victorious. The death of Mot is conceived in a seven year cycle as representing the end of seven years of drought and famine.

In her role of Goddess of War and Death, Anath's lust for blood is unbounded: "Anat kills the people living in valleys, in cities and on the seashore and in the land of sunrise, until the cut off heads of soldiers were reaching to her belt and she was wading up to her waist in blood. Violently she smites and gloats, Anat cuts them down and gazes; her liver exhaults in mirth ... for she plunges her knees in the blood of soldiers, her loins in the gore of warriors,

till she has had her fill of slaughtering in the house, of cleaving among the tables." After which, she, the Progenetress of Nations washed her hands of the blood of the slain, in dew and rain supplied by her brother Ba'al." (Walker 29, Cohn 1993 126)

"Anath was fertilized by the blood of men, rather than semen, because her worship dated all the way back to the neolithic, when fatherhood was unknown and blood was considered the only substance which could transmit life. Hecatombs of [100] men seem to have been sacrificed to Anath when her image was reddened with rouge and henna for the occasion. Like the Lady of the Serpent Skirt, Anath hung the shorn penises of her victims on her goatskin apron or aegis." "Anath's capacity to curse and kill made even the Heavenly Father afraid of her. When El seemed reluctant to do her bidding, she threatened to smash his head and cover his grey hair and beard with gore. He hastily gave her everything she asked, saying 'Whoever hinders thee will be crushed' " (Walker 30).

In the mythical cycle, "Mot too is [now] revived and once again challenges Baal to single combat. In the midst of the fighting, however, the sun-goddess, Spsi (Shapash), intervenes, advising Mot that no further combat is needed because El is now on the side of Baal. El, always patriarchal and judicious, has discerned that Baal in his defeat and resurrection has manifested a new form of order; as a patriarchal deity El must uphold this new order. The decree is made that Baal will rule during the seasons of fertility and Mot during the seasons of sterility and drought." - Grollier

There are many implications of this mythical cycle that underly the events of the Bible and overshadow and cast the die for the Christian heritage (Grollier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1993):

- **Firstly:** "the myth forms a watershed for the understanding of myth and history throughout the Near East. "Egyptian, Hittite, Hurrian, and Ugaritic myths are present in this cycle. Moreover, Hesiod clearly made use of some of these mythological elements in his Theogony; Baal, Yamm, and Mot are directly related to Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades."
- **Secondly:** "although the Old Testament contains a polemic against Baal, Asherah, and Astarte, some of the elements and practices of the Hebrews are best understood within the context of Canaanite mythology."
- **Thirdly:** Anath as the death twin of Mari Lady of Birth, and the destroyer of the dying and reviving Mot plays a central, if concealed role in the crucifixion psychodrama.

"Anath annually cast her death-curse anathema on the Canaanite god", fulfilling Mot's slaying of Ba'al and his destruction in turn by her. Mot stood for the barren season that slew its own fertile twin Aleyin, the son of Ba'al. "In typical sacred-king style Mot-Aleyin was the son of the virgin Anath and also the bridegroom of his own mother. Like Jesus the Lamb of God, Aleyin said 'I am the lamb which is made ready with pure wheat to be sacrificed in expiation.' " (Walker 31 [Larousse]).

"After Aleyin's death, Anath resurrects him and sacrifices Mot, telling him he has been forsaken by his heavenly father El." This is precisely the same father to whom Jesus cried " 'Eloi Eloi lama sabaschthani' - 'El El why hast thou forsaken me?' ... and some said 'Behold he calleth for Elias' and one ran and filled a sponge with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, 'Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down'. And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost." (Walker 31, Mark 15:34)

"The sacred drama included a moment when Anath broke Mot's reed scepter, to signify his castration, again foreshadowing a detail of the Christian Gospels. ... Naturally the god-killing Anath was much diabolized in patriarchal legends. Abyssinian Christians called her Aynat "the evil eye of earth". They said she was an old witch destroyed by Jesus, who commanded that she must be burned and her ashes scattered on the wind." (Walker 31)

St. Paul's excommunication curse "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha derives from the more ancient curse of Anath:

Ana-tithenai: to set up, dedicate [a curse], maranatha: Our Lord [bridegroom], come.

Another pertinent deity, because of his relationship to Sin, or Nannar, the God of Abraham is [Yarikh the moon god](#). The illuminator of myriads (of stars), 'lamp of heaven', possibly also the crescent moon and 'lord of the sicle' and thereby the father of the Kotharat. He is patron of the city Qart-Abilim. Like Sin, he is a dedicated courtier. After sunset he embraces Nikkal-and-Ib (Ningal) and becomes determined to marry her. He refuses the daughters of Baal and presents a lavish brideprice to Nikkal-and-Ib's family and the two are wed. Baal-Hadad's creatures devour his handmaidens, so he sends them to El. El tells them to go into the wilderness and there birth horned buffalo, which will distract Baal-Hadad.

Nikkal-and-Ib 'great lady and clear/bright/fruit' or 'Great goddess of fruit'. She is possibly the daughter of Dagon of Tuttul, or else of Khirhib. She is romanced by Yarikh and marries him after Yarikh arranges a brideprice with Khirhib and pays it to her parents.

Kotharat (was thought to be Kathirat) 'skillful'. They are a group of goddesses associated with conception and childbirth. '...The swallow-like daughters of the crescent moon.' They are also associated with the new moon. They attend Daniel for seven days to aid in the conception of Aqhat and receive his sacrifice.

Mythical Beginnings and the Evolution of God:

The earliest reliable historical records of the Jews date from around 1200 BC in unfortified villages in hill country far from Canaanite coastal cities. These may have been immigrants from Edom and Moab. The term Hapiru in Egyptian or Hibri (Hebrew) means "the people from beyond" those living on the fringes of society. It is a social rather than an ethnic term. Ramesses II (1304-1237) coopted Hapiru to work on his new capital. Some of these may have migrated in a way mythically described in Exodus. (Cohn 1993 129 Reinach 181)

The Pentateuch, the first five chapters of the Old Testament are unfortunately a collection which was edited between 600 and 100 BC to fit the beliefs and experiences of the current authors, so one can only take them as a figurative account. A variety of ages are given for four original authors listed as J (Jahweh) 9th cent, E (Elohim) 8th cent, D (Deuteronomy) 7th, and P(Priestly) 5th century. All these dates are historically long after the events, however the juxtaposed accounts of these disparate authors gives an underlying account of changing attitudes to generation, sacrifice and deity. The early ages of the Old Testament, before about 1200 BC, including Noah, who has a clear precedent in Sumerian Utanapishtim, illustrated below, Abraham, Jacob and even Moses must thus be regarded as mythical. (Cohn 44, Jay 94)

"Disturbed by the sounds of mankind, the gods, led by Enlil, set forth a deluge. Enki (or Ea) saves the world by warning Ziusudra (Utnapishtim), a dedicated king constantly seeking divine revelations in dreams or incantations, to make an ark and to "make every kind of living creature go up into the ship". The flood frightens even the Gods. The Goddess Inanna (Ishtar) laments for man, sending lightning and the covenant of the rainbow against Enlil. "

With regard to the return from exile, Lysimachus (360-281 BC) also mentions an Egyptian expulsion of Hapiru after the outbreak of a disfiguring disease. Tacitus (56-115 AD) mentions that one Moyses led such a band and "warned them not to look for any relief from god or man, but to trust themselves, taking for their heaven-sent leader that man who should first help them to be quit of their present misery". He records that they successfully displaced another people and founded a city and temple. (Walker 676)

Nevertheless these early writings do reveal a great deal about the transition that occurred early in the founding history of the twelve tribes of Israel. In addition to this involving evolution and change in their ideas of deity, this also emerged from a dynamic tension during a transition between matrilineal and patrilineal lines of generation, which underly the evolution of paternal diety.

Briffault (v1 372) comments: "the Jewish rabbis themselves, at a comparatively late date acknowledged that the four patriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah had occupied a more important position than the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. According to Robertson Smith the tribe of Levi was originally metronymous (matrilineal), being the tribe of Leah."

Before contemplating bring back the ancient genetic mother, we should all stop to consider what it is we do want to bring back, lest we make the same mistake made in ancient times and confuse the blood of male sacrifice with the essential fertility principal necessary for our own survival. Lets us bring back the Eve of the eternal germ-line and the synchronistic goddess Leucothea of the sub-conscious mind as a shekhinah of visionary reflection, without the primitive gore of self-mutilation. These passages thus stand as a shrine to the spilled blood of the past and as a warning to those who would seek to bring back the goddess without due caution.

EVE the "Mother of all Living" has many faces spread through diverse cultures. Barbara Walker notes that "She is Adita Eve - the very beginning. Babylonians referred to her as the Divine Lady of Eden or Goddess of the Tree of Life. ... She is Kali-ma as Jagannmata the Creatress of all manifested forms. ... The original Eve had no spouse except the serpent, a living phallus she created for her own sexual pleasure." She is thus also the fearsome Toltce Lady of the Serpent Skirts. Since the old neolithic Goddess fertilized herself with the blood of men and bulls, the sacrificial aspect of her relations with men, in addition to her coquetish lack of regard for paternity, can be singled out as a causative influence on rise of the paternalistic views of the Old Testament.

First Face Europe: Ancient Crete and Cybele Mother of All Living

The Goddess of Crete: One of the more creative archetypes of EVE is the Snake Goddess of Crete. Although she is doubtless the coquetish Goddess of love who worships sexuality, freely walks among her attendant lovers, and never allows her kings to grow old, she has given life to a peaceful, abundant and long-lived society.

"Minoan arts crafts and poetry were unparalleled in the ancient world for their beauty and refinement. ... The artistic tradition of Crete was unique in the Mediterranean world, expressing a sensitivity and delight in all that was alive. ... Hesiod, the eight century Greek poet, sang of Crete, the golden land where 'the earth poured forth its fruits unbidden in boundless plenty' In peaceful ease they kept their lands with good abundance, rich in flocks and ... did not worship the gods of war.' ... Protected by the sea from invasion, the islanders were able to seek trade, rather than make war to hold on to their wealth."

It was first settled around 7000 BC from a culture commensurate with the of [Catal Hoyuk](#). The Minoan culture circa 3500 BC emerged from further interaction with populations from Anatolia and Libya, and peaking around 2500 BC, continued until the Mycenians invaded around 1500 BC.



The Goddess of the slit Poppies indicates opium was used as a religious sacrament.

The priestess is paid homage by her male attendants.

The bull has a central role both in bull leaping, in the counterpoint between the pregnant hill and the bull's horns, and bull sacrifice, as a principle of virility (Gadon).

"The Cretans saw the supreme divine power in terms of the feminine principle, and incarnate in a woman they portrayed as exactly like one of themselves ... comfortable with her beauty and her power." "This dedication to a goddess involved also a glorification of the meaning of sex. Fertility and abundance were the purpose and desire, sex was the instrument. ... Women were the central subjects, and those portrayed most frequently were shown in the public sphere. ... A number of scholars are convinced that Crete was a matriarchy, a theocracy ruled by a queen priestess. No single representation of a king or dominant male god has yet been found. ... In miniature scenes not only is the goddess always the central figure, she is sometimes sitting on a throne. ... For rituals, men and women often dressed alike, implying that their roles [may have been] interchangeable" (Gadon 87).

Women alone figure as priestesses. "There are numerous representations of men in Minoan art, but they are all engaged in subordinate occupations: cup bearers, pages, musicians, harvesters, soldiers and sailors. Not once odes it depict a king, prince or hero, or show a man in a position of domination. The female figures on the other hand invariably exhibit an attitude of self-possessed independence" (Gadon 90).

"The mother's brother occupies an important position and is responsible for bringing up the children." Women had ritual sexual licence. This of course meant that few men knew who their own children were, nor had anything to

do with fostering their well-being, as was the case in Athens until the time of Eumenides. (Briffault v1 251).

Despite its cultural maturity, Crete appears to have followed the Mesopotamian tradition of ritual sacrifice of kings. Barbara Walker comments "Myths suggest a similar seven year period for each king of Crete. Cretan king were never allowed to grow old; they always died in the full bloom of youth." The Labrys, or double headed axe, cannot conceal its sacrificial implications.

Riane Eisler, despite extolling Crete as a founding 'partnership society' "In Crete for the last time in recorded history, a spirit of harmony between woman and men as joyful and equal participants in life appears to pervade" and quoting Reynold Higgins "Religion for Cretans was a happy affair ... closely bound up with their recreation.", nevertheless concedes "it is important to stress that Crete was not an ideal society, or utopia, but a real human society, complete with problems and imperfections ... we know for instance that Cretans had weapons." (Eisler 1987 29-36)



Seal 1500 BC shows a group of priestesses gathering in a grove,
the double-headed axe, the poppy, lily, iris and crocus.
The poppy was used for both religious and medicinal purposes (Gadon).

The Legend of the Minotaur is a tangled tale seen through the lenses of cultural conflict. Bulls were sacrificed to the lunar goddess in Crete from a very early date. In a reversal of destiny, Europa the Full Moon Goddess of the Continent, rather than sacrificing the bull, is taken by Zeus as a bull and raped. Because of the greed of her son King Minos, his wife Pasiphae became infatuated with a bull, producing the Minotaur as offspring. A tribute of seven youths and seven maidens every ninth year was demanded from Athens. Although King Minos represents a Crete already transformed by Mycenaean invasion, the voyage of Theseus follower of Apollo, his defeat of the Minotaur, and the abdication of Ariadne spelt the mythological death blow for the way of the Cretan Moon Goddess. Klidemos, by contrast said that Ariadne negotiated a peace treaty with Athens. She also becomes the mythical consort of Dionysus.

Cybele: One of the most exotic deities introduced into Rome was the Great Mother (Magna Mater), borrowed from Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in 204BC.

The following passages marked in quotes come from Frazer (1890 v4/1 263). "Her divine consort is Attis. He was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis, he appears to have been a god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring.' The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them. Attis was said to have been a fair young shepherd or herdsman beloved by Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, a great Asiatic goddess of fertility, who had her chief home in Phrygia.' Some held that Attis was her son.' His birth, like that of many other heroes, is said to have been miraculous. His mother, Nana, was a virgin, who conceived by putting a ripe almond or a pomegranate in her bosom. Indeed in the Phrygian cosmogony an almond figured as the father of all things, perhaps because its delicate lilac blossom is one of the first heralds of the spring, appearing on the bare boughs before the leaves have opened. Such tales of virgin mothers are relics of an age of when men had not yet recognized the intercourse of the sexes as the true cause of offspring."

"Even in later times, when people are better acquainted with the laws of nature, they sometimes imagined that these laws may be subject to exceptions, and that miraculous beings may be born in miraculous ways by women who have never known a man. In Palestine to this day it is believed that a woman may conceive by a jinn or by the spirit of her dead husband."

"Two different accounts of the death of Attis were current. According to the one he was killed by a boar, like Adonis. According to the other he unmanned himself under a pine-tree, and bled to death on the spot. The legend of which the story forms a part is stamped with a character of rudeness and savagery that speaks strongly for its antiquity. In like manner the worshippers of Adonis abstained from pork, because a boar had killed their god.' After his death Attis is said to have been changed into a pine-tree."



The sacred tree of Attis (Henderson & Oakes).

"On the twenty-second day of March, a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a great divinity. The duty of carrying the sacred tree was entrusted to a guild of Tree-bearers. The trunk was swathed like a corpse with woollen bands and decked with wreaths of violets, for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as roses and anemones from the blood of Adonis and the effigy of a young man, doubtless Attis himself, was tied to the middle of the stem. The second day was marked by a blast of trumpets."

"The third day, the twenty-fourth of March, was known as the Day of Blood: the Archigallus or high-priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering.' Nor was he alone in making this bloody sacrifice. Stirred by the wild barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns, and screaming flutes, the inferior clergy whirled about in the dance with wagging heads and streaming hair, until, rapt into a frenzy of excitement and insensible to pain, they gashed their bodies with potsherds or slashed them with knives in order to bespatter the altar and the sacred tree with their flowing blood.' The ghastly rite probably formed part of the mourning for Attis and may have been intended to strengthen him for the resurrection. Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement they dashed the severed portions of themselves against the image of the cruel goddess."

"These broken instruments of fertility were afterwards reverently wrapped up and buried in the earth or in subterranean chambers sacred to Cybele, where, like the offering of blood, they may have been deemed instrumental in recalling Attis to life and hastening the general resurrection of nature, which was then bursting into leaf and blossom in the vernal sunshine. Some confirmation of this conjecture is furnished by the savage story that the mother of Attis conceived by putting in her bosom a pomegranate sprung from the severed genitals of a man-monster named Agdistes, a sort of double of Attis."

"Other Asiatic goddesses of fertility were served in like manner by eunuch priests. These feminine deities required to receive from their male ministers, who personated the divine lovers, the means of discharging their beneficent functions: they had themselves to be impregnated by the life-giving energy before they could transmit it to the world. Goddesses thus ministered to by eunuch priests were the great Artemis of Ephesus and the great Syrian Astarte of Hierapolis. The unsexed priests of this Syrian goddess resembled those of Cybele so closely that some people took them to be the same."

"The greatest festival of the year at Hierapolis fell at the beginning of spring, when multitudes thronged to the sanctuary from Syria and the regions round about. While the flutes played, the drums beat, and the eunuch priests slashed themselves with knives, the religious excitement gradually spread like a wave among the crowd of onlookers, and many a one did that which he little thought to do when he came as a holiday spectator to the festival. For man after man, his veins throbbing with the music, his eyes fascinated by the sight of the streaming blood, flung his garments from him, leaped forth with a shout, and seizing one of the swords which stood ready for the purpose, castrated himself on the spot."

"Then he ran through the city holding the bloody pieces in his hand, till he threw them into one of the houses which he passed in his mad career. The household thus honoured had to furnish him with a suit of female attire and female ornaments which he wore for the rest of his life. When the tumult of emotion had subsided, and the man had come to himself again, the irrevocable sacrifice must often have been followed by passionate sorrow and lifelong regret."

"The parallel of these Syrian devotees confirms the view that in the similar ' worship of Cybele the sacrifice of virility took place on the Day of Blood at the vernal rites of the goddess, when the violets, supposed to spring from the red drops of her wounded lover, were in bloom among the pines. Indeed the story that Attis unmanned himself under a pine-tree was clearly devised to explain why his priests did the same beside the sacred violet-wreathed tree at his festival."

"At all events, we can hardly doubt that the Day of Blood witnessed the mourning for Attis over an effigy of him which was afterwards buried.' Throughout the period of mourning the worshippers fasted from bread, nominally because Cybele had done so in her grief for the death of Attis; but really perhaps for the same reason which induced the women of Harran to abstain from eating anything ground in a mill while they wept for Tammuz. To partake of bread or flour at such a season might have been deemed a wanton profanation of the bruised and broken body of the god. Or the fast may possibly have been a preparation for a sacramental meal."

"But when night had fallen, the sorrow of the worshippers was turned to joy. For suddenly a light shone in the darkness: the tomb was opened: the Lord had risen from the dead; and as the priest touched the lips of the weeping mourners with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation. The resurrection of the god was hailed by his disciples as a promise that they too would issue triumphant from the corruption of the grave."

"On the morrow, the twenty-fifth day of March, which was reckoned the vernal equinox, the divine resurrection was celebrated with a wild outburst of glee. At Rome, and probably elsewhere, the celebration took the form of a carnival. It was the Festival of joy (Hilaria). A universal licence prevailed. Every man might say and do what he pleased. People went about the streets in disguise. No dignity was too high or too sacred for the humblest citizen to assume with impunity."

"The next day, the twenty-sixth of March, was given to repose, which must have been much needed after the varied excitements and fatigues of the preceding days.' Finally, the Roman festival closed on the twenty-seventh of March with a procession to the brook Almo. The silver image of the goddess, with its face of jagged black stone, sat in a wagon drawn by oxen. Preceded by the nobles walking barefoot, it moved slowly, to the loud music of pipes and tambourines, out by the Porta Capena, and so down to the banks of the Almo, which flows into the Tiber just below the walls of Rome. There the high-priest, robed in purple, washed the wagon, the image, and the other sacred objects in the water of the stream. On returning from their bath, the wain and the oxen were strewn with fresh spring flowers. All was mirth and gaiety. No one thought of the blood that had flowed so lately' (Frazer 1890 v4/1 263).



Cybele and an image of her procession through Rome (Willis).

Many Roman writers described Cybele's arrival in Rome and the fantastic events that surrounded it. The following account is drawn largely from the poet Ovid, writing in the 1st century BC (Willis 171). Hoping for victory in their war against the Carthaginians under Hannibal, the Romans consulted a local oracle, which gave a strange response: "The mother is absent: seek the mother. When she comes, she must be received by chaste hands." Puzzled, they applied to the Greek oracle at Delphi for a second opinion, and the oracle advised that they should "fetch the Mother of the Gods, who is to be found on Mount Ida". So they sent an embassy to King Attalus, in whose territory Mount Ida stood, and asked if they might remove the cult image of the Great Mother to Rome. Attalus refused permission, but then the goddess herself miraculously spoke, saying that it was her own wish to go. Awed by these words, the king gave his consent and a boat was then built to carry the precious cargo. The long voyage across the Mediterranean ended at Ostia, Rome's port at the mouth of the Tiber, where all the citizens came to meet the goddess. Men tried to pull the boat to shore, but it was grounded on a mudbank and could not be shifted. The Romans were afraid they would not be able to fulfil the terms of the oracle. But then Claudia Quinta came forward - a noblewoman who was wrongly accused of being unchaste, on the grounds that dressed too elegantly and had too ready tongue in arguments with men. Knowing herself to be innocent she stepped into the river mouth and held up her hands in prayer to the Great Mother. "If I am innocent of all charges," she exclaimed, "yield, goddess, to my chaste hands." She then drew in the boat effortlessly, and the cult image was escorted to its new temple.

The Romans always had mixed feelings about the Great Mother. On the one hand, her ecstatic cult, with its self-castrated Priests, wild music and dancing, seemed foreign in character. On the other hand, because her homeland near Troy was the ultimate origin of the Roman race (according to the Aeneas I end), she was seen as a "native" deity.

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Second Face India: Kali the Dark Mother of Time

- [An Hymnal to Kali](#)
- [The River of the Sadhu](#) **The Tradition of Indian Philosophy**
- [LOVING THE GODDESS in HINDUISM](#) Nancy M. Martin **Love Sex and Gender in the World Religions**

An illustration of the full force of the sacrificial cycle of EVE surviving unchanged to modern times is seen in Kali the black mother, and the meriahs of modern tribal sacrificial cults of the great mother. The Indus Valley civilizations which preceded the Aryan conquests and the introduction of the Rig Veda and its brahmanic warrior cultures from the north demonstrate the same themes we have seen in Sumeria. We see the counterpoint between the sacrificial goddess of the "bodhi" tree, and the King of the Beasts, who already displays the yogic posture, so central to Eastern mysticism.



The goddess of the sacred grove, the king of the beasts, the sacrifice.
Indus Valley 2000 BC (Campbell 1962 166-9).

The complementation of female and male becomes the central **Tantric theme of creation**, as it is in many earth mother - sky father myths, except here the eternal unity of the cosmos in embracing sexual union retreats so that the female objective reality separates from the male subjective, and in her dance of illusion, her womb generates the divided world of objects in space and time.

Kali, along with Kan, Durga "difficult of approach" the terrible one of many names, is a manifestation of the dark mother of the Deccan, whose stomach is a void which can never be filled and gorges blood and death and from whose womb life ever springs anew demonstrates the full force of destruction possessed by the ancient mother. "A river of blood has been pouring continuously for millennia, from beheaded offerings, through channels carved to return it, still living, to its divine source." Not content with destroying the demons which threaten the cosmic order, she becomes so drunk with blood on the battlefield that she begins to destroy the world. She holds the severed head of Shiva, from whose neck run the waters of new life. She is pictured copulating with him as the corpse, or standing on his prostrate body (Campbell 1962 171, Mookerjee61).



Hungry pregnant Kali (Wosien).

" It is she alone who is known as Maha-Kali (Mighty Time), Nitya-Kali (Endless Time), Shmashana-Kali (Kali of the Burning-ground), Raksha-Kali (Guardian Kali), and Shyama- Kali (the Black One). ... When there were neither the creation, nor the sun, the moon, the planets, and the earth, and when darkness was enveloped in darkness, then the Mother, the Formless One, Maha-Kali, the Great Power, was one with Maha-Kala, the Absolute. Shyama-Kali has a somewhat tender aspect. ... the Dispenser of boons and the Dispeller of fear. People worship Raksha-Kali, the Protectress, in times of epidemic, famine, earthquake, drought, and flood. Shmashana-Kali is the embodiment of the power of destruction. She resides in the cremation ground, surrounded by corpses, jackals, and terrible female spirits. From her mouth flows a stream of blood, from her neck hangs a garland of human heads, and around her waist is a girdle made of human hands. After the destruction of the universe, at the end of the great cycle, the Divine Mother garners the seeds for the next creation." In her disciple, Ramakrishna's words "Oh she plays in different ways. ... Bondage and liberation are both of her making. ... She is called the Saviour, and the Remover of the bondage that binds one to the world. ... She is self-willed and must always have her own way. She is full of bliss." It is no irony that Ramakrishna entered into his three-day maha-samadhi while contemplating destroying himself with her sword, because the cosmic mother is a perfectly powerful agent for death realization (Campbell 1962 165).



Kali copulating with Shiva's corpse, Yoni-lingam, Kali-ghat statue showing the goddess with blood covered tongue trampling on Shiva's corpse, holding a severed head and wearing a necklace of skulls (Rawson, Mookerjee).

"To this day seven or eight hundred goats are slaughtered in three days in the Kalighat, the principal temple of the goddess in Calcutta, during her autumn festival, the Durga Puja. The heads are piled before the image, and the bodies go to the devotees, to be consumed in contemplative communion. Before the prohibition of human sacrifice in 1835, she received from every part of the land even richer fare. In the towering Shiva temple of Tanjore a male child was beheaded before the altar of the goddess every Friday at the holy hour of twilight. In the year 1830, a petty monarch of Bastar, desiring her grace, offered on one occasion twenty-five men at her altar in Dantesh-vari and in the sixteenth century a king of Cooch Behar immolated a hundred and fifty in that place" (Campbell 1962 5).

"In Assam it was the custom of a certain royal house to offer one human victim at the Durga Puja every year. After having bathed and purified himself, the sacrifice was dressed in new attire, daubed with red sandalwood and vermillion, arrayed with garlands, and, thus bedecked, installed upon a raised dais before the image, where he spent some time in meditation, repeating sacred sounds, and, when ready, made a sign with his finger. The executioner, likewise pronouncing sacred syllables, ... struck off the man's head, which was immediately presented to the Goddess on a golden plate. The lungs, being cooked, were consumed by yogis, and the royal family partook of a small quantity of rice steeped in the sacrificial blood." (Campbell 1962 5)

"A vivid typical lesson is supplied, for example, by the Khonds ... who had victims known as meriah, set apart and often kept for years, who were offered to the Earth Goddess, Tara, to ensure good crops and immunity from disease. To be acceptable, such a figure had to have been either purchased or else born as the child of a meriah. The Khonds, according to report, occasionally sold their own children for this sacrifice, supposing that in death their souls would be singularly blessed. ... They were regarded as consecrated beings and treated with extreme affection and respect, and were available for sacrifice either on extraordinary occasions or at the periodic feasts, before the sowing; so that each family in the village might procure at least once a year a shred of flesh to plant in its field for the boosting of its crop" (Campbell 1962 160).



Shrine of the Earth Mother, Bolhai Megalith, Madhya Pradesh (Mookerjee 12)

"Ten or twelve days before the offering, the victim was dedicated, shorn of his hair, and anointed with oil, butter, and turmeric. A season of wild revelry and debauchery followed, at the end of which the meriah was conducted with music and dancing to the meriah grove, a little way from the village, a stand of mighty trees untouched by the axe. Tied there to a post and once more anointed with oil, butter, and turmeric, the victim was garlanded with flowers, while the crowd danced around him, chanting, to the earth: 'O Goddess, we offer to thee this sacrifice; give to us good seasons, crops, and health'; and to the victim: 'We bought thee with a price, we did not seize thee, and now, according to custom, we sacrifice thee: no sin rests upon us.' A great struggle to secure magical relics from the decorations of his person flowers or turmeric-or a drop of his spittle, ensued, and the orgy continued until about noon the following day, when the time came, at last, for the consummation of the rite" (Campbell 1962 160).

"The victim was again anointed with oil ... and each person touched the anointed part, and wiped the oil on his own head. In some places they took the victim in procession round the village, from door to door, where some plucked hair from his head, and others begged for a drop of his spittle, with which they anointed their heads. As the victim might not be bound nor make any show of resistance, the bones of his arms and, if necessary, his legs were broken; but often this precaution was rendered unnecessary by stupefying him with opium. The mode of putting him to death varied in different places. One of the commonest modes seems to have been strangulation, or squeezing to death. The branch of a green tree was cleft several feet down the middle; the victim's neck (in other places, his chest) was inserted in the cleft, which the priest, aided by his assistants, strove with all his force to close. Then he wounded the victim slightly with his ax, whereupon the crowd rushed at the wretch and hewed the flesh from the bones, leaving the head and bowels untouched. Sometimes he was cut up alive. In Chinna Kimedy he was dragged along the fields, surrounded by the crowd, who, avoiding his head and intestines, hacked the flesh from his body with their knives till he died" (Campbell 1962 160).



A GOND ring used as a ritual object in fertilizing the new crops and to ensure the future fertility of a bride on her marriage. It includes the yoni-lingam, buffalo, well and grain sheaf (Art Collection).

Another very common mode of sacrifice in the same district was to fasten the victim to the proboscis of a wooden elephant, which revolved on a stout post, and, as it whirled round, the crowd cut the flesh from the victim while life remained. ... In one district the victim was put to death slowly by fire. A low stage was formed sloping on either side like a roof; upon it they laid the victim, his limbs wound round with cords to confine his struggles. Fires were then lighted and hot brands applied, to make him roll up and down the slopes of the stage as long as possible; for the more tears he shed the more abundant would be the supply of ram. Next day the body was cut to pieces. ... Each head of a house rolled his shred of flesh in leaves, and buried it in his favourite field, placing it in the earth behind his back without looking (Campbell 1962 160).

Girl sacrificed 31-1-1997

Indian police say a couple sacrificed a neighbour's six- year-old daughter to the goddess Kali in the hope it would give them a child of their own. A village witch who told them it was the only way for them to have children was also arrested.

Third Face Pre-Columbian America: The Lady of the Serpent Skirts

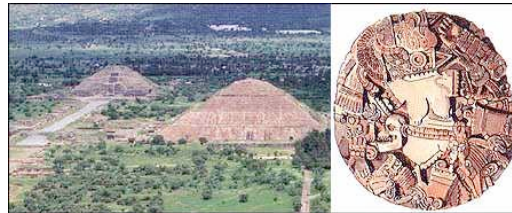
The warrior [Aztecs](#) likewise are supported ultimately by the destructive forces of the great mother. The lust for human sacrifice was again based on the cosmic cycle, indeed was necessary for the cosmos to continue in its course. "As Earth and as Woman her appearances and her effects were excessively concrete and simple. She did not invite thought or tease the creative fancy. She was the epitome of both terror and bounty and her worshippers experienced her as a whole being, one basically beyond definition. It is true that, because she included so many aspects of the divine, she could and did evolve a multitude of epithetical variations and trans-figurations. But she easily resumed her unique identity and was always all-inclusive. She was Tlaltecuitli, Earth Lady, the palpable rock and soil and slime upon which men moved and into which they were lowered at death. But her impact on the Aztecs was a religious seizure and terror ... she was depicted as a gargantuan toad slavering blood with clashing jaws at every joint. She represented chaos. The nurse and nourishing goddesses as well as flower feather, the virgin goddess of spring and sex were of a lighter more fond nature" (Brundage 166).



Coatlque Lady of the Serpent [penis] Skirts, the mother of the Aztec war god Huitzilopochtli who sprung from her womb at the moment of her murder. Her head is composed of blood serpents pouring from her severed throat, her pendulous breasts are partly obscured behind a grisly necklace of severed hearts and hands. Xipe-totec the flayed god illustrates how human life in the sacrificial cycle became a skin easily shed and renewed. Sacrificial victims were flayed and a priest would don the skin as part of the ritual (Miller & Taube, Willis).

"There is a group of goddesses bound together by their common hideousness and thirst for blood. ... The semicivilized cultures of the northern steppe delineated these goddesses with truly monumental power. The later Aztecs were to refine upon these attributes but they did not substantially change them. These goddesses are Coatlicue, Serpent Skirt; Cihuacoatl, Snake Woman; and Itzpapalotl, Obsidian Knife Butterfly. Serpent Skirt ... is described as black, dirty, dishevelled, and of shocking ugliness, as befits a creature of the underground. In the myth she is the mountain itself, the Earth Mother who conceives all the celestial beings out of her cavernous womb: Huitzilopochtli, the sun; Coyolxauhqui, the moon; and the Huitznahua, the host of stars. We conclude that in the myth Serpent Skirt is a locus rather than a power, being the dark world from which all beings spring and within whose body the terrible conflict takes place. Serpent Skirt is associated with Tula and in the *Annales de Cuauhtitlan* is brought into connection with the fateful confrontation there between Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca" (Brundage 166).

Snake Woman has some claim to be considered the most feared and effective of all the goddesses. She was there to trigger those wars over which her son, as the god of war, presided. He was the doer and the victory bringer, she the inciter. This goddess is presented to us as a being almost as horrifying as her alter ego, Coatlicue. The lower part of her face is shown as a crude bare jawbone, and the grisly mouth is stretched wide to indicate her hunger for victims. Her hair is long and stringy, and two knives form a kind of diadem on her forehead. She is clothed and painted in chalky white. She was referred to as a horror and a devourer: she brought nothing but misery and toil and death. Sacrificial death, symbolized by the knife, was her issue - not the issue of some god of war, as we might logically have expected. As if to nail this down with finality, when the Aztecs told the story of a once perfect happiness, it was the goddess, not the male god and deceiver Tezcatlipoca, who lost paradise. And in her role as Tlazoteotl she became outright carnality with all its attendant disasters. No male god, not even Tezcatlipoca, stood for the sensual with such an emphasis. This bias in the Aztecs' understanding of the Great Mother was not at variance, however, with their understanding of her as a totality, an integrity. Certainly no peoples have so richly elaborated the culture of death as have the Aztecs and, if death held such an influence over their creative efforts, who else but the Mother should patronize that point of view?



(a) Pyramids of the Moon and Sun: Teotihuacan. The sun and moon were believed to be created there in the dawning of the current era (Berrin et. al.). (b) The dismembered Coyolxauhqui (The Moon) at the foot of the stairway leading to Huitzilopochtli's Templo Mayor shrine at Tenochtitlan. Huitzilopochtli as the sun defeats Coyolxauhqui the moon, and his four hundred brothers the stars, thereby creating the fifth "sun" or world era." (Willis)

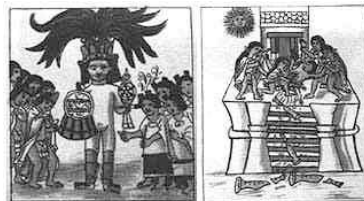
"At Coatepec (the Serpent Hill) near Tula, the sacrificing Aztec war god Huitzilopochtli was magically conceived by Coatlicue, who was impregnated by a ball of down which descended from heaven. Forewarned of an attempt to kill his mother by his sister Coyolxauhqui and his four hundred brothers, Huitzilopochtli sprang from the womb fully formed and painted blue, wielding his flaming fire-serpent, or xiuhcoatl. Cutting off Coyolxauhqui, the Moon's head, and hurling her body down the mountainside, Huitzilopochtli, then routed his brothers, the stars, thereby creating the fifth "sun" or world era" (Willis 242). We thus like the Fall from Eden have the ascendant Sun defeating the Moon Goddess. In a sense, Aztec culture, despite the looming figure of Coatlicue, has made the same paternalistic warrior god mistake of subjugating the knowledge of life to the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence, a desperate cycle of continued sacrifice to keep the sun in its orbit, a failing cosmos, is the Aztec's eventual nemesis. The fact that the Aztec's actually slaughtered the Moon Goddess should be borne very carefully in mind.

By contrast, at the ancient founding centre of Teotihuacan, which lasted from around 200 BC to 700 AD and in 600 was the world's sixth largest city, the sun and moon were celebrated together with two great pyramids in addition to that of Quetzalcoatl, illustrating an original balance between sun and moon. They were believed to have been created by two warriors who sacrificed themselves, thus setting the stage for eternal sacrifice to keep the sun in its course. Quetzalcoatl as the god of the calendar was influential on all the meso-American cultures including the Maya. The founding of the Quetzalcoatl temple was accompanied by an elaborate ritual sacrifice of an apparently calendric nature involving patterns of 9 richly decorated warriors and four plainer maidens totalling in all some 260. Although life was possible more militaristic than the epithet theocratic age would suggest, this pattern of sacrifice is limited to this one founding incident at Teotihuacan (Berrin 1411)

Among the Classic Maya, a young beautiful woman was Moon Goddess and she frequently sits on the crescent of the Maya glyph for moon, bearing the "rabbit in the moon" in her arms. However the Maya also describe the idea that the moon is dimmer because it was wounded by the sun.

The Aztecs had a special type of idol which differed radically in that it was animate and incarnate. This was the *ixiptla*, "image" or "representative," a person who wore the regalia, acted out the part of the god, and then was sacrificed. In the understanding of the Aztecs the gods moved of their own volition among men. In other words their presences were not conjured up by men. Rather the world was a stage common to both men and gods and therefore, once the gods had assumed their masks and had taken concrete forms, they were at home on earth. Men and gods, however disparate in qualities, lived together in territorial symbiosis. The gods could and did inject themselves into static idols in order to maintain a constant presence and a daily cult of service. Among men, however, they moved dynamically as *ixiptla*, entering homes on ceremonial occasions, ascending and descending the temple stairs, dancing in public, receiving the liberality of their worshippers and blessing them, cohabiting with young women reserved for them, feasting, etc. In every case the chosen humans were all or a sufficient part of the regalia of the god in question to be able to dispose of his powers. The *ixiptla* was considered to be the god in person. ... The extra confidence given them by the living presence of the gods was of incalculable support to them in their piety. Every major god or goddess had his or her *ixiptla* (Valliant 176).

In the Feast of the Playing of Men, for instance, each ward in the city of Mexico dressed a slave as the *ixiptla* of the particular deity of that ward. Before the sun had set each one had been sacrificed. On the other hand, the famous *ixiptla* of Tezcatlipoca acted out his part for an entire year, at the end of which, universally honoured, he was destroyed, just like the tanist substitutes for the Mesopotamian Sacred Kings. Even the god of death on his special feast day was impersonated by an *ixiptla* who was duly sacrificed.



The Ixiptla of Tezcatlipoca: Hero and Sacrifice (Valliant, Gruzinski)

"The ceremony in honour of the god Tezcatlipoca was strikingly dramatic, tinged with the pathos with which we view the taking of a life. The handsomest and bravest prisoner of war was selected a year before his execution. Priests taught him the manners of a ruler, and as he walked about, playing divine melodies upon his flute, he received the homage due Tezcatlipoca himself. A month before the day of sacrifice four lovely girls, dressed as goddesses, became his companions and attended to his every want. On the day of his death he took leave of his weeping consorts to lead a procession in his honour, marked by jubilation and feasting. Then he bade farewell to the glittering cortege and left for a small temple, accompanied by the eight priests who had attended him throughout the year. The priests preceded him up the steps of the temple, and he followed, breaking at each step a flute which he had played in the happy hours of his incarnation. At the top of the platform the priests turned him over the sacrificial block and wrenched out his heart. In deference to his former godhood his body was carried, not ignominiously flung, down the steps; but his head joined the other skulls spitted on the rack beside the temple" (Valliant 191).

Like the tears of the year King, "the Aztecs performed a hideous ceremony in honour of the Fire God, Huchuetotl. Prisoners of war and their captors took part in a dance in honour of the god, and the next day the captives ascended to the top of a platform, where a powder, *yauhtli* (Indian hemp), was cast in their faces to anaesthetize them against their ghastly fate. After preparing a great fire, each priest seized a captive and, binding him hand and foot, lifted him on to his back. A macabre dance took place around the burning coals, and one by one they dumped their burdens into the flames. Before death could intervene to put an end to their suffering the priests fished out the captives with large hooks and wrenched the hearts from their blistered bodies" (Valliant 191)

Let us forget that maidens were also sacrificed, although less often than men, consider the *ixiptla* of the corn goddess: "At a great festival in September, which was preceded by a strict fast of seven days, they sanctified a young slave girl of twelve or thirteen years, the prettiest they could find, to represent the Maize Goddess Chicomocuatl. They invested her with the ornaments of the goddess, putting a mitre on her head and maize-cobs round her neck and in her hands, and fastening a green feather upright on the crown of her head to imitate an ear of maize. This they did, we are told, in order to signify that the maize was almost ripe at the time of the festival, but because it was still tender they chose a girl of tender years to play the part of the Maize Goddess" (Campbell 1959 222).

"The whole long day they led the poor child in all her finery, with the green plume nodding on her head, from house to house dancing merrily to cheer people after the dullness and privations of the fast. In the evening all the people assembled at the temple, the courts of which they lit up by a multitude of lanterns and candles. There they passed the night without sleeping, and at midnight, while the trumpets, flutes, and horns discoursed solemn music, a portable framework or palanquin was brought forth, bedecked with festoons of maize-cobs and peppers and rilled with seeds of all sorts. This the bearers set down at the door of the chamber in which the wooden image of the goddess stood. Now the chamber was adorned and wreathed, both outside and inside, with wreaths of maize-cobs, peppers, pumpkins, roses, and seeds of every kind, a wonder to behold; the whole floor was covered deep with these verdant offerings of the pious. When the music ceased, a solemn procession came forth of priests and dignitaries, with flaming lights and smoking censers, leading in their midst the girl who played the part of the goddess." (Campbell 1959 222).

"Then they made her mount the framework, where she stood upright on the maize and peppers and pumpkins with which it was strewn, her hands resting on two banisters to keep her from falling. Then the priests swung the smoking censers round her; the music struck up again, and while it played, a great dignitary of the temple suddenly stepped up to her with a razor in his hand and adroitly shore off the green feather she wore on her head, together

with the hair in which it was fastened, snipping the lock off by the root. The feather and the hair he then presented to the wooden image of the goddess with great solemnity and elaborate ceremonies, weeping and giving her thanks for the fruits of the earth and the abundant crops which she had bestowed on the people that year; and as he wept and prayed, all the people, standing in the courts of the temple, wept and prayed with him. When that ceremony was over, the girl descended from the framework and was escorted to the place where she was to spend the rest of the night" (Campbell 1959 222).

"But all the people kept watch in the courts of the temple by the light of torches till break of day. The morning being come, and the courts of the temple being still crowded by the multitude, who would have deemed it sacrilege to quit the precincts, the priests again brought forth the damsel attired in the costume of the goddess, with the mitre on her head and the cobs of maize about her neck. Again she mounted the portable framework or palanquin and stood on it, supporting herself by her hands on the banisters. Then the elders of the temple lifted it on their shoulders, and while some swung burning censers and others played on instruments or sang, they carried it in procession through the great courtyard to the hall of the god Huitzilopochtli and then back to the chamber, where stood the wooden image of the Maize Goddess, whom the girl personated. There they caused the damsel to descend from the palanquin and to stand on the heaps of corn and vegetables that had been spread in profusion on the floor of the sacred chamber" (Campbell 1959 222).

"While she stood there all the elders and nobles came in a line, one behind the other, carrying saucers full of dry and clotted blood which they had drawn from their ears by way of penance during the seven days' fast. One by one they squatted on their haunches before her, which was the equivalent of falling on their knees with us, and scraping the crust of blood from the saucer cast it down before her as an offering in return for the benefits which she, as the embodiment of the Maize Goddess, had conferred upon them. When the men had thus humbly offered their blood to the human representative of the goddess, the women, forming a long line, did so likewise, each of them dropping on her hams before the girl and scraping her blood from the saucer" (Campbell 1959 222).

"The ceremony lasted a long time, for great and small, young and old, all without exception had to pass before the incarnate deity and make their offering. When it was over, the people returned home with glad hearts to feast on flesh and viands of every sort as merrily, we are told, as good Christians at Easter partake of meat and other carnal mercies after the long abstinence of Lent. And when they had eaten and drunk their fill and rested after the night watch, they returned quite refreshed to the temple to see the end of the festival. And the end of the festival was this" (Campbell 1959 222).

"The multitude being assembled, the priests solemnly incensed the girl who personated the goddess; then they threw her on her back on the heap of corn and seeds, cut off her head, caught the gushing blood in a tub, and sprinkled the blood on the wooden image of the goddess, the wags of the chamber, and the offerings of corn, peppers, pumpkins, seeds, and vegetables which cumbered the floor. After that they flayed the headless trunk, and one of the priests made shift to squeeze himself into the bloody skin. Having done so they clad him in all the robes which the girl had worn; they put the mitre on his head, the necklace of golden maize-cobs about his neck, the maize-cobs of feathers and gold in his hands; and thus arrayed they led him forth in public, all of them dancing to the tuck of drum, while he acted as fugleman, skipping and posturing at the head of the procession as briskly as he could be expected to do, incommoded as he was by the tight and clammy skin of the girl and by her clothes, which must have been much too small for a grown man" (Campbell 1959 222).

The End of Sacrifice

Of course, as time itself, Kali is just the crone we have described. In a sense, every living soul in history has been devoured by her. It is her who is at work when we look in the mirror and see grey hairs appearing overnight. It is also her at work when disease or accident, those manifestations of entropy, strike and sometimes carry us away. But this does not mean that we should slaughter in her name. She will take those who she chooses in her time. It is our duty to placate her as much as possible through harmonious living with nature and through preserving a healing world, not through intentional killing. Neither do we need to offer up our firstborn like many ancient cultures, kill 20,000 people at a time like the Aztecs did to keep the universe in its ordered path, or suffer martyrdom like the Christian and Islamic zealots, to enter directly into heaven.

The limits determined on our part for human sacrifice consist however of the same rites of passage of birth and death, brought more closely into scientific focus: when to allow termination of pregnancy, and when to allow the terminally, or seriously ill, to depart, how to determine which species and which individual organisms to save and protect in a finite, evolving world. These decisions need to be taken carefully by society in full awareness of the circumstances. They cannot be determined by fundamentalistic beliefs and require ethical insight, because in the preservation of the quality of life, all factors need to be accounted with wisdom and foresight.

In the ancient past, sacrifice had many rationales. One was the notion that human beings were merely the servants, surrogates, or even the food of hungry gods. Another deeper one is to maintain fertility and good fortune for the people. It is true that sacrifice, particularly human, can act as a uniquely powerful force to center and align the psychic energy of a people, but there are equally powerful non-destructive ways of doing this. The idea that karma is, or needs to be, driven by destructive acts of sacrifice is false. Good luck is more than equally likely to emerge from healing energy. What is pivotal is the alignment of intent and depth of awareness emerging from the encounter. The most empowering act conceivable is that which celebrates our participation in the Great Becoming - the future golden evolutionary age.

Wisdom and the Tree of Life

Proverb 3:18 grants wisdom as a tree of life. This is an important acknowledgement of the feminine nature of the tree lost to us all:

Wisdom is a tree of life to all who grasp her,
and whoever holds on to her is happy.

In fact wisdom has a concealed status as primal as that of God himself Proverb 8:23:

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;

The Peaceable Kingdom of the Branch

The 'first' Isaiah wrote circa 740-700 BC, although additions by the 'second' Isaiah and possibly others 200 years later added materials to make a composite work. However one passage of the 'first', Isaiah chapter 11, makes a prophecy which will come to have major impact on history. The first part of the prophecy concerns a messiah of the line of David, more precisely his father Jesse:



Miniature of David, Mary and Jesus emerging from the rod out of the stem of Jesse (Cook pl 53)

Isa 11:1 "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Although he will presumably be a king like David, there is nothing to say this person will be a secular or military monarch, just a righteous person of spiritual insight and social justice, who is, perfecting Adam, 'righteous in his loins' and who is faithful, but a sharp speaker. However the really mysterious thing is that he doesn't just bring about a change in the social order, but a profound and very peculiar change in the natural order as well, a biologically impossible 'peaceable kingdom' of childlike innocence, in which the evolutionary roles of the fauna are abrogated, in a manner which later Christian theologians, and possibly Jewish prophets before them, were to associate with the pristine era before original sin caused the Fall:



Durer's Adam and Eve has below a cat about to pounce on a mouse, as Eve grasps the apple. The natural order is about to begin with the fall from innocence (Fedija).

Isa 11:7 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

It is also clear this man will be a signal who will attract the gentiles and become glorious in his death: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." This is one of the older messianic prophecies, but it leads one way only and that is towards a messiah who will undo the Fall, however un-biological the vision of nature is.

The Apocalyptic Heritage

2 Ecc 5:24 "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die." From this passage in Ecclesiasticus, the wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach, we find the first returning references to the dilemma of Eden and the origins of death. The Book of Enoch similarly claims that God created death to punish humanity for Eve's sin (Walker 290).

The theme continues: 33:10 "All men are from the ground, and Adam was created of the dust. In the fullness of his knowledge, the Lord distinguished them and appointed their different ways; ... As clay in the hand of the potter ... so men are in the hand of him who made them, to give them as he decides. Good is the opposite of evil, and life the opposite of death; ... Look upon all the works of the Most High; they likewise are in pairs, one the opposite of the other."

The following reference to the mother of all living reflects Genesis 3:20 in a new way which suggests returning to the ancient mother in death, something which becomes pivotal to her subsequent overthrow in the Crucifixion:40:1 "Much labor was created for every man, and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day they come forth from their mother's womb till the day they return to the mother of all."

In Aramaic, the title Son of *Man bar enas* is 'one in human likeness'. In Hebrew, this is translated *ben adam* son of Adam or son of man (Spong 1994 152). The prophetic son of man of Ezekiel, and the later transcendental *gure* of Daniel and Enoch, who more closely resemble the Aramaic are thus both linked to the archetype of man - the Adam who has become transfigured to become a transcendental saviour.

Standing in the shadow of the myth of the Fall from the Garden, some apocalyptic Jewish thinkers became increasingly troubled by the conflict and misery that they believed had been caused by the sexual origin of death. They believed the life-span was shrinking (it was certainly a lot shorter than Adam's reputed nine hundred and thirty year span) and that malaise was rife. They blamed Adam for giving in to the physical wiles of Eve, who was regarded as the source of original sin and death itself. Over the centuries, as a result of interaction between Babylonian, Persian and Jewish ideas, a great anticipation began to build that this state of affairs could be reversed. The new "King David" of the Jews, who would regain the Jewish kingdom, evolved into a transcendental Messiah.

Following the tradition set on the return from exile, the Essenes expected two messiahs, followed a life of renunciation and regarded the female as, dangerous and potentially evil, to be related to only for producing offspring. They carried with them the spirit of renunciation and penitence stood in the imminence of the apocalyptic end of days and celebrated a meal of bread and wine officiated over by the messiahs. They renounced polygamy and believed in the Genesis 1 account as a description of marriage as we see later in Matthew. They also believed that this messiah would come in the form of 'the Man' the archetypal Adam figure of the collective sourcing from Daniel. The Teacher of Righteousness thus became identified with 'removing the threatening sword from Adam.

The late apocalyptic prophets had inserted into Isaiah, Zechariah and Daniel passages that in combination with several of the Psalms foretold that this Messiah would return as the Suffering Servant or Foolish Shepherd. A Messiah, who unlike the kingly Davidic Messiah would be despised of men pierced and die as an offering to assuage sin. As a sacrificial Messiah, such a prophet not only fulfils the heritage of the Yahwistic prophets, but also in a very archaic way still carried in the Hebrew tradition becomes a sacrificial offering, himself dying to usher in the new eternal Kingdom of the Father. The Messiah had to be both a spiritual leader of his people and also suffer a death of atonement by becoming herem or taboo - coming too close to God, just as Moses who died on the mountain, or accused for 'blaspheming' as the Foolish Shepherd.

This figure became the Elchasaite 'secret Adam' a recurrent supernatural figure illuminating historical figures, such as Jesus. He was supposed to be ninety-six miles high. Little wonder John the Baptist could only stoop to his shoe latchet. This tradition continued with the Ebionite Christians closely linked with the first Jewish Christian tradition of James, Jesus' brother.

Eisenman (427) comments about the continuing 'standing Adam' tradition in early sects: "Hippolytus, in discussing the group he calls the 'Naassenes' ('Sebuaeans' in Epiphanius), also, ties the 'Gate' imagery to the 'Primal Adam' ideology. Saying that, like al-Biruni's 'Sabacans' centuries later, the Naassenes pray towards 'the Dome of Heaven' (that is, the North). Hippolytus notes that, for the Naassenes, 'Adam is the Primal ['First'] Man' and Jesus, 'the True Gate', through whom the Perfect Man enters. As they appear to have believed, 'the Perfect Man is incapable of being saved unless he be born again'. So in all these presentations, 'the Gate to Jesus' is generally connected in some manner to 'the Perfect Man'. Not only do we have here the 'Great' or 'Hidden Power' ideology, but for him, anyhow, 'the Son of Man' is literally 'the Gate of Jesus' or 'Perfect Adam'. Before proceeding, however, it is important to grasp that in Hebrew 'Son of Man' literally is 'Son of Adam' (in Aramaic, 'Son of Enosh') and, therefore, what we have, the reference to the imminent 'coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of Heaven' - in the War Scroll, as we shall see, identified with 'the Heavenly Host' - is basically a more incendiary version of the 'Primal' or 'Perfect Adam' ideology."



The Annunciation of Mary shadowed by the plight of Adam and Eve - Fra Angelico (Morante)
Disruption of the fertility cult by the male deity. Note the dove of Aphrodite in the ray.
Through her chasteness, Mary is attributed to have corrected Eve's carnal sin.

[Back to Consummation of Eden Part 1?](#)

The Second Adam and the Pangs of the Messiah

To quote Barbara Walker: "Take the snake, the fruit-tree, and the woman from the tableau and we have no fall, no frowning Judge, no Inferno, no everlasting punishment - hence no need of a saviour. Thus the bottom falls out of the whole of Christian theology".

I am Eve, great Adam's wife,
'Tis I that outraged Jesus of old;
'Tis I that robbed my children of Heaven,
By rights 'tis I that should have gone upon the Cross ...

There would be no ice in any place,
There would be no glistening windy winter,
There would be no hell, there would be no sorrow,
There would be no fear, if it were not for me.
*Translated from the Celtic original by Kuno Meyer
from Come Hither, ed. W. de la Mare*

Eventually these energies synchronistically culminated in the arrival of the Messiah, who duly and in quite a magical way fulfilled the prophecies. The trouble was that the story of sexual guilt was wrong in two ways:

- (a) Sex is the origin of new life, not the source of death. Entering into mortal combat with original sin will not end death, and worse still, it will fulminate "knowledge of good and evil" into a final Armageddon.
- (b) The expectation of the physical world ending and the advent of the kingdom of spirit without the evils of matter was unrealizable. The Kingdom of the Spirit is always there and always has been, lurking in the dream world and telling us we are the ancient spirits of creation, but to end the realm of matter - the mother completely is a fallacy. It just forces mortality in the flesh, because we are separated from the material unity, and can no longer enter into atonement with the immortal continuity of the life stream.

Jesus thus entered into a tragic alliance with mythical destiny, full of the dawn of new understanding but tortured and doomed because it was subject to the demiurge of the patriarchy:

But he himself was broken
Long before the sky would open

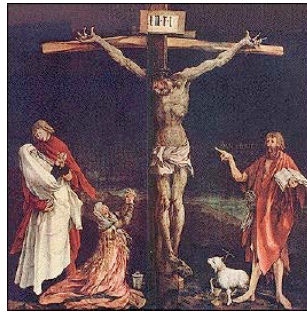
Forsaken, almost human
 He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone
 And you want to travel with him
 And you want to travel blind
 And you think maybe you'll trust him
 For he's touched your perfect body with his mind.
 Leonard Cohen - Suzanne

Although embraced in its most apocalyptic form by the entirely patriarchal and wholly Jewish Essene order, this sacrificial role inherits with it a collision course with the female, and with the physical, in which the ancient themes of sacrifice of the sacred king to the goddess re-emerge. The very gnostic light and darkness of the Essene view of the end of time, the transcendental role of the Messiahs, the Suffering Servant echoed in the haunting history of the Teacher of Righteousness lead to the notion of the doomed atonement Messiah. The mission of Jesus was to bring in the Kingdom of God. He solved the eschatological problem of the twin kingly and priestly Messiahs and the Suffering Servant by becoming a controversial prophet who assumed the burden of sacred king. In doing so he became the atonement sacrifice to undo the original sin of Eve. A death to end the realm of death, which becomes the central purpose of the Christian religion.

The frequent sacrificial references to the Son of Man; Matt 8:20 "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," the Bridegroom; Matt 9:15 "but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them" and finally the Sacred King of the Jews; Matt 27:29 "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" combine to cement a male sacrifice of the most ancient kind, and one which can only meaningfully be understood in relation to Eve the "Mother of all Living", although Yahweh, Abba, or the mysterious Father who demanded such sacrifice of his only-begotten Son is really the one whom we should hold to account.

Already with the annunciation to Mary of the conception of Jesus, the myth of the undoing of the mortal sin of Eve is established, for by remaining "virgin", she has snared Satan into releasing Eve from her ancient bond of sexual union, through which offspring and death came into the world (she was even reputed to have been circumcised).

Hail! sinful Adam's recalling
 Hail! Eve's tears redeeming. ...
 Hail! O Star that bore the Sun.
 Hail! the womb of God enfleshed. ...
 Hail! through whom things made are all new made.
 Hail! Bride unbridled. ...
 Hail! By whom was loosed our sin.
 Hail! by whom was opened Paradise.
 Hail! Key of Christ's Kingdom.
 Hail! Bride unbridled.
 The Akathosis of Mary - Constantinople circa 646



The dead Adam hanging on his accursed tree before the twin aspects of Eve, the 'virgin of purity' in the mother and the 'penitent sinner' in Magdalen Crucifixion (Grunwald - Pevsner and Meier).

Jesus claimed to be the primal incarnation John 8:58 "Before Abraham was, I am." In Luke 3:38 his mythical genealogy is traced back to Adam.

To bring in the Kingdom of the Father, Jesus had to challenge Eve to rejection and die a sacrificial death-to-end-death and to have his hands and feet pierced as foretold in the Psalms. This admittedly Essene attitude results in a religion in which women are evil, sex is carnal downfall, the physical world is flawed and full of death, suffering and evil, and the great vision quest is to die and thus leave the physical world for the pure and perfect spiritual realm. Mind in a war of dominion over body, just as Man is in dominion over nature.

The Kingdom made anyone who could return to pristine innocence superior to the best who had walked since Adam. It was thus undoing the Fall : Thomas 46 Jesus said, "Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered (before him). Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will become superior to John."

The saviour, Jesus, who came as the Adam - the Son of Man thus embarks on a visionary quest to fulfil the messianic prophecy and bring in the Zoroastrian age of cosmic renovation, the post-Essene "New Covenant" by ushering in the Kingdom of the Father, overthrowing the mortal sins of Eve.

He is baptized by John and spends forty days in the wilderness Mark 1:13: "He was with the wild beasts and the angels waited on him" recapitulating Adam in the first era of Genesis (Cohn 1993 195).

The Gospel of Thomas 18 declares "Tell us how our end will be." Jesus said, "Have you discovered, then, the beginning, that you look for the end? For where the beginning is, there will the end be. Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning; he will know the end and will not experience death," confirmed again at Thomas 85: Jesus said, "Adam came into being from a great power and a great wealth, but he did not become worthy of you. For had he been worthy, [he would] not [have experienced] death."

Just as John the Baptist was himself mythically sacrificed by the Salome as her rejected consort in the dance of the seven veils, Jesus the lamed sacred king, titled Balaam the lame by the Jews, declines to consummate his sacred marriage, despite his ritual anointing on the feet in Luke and by Mary sister of Martha in John and on the head to his doom in Mark and Matthew. He has to escape the crowd the first time they would make him king and finally enters Jerusalem as Zechariah's fertility King. He curses the fig tree because it does not bear fruit and it withers. When faced with the sceptics in his final hours he could not, or would not, demonstrate his miraculous transcendence in the face of impending annihilation, just as was the case in his home town of Galilee, and was crucified in a ritual sacrifice, both to the goddess Mari-Anath as Mot the Lord of Death forsaken by El, and as sacred atonement King of the Jews, rolled into one ghastly passion, the Last Supper becoming the veritable flesh and blood feast of the Eucharist, a Dionysian delight reminiscent more of Edom than Israel.

The sacred king is passed from the Sanhedrin to Herod and to Pilate thus making a complete cultural circuit, including the traditional breaking of the phallic reed sceptre - setting at naught. He is thus at once the sacred atonement king of the Jews, Dionysus and Tammuz, the bread and wine and the Saturnalia of the Romans metering justice to the underdog.

The sacred king is passed from the Sanhedrin to Herod and to Pilate thus making a complete cultural circuit, including the traditional breaking of the phallic reed sceptre - setting at naught. He is thus at once the sacred atonement king of the Jews, Dionysus and Tammuz, the bread and wine of the Great Goddess and the Saturnalia of the Romans metering justice to the underdog.

Jesus' title in the Qur'an is Isa - Esau the 'red man' of Edom, such was his name spread in satire through Arabia by the Jews. Nabataean Edom bordered on Perea, John the Baptist's territory. The god of Edom was Duchares, God of Gaia - a form of Dionysus, as echoed by the 'body and blood' of the Eucharist, the 'true vine', and Cana.

He is watched over by three women in every gospel, sometimes the three Marys : "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother (Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph), and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." How can two sisters both be called Mary? And there's more: Joanna and Salome; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem." These women ministered unto him in Galilee "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." These are the ones who announce his resurrection on the third day.

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In a particularly macabre way, the Cross itself became the Tree of Life. The Deuteronomic curse 21:22 "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death ... thou hang him on a tree" became the very symbol of Jesus' bid to end

death through death. This image became actualized in the Great Cross of the Lateran in Rome (Cook pl 46).

Christ is betrayed in a garden, crucified in a garden and resurrected in a garden: Mark 14:32 "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray." John 18:1 "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." John 19:41 "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid."



Noli me tangere (Wilson I)

The recurring theme of Eden in Christ's rejection of Eve is paralleled in 'real life' in his relationship with Mary Magdalene. In John, the risen Christ is revealed to her in the garden and Christ makes just this admonishment "Noli me tangere" - do not touch me! 20:14 "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." In Greek this reads "Embrace me not" - the rejection of Adam for the sin of Eve is the key statement of Jesus mission to undo the curse of death of Ecclesiasticus 25:24.

Through this passage, we see Magdalene, the 'companion of the saviour', the new Eve who became the repentant sinner as the physical and sexual complement of Christ's divinity, who remains in the physical world to witness the risen Christ of the heavenly kingdom.

Haskins (47) sees here the relationship between Yahweh Adonai and his lost consort Asherah or Anath as continuing traces which are resumed in the "Christian god who was slain and rose again from the dead and the goddess who found him again in the garden of Gethsemane", after searching for the dead LORD just as the women searched for Adonai.

It is from this eclectic foundation in both paganism and Jewish monotheism that Christianity became a global religion.

However, Magdalene, the physical heart and true bride of the Church as the feminine physical component of the sacred marriage was to become sidelined in another very troubling manifestation of the continuing schism between the genders.

Jesus and Gender : Synoptic and Gnostic Views

- **Jesus and Gylany: A Partnership perspective - Riane Eisler**

Jesus had overturned traditional Jewish morality, which stressed the fertility of the male line, replacing it with a more Essene interpretation of non-polygamous pairing, without divorce based on genesis itself: Matt 19:4 "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

He furthermore regards divorce as a form of adultery: Matt 19:9 "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Although he admits this is a hard saying for Jews, he even extends this idea as far as suggesting that ritual castration might be a solution: Matt 19:12 "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

The idea of the supreme male sexual principal of the Kingdom of the Father in Jesus' teaching is confirmed in the Gospel of Thomas (114), an early work dating from the first century, containing saying of Jesus in archaic form (Robinson 124):

Simon Peter said: 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of Life.'
Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her, in order to make her male,
so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males.
For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven'.

According to Clement of Alexandria in the Gospel to the Egyptians, Shelom asked the Lord: "How long shall death prevail?" He answered "So long as you women bear children" ... and when she enquired at what time these things would be known, He answered: "When you women have trampled the garment of shame, when the two become one, when the male with the female is neither male nor female". And in the same work the Lord said: "I have come to destroy the works of the female." (Graves 1948)

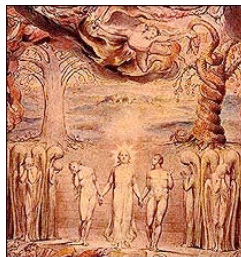
When describing the after-life Jesus is said to have portrayed a sexless heaven in which, in so many words, original sin is replaced by angelic immortality: Luke 20:34 "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

This idea of the undoing of the original sin of sex in the Kingdom portrays it in effect as a return to the childlike innocence of Eden:

- Luke 18:16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
- Thomas 37: His disciples said, "When will you become revealed to us and when shall we see you?" Jesus said, "When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then [will you see] the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid," and again in 46: "whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom"

Thomas 22 echoes this return to innocence, stressing the androgynous state which the Jews associated with the epoch before Adam and Eve were cleaved: Jesus said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness, then will you enter [the kingdom]."

In Thomas 106, he adds to this a key quotation, which in Mark 11:12 occurred when he cursed the fig tree for not bearing fruit and it withered, another symbol of frustration of the female "When you make the two one, you will become the sons of man, and when you say, 'Mountain, move away', it will move away."



Christ leading Adam and Eve from the world of innocence into experience while God is above in the clouds.
The two tress are present. The serpent is reviled. - The Fall of Man William Blake (Cook)

A telling view female appears in Thomas 105 "He who knows the father and the mother will be called the son of a harlot." and 15 "When you see one who was not born of woman, prostrate yourselves on your faces and worship

him. That one is your father."

The Dialogue of the Saviour, again originating in the first century, further conveys these sentiments, suggesting the oldest components of the gnostic gospels contain an original tradition: (91) The Lord said: "Pray in the place where there is no woman". Matthew said: "meaning Destroy the works of womanhood, not because there is any other [manner of birth] but because they will cease [giving birth]". Mary said "They will never be obliterated" The Lord said ... "Now a true word is coming forth from the Father [to the abyss] in silence with a [flash of lightning] giving birth (Robinson 254). This sounds both like Zeus begetting Dionysus and Thoth-Hermes logos.

Thomas further echoes the derogation of the flesh and the physical: 29 Jesus said, "If the flesh came into being because of spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty." 56 Jesus said, "Whoever has come to understand the world has found (only) a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world." 87 Jesus said, "Wretched is the body that is dependent upon a body, and wretched is the soul that is dependent on these two."

These sayings do clearly reflect sentiments attributed to Jesus against the flesh and consistent with a view of the female as sinful. This attitude of renunciation flows ever from Jesus' teachings, despite his close association with Mary Magdalen and the women of Galilee: Luke 23:28 "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children". Nevertheless, Jesus was a great nature shaman who was also renowned for his message of love and forgiveness.

The Pangs of the Messiah and the Delayed Imminent Kingdom

Between the death of the saviour and the immortal kingdom was to be a prophesied turbulent age called the Pangs of the Messiah. Although Revelation cast a twain millennial span, from Jesus' words this was meant to take no longer than one generation:

- Mark 9:1 "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
- Luke 21:23 "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."
- Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.
- Matt 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken"

However Jesus himself claimed not to know when the Son of Man would arrive: Mark 13:32 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. ... Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping."

This uncertainty of the time is echoed in Luke 12:40 and Matthew 24:44 as Christ coming as a thief in the night: "And this know, that if the Goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

The earliest Christian writing is 1 Thessalonians, dated circa AD 50. In it Paul's message is to wait and not slumber, for the son of man shall come at any time hence, in the Rapture in the air 1:10: "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. 3:13 ... to stablish your hearts ... at the coming of Jesus Christ with all his saints ... 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ... Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

This immediate urgency of the Kingdom remains central to Paul's teaching in 55 AD: 1 Corinth 7:25 "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment ... that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. ... But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

However the very existence of the Gospels arises from the failure of this Kingdom to arrive as expected: John Spong (1994 57-8) notes: "When we read Paul, we find almost no biographical details about the life of the Jesus of history. Few people seemed to care about this in Paul's time. Paul was specifically not interested, he said, in the knowledge of Jesus from a human point of view. One reason for his lack of interest surely lay in the sense among primitive Christians that they lived at the end of history, that the dawn of God's eschatological kingdom was about to occur. What mattered was that Jesus had been exalted to heaven, from whence he would come again as the inaugurator of that new kingdom. But, as the years passed and the New Jerusalem did not descend out of the heavens, questions began to be asked not just about that postponement but also about the life of Jesus. By the time Mark wrote, those questions demanded answers, and part of Mark's motive for writing was to address such concerns as who Jesus was, whence his power came, the reasons for his crucifixion, and what constituted the basis of the claim that God had raised him from the dead. It is fair to say that the tradition of writing Gospels evolved in direct response to the need to address these issues."

Renan (147) wrote: "Jesus imagined the end to be much nearer than it really was; he did not take into account the slowness of movements of humanity; he thought to realize in one day that which , eighteen centurys later has still to be accomplished." Maybe it will at last.

Despite his fierce opposition to the gnostic 'heresies' Irenaeus remained fully committed to the prophecies of Revelation and the belief in the end of days. However Origen threw a spanner in the works by claiming the eschatological condition was essentially in the mind - occurring only in the souls of believers. This fitted well with the Hellenistic imagination of "spiritual progress begun in this world and continued in the next". Once the Christian church became officially adopted with the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century, it became "a powerful and prosperous institution functioning to a well-established routine, and the men responsible for governing it had no wish to see Christians clinging to out-dated and inappropriate dreams of a new earthly paradise" (Cohn 1952 29). Early in the 5th century Augustine propounded in the City of God that Revelation was to be understood as a spiritual allegory, and as for the millennium, that had begun with the birth of Christianity and was fully realized in the church.

Despite his warring against the gnostics, Irenaeus' belief in the millennium thus came to be as expurgated as his gnostic victims beliefs and it is only because of a single copy of his "Against Heresies" found in 1575 that we know he held the same end days beliefs of many protestants through to this century (Cohn 1952 29). This is itself fitting commentary on the position of the Catholic Church to this very day.



Original Sin, repression of the Gnostics and the Early Church

- [Gnostic Origins of the Christian demonization of Sex and Women](#)
- [Uta Ranke Heinmann](#)
- [Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, Wives - David F Noble](#)

Early Christian interpretations of the Fall differed radically, and depended largely on whether they were of the eastern or western Church, although they ultimately all but concurred in their deliberations regarding sexuality and sin. In the eastern Church (and with them the gnostics), the myth was seen as an allegory of the evolution of man, whilst in the west, following Paul, it tended to be treated as an historical fact. The eastern view, influenced by Plato, and later Plotinus (d.270), viewed the world of matter darkly: Man and evil had evolved through the descent of the pre-existing spiritual substance, or soul, into matter. The Alexandrian school, saw the primeval Fall from the pristine in the sinful union of spirit (Adam, the male principle) and flesh (Eve, the female principle). Man's first nature was generally believed to have been spiritual and bodiless, without and incapable of sexual differentiation; he had become a physical being, and sexed, through his soul's sin, to desire the mundane (Haskins 73).

About two hundred BC the rabbis had propounded the idea of the yezer ha-ra' which roughly translates as the 'evil impulse'. Unlike the earlier Hebrews, who blamed themselves for their woes, the rabbis believed God had implanted in the 'heart', the Hebrew place of the unconscious of each individual, at his birth or conception. The yezer was not hereditary. It was intrinsically good and the source of creative energy, but had a strong potential for evil through appetite or greed. Only strict observance of the Law could keep the strong drives it engendered under control. To the commentators in the five centuries before Christ, Adam's death was due to his own sins, and not to any sin innate in the race of man (Haskins 72).

In Christian hands, the yezer would become the debilitating corrupting condition known as 'concupiscence', which each human being would inherit at birth, and which was transmitted through the sexual act, through the 'libid' which accompanied it, and which infected his every action, and was commutable in part only through baptism. Christians were born into a sinful world, a fact which Christ himself constantly reiterated when he called for sinners to

repent, but he never referred either to the Fall itself, except to say that mankind was fallen, or to original sin, and alluded only once to Adam and Eve when replying to the Pharisees' question concerning divorce (Haskins 72).

The first intimation in the New Testament that Adam bequeathed sin to mankind is to be found in 1 Corinthians. This passage also makes two clear statements that Christ is the second Adam : 15:21 "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. ... And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

To Paul the two "becoming one flesh" when man cleaves unto his wife as ordained in Eden is a "great mystery" of Christ's marriage to the church (Eph 5:32). Paul sees Christ's death as the salvific act which made necessary a real sin by an historical Adam, in which all mankind, corrupted and lost as a result, were integrally involved Paul's act was to link Adam, the first father, and the rest of mankind in a hereditary manner. Adam's descendants became in Eph 2:2 the 'children of disobedience', who were 'by nature the children of wrath'. In Romans 5:12, Paul condemns mankind forever in Christian teaching: 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'. However the original Greek says "in that all have sinned", not "for that all have sinned". Death thus comes from sin not from Adam. This mistranslation was to become the foundation stone of Augustine's doctrine of 'original sin' (Fox R 25).

But God in his mercy had offered up his own son to atone for Adam's sin, and it was through Christ and 'by grace [that] ye are saved' (Eph. 2:5). In Gal 5:17 we see the spirit and flesh at war: 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would' He notes the works of the flesh in a way which became of hideous significance during the inquisition "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies" (Haskins 72).

Although Paul admits Peter may have travelled with female company, despite leaving his home to follow Jesus - 1 Corinth 9:5 'Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?' These sister-wives adelphen gynaika may have been purely spiritual counterparts (Crossan 335). Paul took a very celibate view of sexuality, proclaiming many beatitudes of celibacy and virginity. 1 Corinth 7:29 "Blessed are they who have wives as if they had none, for they shall inherit God". 2 Corinth 6:16 "Blessed are they who have kept the flesh pure, for they shall become a temple of God."

Various passages suggest Paul may have castrated himself, just as Tertullian later said the heavenly gates were always thrown open to eunuchs, and that marriage was nothing but fornication (Briffault 3 372-3). In 2 Corinth 4:16 "but though or outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed ... for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". Galatians 5:12 "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." Galatians 6:17 "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore brethren that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service". Whether this means celibacy or castration, the sentiment is definitely against sexual intercourse of any sort (Walker 776). Origen castrated himself. Numerous Christians adopted the same course; surgeons were besieged with requests to perform the operation (Briffault 3 372).

Virginity can also be seen as a sacrifice of the body - a limited form of martyrdom. Ambrose said that man and woman were born in virginity and that to change it was to deface the work of the creator (Briffault 3 373). Both Ambrose and Tertullian declared that the extinction of the human race was preferable to its propagation by sexual intercourse (Briffault 3 374).

However Paul entreats sexual union as an antidote to desire for fornication: 1 Corinth 7:1 "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ... Defraud [deprive] ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. ... For I would that all men were even as I myself. ... But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (Pagels). In Ephesians 5:28 he even says: "So ought men to love their wives even as their own bodies, for he that loveth his wife loveth himself" - flesh of my flesh.

"As we learn from Acts and Paul's own epistles, women were able, like Phoebe and Junia to have important functions as bishops and deacons in the fledgling church, earning the admiration of Paul himself" (Haskins 53), not to forget Thecla (Pagels 1988 18).

However we find in 1 Cor 14:34 women barred from public ministry: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Although these and other sayings of early Christian apostles, also including some of the early gnostics, illustrate how choosing celibacy to "undo the sin of Adam and Eve" may have disrupted traditional family life, other early Christians stressed however that Christians marry and have children but "do not destroy fetuses" (Pagels 1988 21).

The deuterio-Pauline letters thus constitute in part a reaction to celibacy, stressing instead family life. However these authors also stress the lowly nature of woman as the perpetrator of original sin: 1 Timothy 2:11 "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent with all subjection; for Adam was first formed then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (Pagels 1988 24).

By 200 AD Irenaeus ushers in the campaign of the orthodox church against the gnostics, complaining in particular that women were celebrating the Eucharist with the gnostic teacher Marcus. Tertullian expresses similar outrage: "These heretical women - how audacious they are! They have no modesty; they are bold enough to teach, to engage in argument, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures, and it may be, even to baptize!" Tertullian specified "It is not permitted for a woman to speak in church nor is it permitted for her to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer [the eucharist], nor to claim for herself a share in any masculine function - not to mention any priestly office. Marcion had gone as far as to appoint women as priests and bishops (Pagels 80-81).

This view is wedded into the orthodox literature in a way which denigrates the Montanists and assumes wisdom to male orthodoxy. The late nineteenth-century Dictionary of Christian Biography states "If Montanus had triumphed, Christian doctrine would have been developed not under the superintendence of the Christian teachers most esteemed for wisdom, but wild and excitable women" (Trevett 151).

Occhigrosso (1996 302) even describes the consolidation of the synoptic canon as a reaction to gnosticism itself. "Marcion believed that Jesus was radically different from the Jewish tradition that preceded him and that the Gospels had been altered to conceal this. He rejected those Gospels along with the entire Old Testament and reedited the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of Luke to prove that Jesus taught a God of love rather than fear, quite distinct from the Old Testament God, whom Marcion considered an inferior being. Marcion was denounced as a heretic, but the rapid growth of the Marcionites led the church to establish a canonical set of New Testament texts, consisting of four Gospels, 21 Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and Revelation."

Occhigrosso notes that despite his rhetoric, Tertullian actually crossed to the other side: "Montanus and two women named Prisca and Maximilla led a movement of charismatic prophecy in 2nd-century Phrygia in Asia Minor, claiming they were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, or Paraclete. Many of Montanus's followers were women, who were allowed to teach, heal, and exorcise demons. Their most famous adherent was Tertullian of Carthage (c. 203), the great early Christian theologian, who first attacked the charismatic movement and then joined it.

Although the New Prophecy (Trivett 1996) of the Montanists was a chaste movement of often celibate women they were portrayed as dangerously liberated. In fact their authority was closely associated with martyrdom for Montanist women were expected to make their apostolic faith known and those under sentence - the confessors - gained priestly status to 'bind' and 'loose' to forgive for any error.[Perpetua](#) of Carthage was closely associated with the Montanists. Perpetua is in the spirit of the Montanists in their ecstasy in which baptism and martyrdom are two aspects of one 'exalted' reality.

Regardless, the orthodox church, led by Irenaeus, the Greek bishop of Lyons, attacked Montanism, along with other Gnostic manifestations, as heresy. The evidence indicates that these and the Gnostic sects thrived alongside orthodox Christianity throughout the Mediterranean rim and that in the early centuries the Gnostics may have outnumbered the orthodox. The founding Egyptian Christians appear to be the predecessors of the Valentinian gnostic school (Pearson 194).

Irenaeus fastened on Paul's connections between Adam and Christ to say God had used a virgin substance to mold Adam from the virgin mother earth, which had never been ploughed and Jesus from the virgin womb of Mary. Mary thus also became ascendent as the Eve who remained a virgin (Spong 1992 209). What this says about Jesus' brothers James and Joses and his sisters remains a source of paradox.

According to Tertullian, man was not merely weakened, but depraved as a consequence of Adam's sin, an idea which Calvin espoused heartily in the sixteenth century. Tertullian also coined the word concupiscence (from the Latin, concupiscere, to long for, to be desirous of, to covet), which signified Adam and Eve's fatal flaw and the loss of integrity which had resulted from their disobedience to God. Tertullian makes clear the scorn and prejudice of early Church fathers towards the 'immortal' sex: "And do you not know that you are [each] an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert - that is, death - even the Son of God had to die" (Haskins 79).

Tatian the Syrian specifically taught that the fruit of the tree of knowledge conveyed carnal knowledge, and that in Genesis they became sexually aware (Gen 3:7). The Hebrew word to know (yada) connotes sexual knowledge. Tatian blamed Adam for inventing marriage. Julius Cassianus, another ascetic Christian, blamed Satan instead for the same act by inducing Adam to do as the animals (Pagels 1988 27).

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) rejects such associations and declares that sexual intercourse was not sinful but was part of God's original and 'good' creation - cooperation in God's act of creation as in fact many Jews had thought before him. Clement and Irenaeus thus insist that it was hasty adolescent disobedience and not sexuality itself which was the primal break, although both would acknowledge this break did take a sexual form. Clement expressing an ambivalence sees procreation as the sole legitimate purpose in sexuality - a reverberating doctrine of the Christian church: "Our ideal is not to experience desire at all ... A man who marries for the sake of begetting children must practice continence so that it is not desire he feels for his wife ... not even at night or in the darkness is it fitting to carry on immodestly or indecently ... for even that union which is legitimate is still dangerous, except in so far as it is engaged in procreation of children" never to take place in the morning, daytime or after dinner, and never with menstruating, barren, or menopausal wives (Pagels 1988 28-9). This became a fundamental legacy for 2000 years. Clement said "Every woman ought to be filled with shame at the thought she is a woman".

To Irenaeus, Adam and Eve had been under age. Adam's lust had led them into preempting God's command, and their guilty reaction had been to cover themselves immediately in scratchy fig leaves, thus chastising those organs which had led therein to sin." But Irenaeus could also see that the Fall had not been entirely calamitous, for had mankind's ancestors not committed the misdeed, man himself would have had a less full and rich moral evolution;" this view came to be known as the doctrine of the 'Fortunate Fall' (Haskins 75).

Despite this, both Jerome (347-420) and John Chrysostom (346-407) still associated the Fall with loss of virginity: In his letter to Eustochium St Jerome stated: 'it was only after she put on a garment of skins that her married life began ... That you may understand that virginity is natural and that marriage came after the Fall, remember that what is born of wedlock is virgin flesh and that by its fruit it renders what in its parent root it had lost.' John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, an adherent of the Gnostic Christian eastern Church emphasizes this: "Scarcely had they [Adam and Eve] turned from obedience to God than they became earth and ashes and, all at once, they lost the happy life, beauty and the honour of virginity: thereupon God took virginal chastity from them ... they were ... made subject to death and every other form of imperfection; then did marriage make its appearance with the mortal and servile garment of human nature ... Do you see where marriage took its origin? How it had of necessity to be preceded by the breaking of the divine commandment, by malediction and death? For where there is death, there too is sexual coupling; and where there is no death, there is no sexual coupling either" (Haskins 79). Jerome poured scorn on motherhood "the tumefaction of the uterus, the care of yelling infants, all those fond feelings which death at last cuts short", and called sex prostituting the members of Christ (Briffault 3 373).

Augustine, the Father of Original Sin

- **Augustine - Uta Ranke-Heinmann**

This theme of original sin finally became fully elaborated by **St. Augustine** (396-430) giving Eve the dubious titles of the 'devil's gateway' and the 'desirable calamity', limiting freedom of will through the taint of original sin, which makes all humanity mortally fallible.

Augustine took up Tertullian's idea of concupiscence with all the enthusiasm of 'twice-born'. He at first rejected the Christianity of his childhood and lived for fifteen years with the first of his two concubines, by whom he had a son and from whom he felt a 'sharp and searing pain' when he had to reject her in order, on his mother's insistence to make a proper (but unfulfilled) marriage. He first espoused Manichaeism, which saw light and dark, locked in

permanent conflict and the soul, a spark of light, seeking to escape the darkness of the physical world. Later Ambrose introduced him to Christian Neoplatonism and the writings of St Paul, leading to his conversion in 387. Ambrose, a champion of orthodoxy, an ardent advocate of the Virgin Mary, taught that Adam and Eve had fallen from a state of 'original perfection' and adopting this thesis, Augustine wrote in glowing terms of the life that Adam had originally had in Paradise, exempt from all physical evils or sickness, endowed with immortal youth, and with the possibility of immortality, through eating of the tree of life. Adam's intellect and moral character had been equally elevated. He had, however, missed the free will given him by his Creator, and succumbed to temptation. As a punishment, he had acquired a moral debility, concupiscence, which was transmuted through physical heredity to his descendants, who were thus rendered a massa damnata. To Augustine, death had come upon all human beings by their union with Adam, and they also shared in the responsibility for the Fall; he thereby denied that humanity had a free moral choice. 'For we were all in that one man ... who fell into sin through the woman who was made from him' (Haskins 76, Jones 222).

The devout British Catholic monk Pelagius also held that the Fall had come about through God's gift of free will, but denied that the sin of Adam and Eve had been passed on to their descendants - it had been theirs alone - and thus rejected St Paul's pronouncement in his letter to the Romans. God's grace was thus helpful rather than necessary. Pelagius argued that man had free-will and was liable for all his deeds, whether good or evil. Augustine disputed with Pelagius and claimed that humanity had no free will, but was doomed to transgress because original sin - estrangement from God - was congenital and universal. To allow man freedom to decide minimized the role of God and the power of the Church. Pelagius was twice accused of heresy, and vanished from history in 418.

The politics of this process are very telling. Two councils of bishops in Palestine had declared Pelagius orthodox but two in Africa, led by Augustine opposed them and persuaded Pope Innocent to support them in 415. The next pope first declared Pelagius orthodox and then after 'vehement protests from Augustine and the Africans' excommunicated him. Augustine openly courted the emperor's support, using Nubian stallions as bribes. The emperor Honorius condemned him ordered him fined, expelled from office and exiled along with his supporters. Pelagius died soon after (Pagels 1988 129-30).

To Augustine, the sin of Adam and Eve had not been sexual intercourse but their presumption, in their desire for knowledge, to rival their Creator. Concupiscence affected the whole being, as man in his fallen state no longer had control over himself, and was prey to agitations of the flesh. Adam and Eve's sin lay not in the sexual act, but the lust accompanying a procreative process, which would otherwise have occurred with angelic apathy. Concupiscence was now needed for mankind to survive, but within it there was evil. The redeemed licentiate, who as a Manichaean prayed: 'O Lord bring me chastity only not yet', thus enabled sexuality to be associated with original sin through lust, whilst still allowing the creation to be essentially good - a point denied by the Gnostics.

In City of God (413-26) he notes that it would be "a manifest absurdity to deny that the sexual differences were created for begetting children. But marriage would have taken place in Paradise without the accompanying - 'lust'." Augustine tells us that before the Fall, Adam had been capable of moving his sexual member with as much control as fallen man might exercise over a finger. But now, infected by the stain of original sin, the sexual organs functioned with no regard to their owner, in retribution for their sin of disobedience. 'Without the allurements of passion goading him on, the husband would have relaxed on his wife's bosom in tranquillity of mind and with no impairment of his body's integrity'. After their sin our first parents covered their parts in shame of their pudenda (Latin, pudendus shameful). Eve's formation from Adam's rib rendered her the weaker part of the couple, and she compounded her subordinate role as helper by tempting Adam to fall. Adam's culpability lay merely in his desire please his spouse (Haskins 77).

In response to Augustine's destruction of Pelagius, one of his followers, Julian of Eclanum challenged Augustine back. Augustine summoning all his eloquence and fury argued for a view of nature utterly antithetical to scientific naturalism. Augustine's error Julian believed, was to regard the present state of nature as punishment, for Augustine went further than those Jews and Christians who agreed that Adam's sin brought death upon the human race. He insisted that Adam's sin also brought upon us universal moral corruption, Julian responded that 'natural sin' does not exist. No physically transmitted, hereditary condition infects human nature, much less nature in general. We must begin by distinguishing what is natural from what is voluntary. By contrast Augustine traces most free-will to Adam and his error: "Nature which the first human being harmed is miserable ... now fertility operates under this burden" (Pagels 1988 132-3).

In reply, Augustine releases the Pandora's box of entropy: "If nothing deserving punishment passes from parents to infants, who could bear to see the image of God sometimes born retarded, since this afflicts the soul itself. You must explain why such innocence is sometimes born blind or deaf." citing even children's suffering and of course mortality as original sin.

Augustine took things to other impossible lengths, claiming that before the Fall there were no weeds, an age of innocence which defies all biological realities, by denying the very evolutionary purpose of each animal, just as in the un-biological prophecy of Isaiah 11 which came to be a foretelling of Christ's mission.

Pagels (1988 134) comments that Augustine denies nature, the existence of nature per se ... for he cannot think of the natural world except as a reflection of human desire and will.

Julian rejected the notion of natural sin and accused Augustine of retaining his Manichaean heresy, insisting the church was founded on the praise of creation, marriage, law, saints and will. In counter to Augustine's reading of pain in childbirth he pointed out naturally that [pagan] village women with good childbirth practice had easy deliveries. Julian sees childbirth pains, death, being ruled by a husband and living by the sweat of labor as conditions of nature, not punishment, noting that sweat is a beneficial, not sinful, response to exertion and that Adam anyway had to "dress and keep" the garden before the Fall. Julian's greatest feat however was to correctly realize that the fall is the existential situation that arises when we fall into the sin of separation from the whole and make the world harsh through our selfishness (Pagels 1988 136-8).

Augustine saw Julian's "vital fire" of the natural 'appetite' of sexual desire as that "which does not obey the soul's decision, but for the most part, rises up against the soul's desire in disorderly and ugly movements. The ultimate punishment - to be tormented by 'natural' sexual arousal. And by Julian, who continued to reject his arguments until Augustine's death.

Augustine's theory of original sin not only proved politically expedient since it persuaded many of his contemporaries that human beings universally need external government ... but also offered an analysis of human nature that became, for better or worse, the heritage of all subsequent generations of western Christians (Pagels 1988 xxvi). Such was Augustine's later reputation that his views were to permanently color the Christian view of sin, sexuality and the female. Augustine's doctrine was austere. As children were born full of sin they were damned if they died before baptism. Hell, he said, was paved with infants. He could not understand why God had chosen the sexual option, and the opportunity it gave for sin, for the Garden of Eden: 'If it was good company and conversation that Adam needed, it would have been much better arranged to have two men together as friends, not a man and a woman' (Jones 222).

Entropy and Original Sin

Augustine's Pandora argument raises a fundamental issue about the so-called flawed nature of the physical world. It is true that all of us in different ways are subject to the second law of thermodynamics: that entropy (disorder) is increasing. Life stands mysteriously in the universe, an open thermodynamic system, defying this trend, but the laws of nature which permit life also are subject to entropy - accident, disease and misfortune. This is the essence of the so-called flaw in nature.

However a deeper understanding tells us that without mutation there can be no evolution, without chaos there can be no regeneration of order. It is not a question of nature being evil but of nature depending on diversity of condition. There is both joy and pain.

It is true that each of us experience unique life situations in which some of us are in pain, some in mental confusion and some in terminal conditions. Some also receive hideous injuries. There is pain and suffering in the world, as Buddha noted. The key to human suffering is in all being one at heart and sharing in the ongoing immortal flow of life for together we are immortal but apart we die. There are many things which can be done to alleviate suffering. In extreme cases, some may wish to choose the right to die humanely in dignity, rather than in pain and confusion.

However what is truly awesome is that for many of us, particularly when we avoid war or famine, we can live in years of pleasure, even the majority of our lives, not in pain, but "creatively, intensively and successfully" - "to embrace the world and ingest experience without restraint" (Armstrong 1996 29).

Although we are mortal as individuals, the sense of wholeness we can achieve in two ways, psychic and physical through both experiencing gnosis with the eternal mind, and participating with love in sustaining the immortal flow of life, gives us a meaning in existence which is both eternal and immortal. A creative meaning, in which every act of free-will participates in the becoming as we experience it. By merging our 'kin altruism', we live as one spirit in wholeness and become immortalized in the creative process.

"No one, saint or sinner, escapes suffering, which remains unavoidable in nature.
Yet each of us holds in our hands our spiritual destiny" - Julian of Eclanum.

As Paul and Julian noted in 1 Corinth 15:54 "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" noting also that it is when we loose this oneness in selfishness that "The sting of death is sin". Julian declared: "God created fully innocent creatures, capable of virtue according to their will" (Pagels 1988 139).

In the balance, the experience of life is an eternal mystery of mysteries and participating in the cosmic unfolding is a joy beyond ecstasies. Life has purpose beyond meaning, which can only be realized in creative choice.

We can only truly care for one another, achieve political liberty and justice, and protect the diversity of the living planet, if we are prepared to make real personal and financial sacrifices for the common and altruistic good. Love needs body as well as spirit, brains, muscle and stomach as well as heart.

John has Jesus make a stunning answer to the Pandora argument, used by Julian, which affirms the live nature of synchronicity elicited by gnosis: 9:2 "And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.'" It is not past sin but future gnosis and its synchronicity that give the event its meaning, a meaning beyond the immediate physical cause of the blindness: congenital, accidental or pathological. It is not what caused the event but why did it happen just at that moment? (Pagels 1988 134, 147).

Luke's parable about karma and sin likewise denies that the confusion of sin has real power over circumstance, but that the sinful attitude of division will get you in the end: 13:4 "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The Gnostic Eden

Source Gnosticism

- [The Gnostic Eden](#)
- [Becoming the Gnostic Twin](#) - The Gospel of Thomas
- [Mary and Peter](#) - The Gnostic's Lament
- [The Gnosis of Homo sapiens](#) - The Perennial Gnostic Spirit

The gnostics claimed to possess the inner teachings of the Christ, a tradition that was not told in the public parables and possibly even to the disciples, but only to a select few. Some aspects of gnostic teaching predate Jesus and are shared by Hermetic doctrines. As we have seen, by about 200 AD the orthodox church had identified the gnostic path as a heresy, and proceeded to stamp it out. It is only with the discovery of the Nag Hamadi texts that a true appreciation has come of the major role gnosticism played in the life of the early church.

Part of the reasons for the repression of the gnostics were political. The orthodox church identified as a social movement ruled by bishops. The gnostics' inner path involved instead self-realization, a realization of the elect, which had many diverse forms. The orthodox bishops found such clandestine diversity threatening to their agenda of moral authority. While the gnostics often rejected sex as physical ensnarement they also often accepted women as

equals. By contrast, the orthodox Christians had come to accept family life, but gave the key roles of worship and church authority only to men.

The gnostics displayed a variety of responses to the gender dilemma posed by Jesus. Many took a view similar to the Manichaeans and rejected sex and marriage and viewed the physical world as flawed and transitory and yearned to escape the mortal coils of the flesh for the eternal realm of the spirit.

A Tribute to Elaine Pagels



The Gnostic interpretation of the genesis myth is that it is a spiritual allegory rather than a history with a moral, a term [Elaine Pagels](#) (1979, 1988) calls allegorical exegesis.

- Pagels, Elaine 1979 [The Gnostic Gospels](#), Random House, N.Y.
[God the Father / God the Mother](#)
[Gnosis Self-knowledge as knowledge of God](#)
- Pagels, E. 1988 [Adam Eve and the Serpent](#), Random House, N.Y.
- Pagels, Elaine 1995 [The Origin of Satan](#), Random House, N.Y.
[The Enemy Within](#) Reconciling dark and light

"One of the reasons [Gnostic Gospels] was a blockbuster was that it shattered the entire premise of the ecumenical movement." The Devil Problem New Yorker 3 Apr 1995

Other gnostics, such as the Valentinians, who borrowed the mother-goddess myth from the Ophite (5.15.27) (Gk. ophis snake) (Haskins 45), took a very liberated view, seeking the divine in the union of psyche and cosmos in gnosis itself and accepted the complementation of the genders in both their priesthood and their vision of the spiritual theogony. Some took the position that Yahweh, in forbidding one fruit, had already caused the binary division of the descent, and that to correct the imbalance, Sophia, wisdom will have to "call off Samael", regain the fruit of the tree of life through the helpful guidance of the snake of knowledge and return life to the garden of immortality. Well this is what is going to happen, but it is a long and tortured story.

Whilst both sexes seem to have been allowed to play an equal part in religious practice and discussion the ultimate aim of the Gnostic was to achieve a state which eliminated sexual difference - which in effect meant that the women had to lose their femaleness in order to be subsumed into the larger 'male' group, whose actual sex was no longer significant. The Gnostic's use of the terms male and female to describe the division between spirit and matter, and their further equation of the these terms with good and evil inevitably leads to the association of women and sexuality with evil. If woman and femaleness represented human nature and sexuality, then by rejecting these, and in particular sexual intercourse and procreation, Gnostic, as well as certain orthodox Christians influenced by this dualistic outlook, believed they could reach the spiritual heights (Haskins 42).

In the Gnostic cosmology, a huge chasm divides heaven from the world of matter, and the opposites of light and dark are reflected in the concepts of a divine realm of light and a world or cosmos, the realm of darkness. According to many Gnostic sects, God is neither creator nor governor of the world, from which he is separated by a vast abyss, and remains always alien and unknowable to man, unless man should become the recipient of supernatural revelation. The supreme being and God of love could never have created a universe of chaos and evil; but a lesser, imperfect, deity, the 'Demiurge'. Man was also an imperfect creation of the Demiurge, and formed of flesh, soul and spirit; his ignorance and sin had been responsible for the corruption of the world. (The soul is seen by Gnostics rather as the force which motivates and gives appetite to his body.) However, imprisoned within the soul of some 'elect' men was the divine spark, the pneuma or spirit. Salvation took place when the pneuma came to know the Supreme Being, and to understand itself, its divine origins and its ultimate destiny - reunion with the supreme deity in the realm of light. In many Gnostic writings, the Redeemer, or Saviour as he is often described, is sent by the Supreme God as an emissary to give gnosis, which is in itself redemption, to those capable of salvation. A central feature of Gnostic myths, this derived from the orthodox Pauline argument that Christ was sent by God the Father to save the world (Haskins 37).

Because of the significance of the gnostic view and Elaine Pagels' outstanding contribution to the healing of Eden in the Gnostic Gospels, I include a summary of her description of a variety of ways gnostic writers have portrayed the creation as dyadic and in a way which shows no immediate parallel with the worship of the pagan Goddess:

"Some saw creation as dyadic in reality, some only in metaphor and others allowed it either nature. They generally take their viewpoint from the first genesis account in which male and female are created together in the likeness of the Elohim, in which "the divine is understood in terms of a harmonious, dynamic relationship of opposites - a concept that may be akin to the Eastern view of yin and yang, but remains alien to orthodox Judaism and Christianity" (Pagels 1979 74).

Yahweh is a god of male epithets, 'king, lord, master, judge, and father', who unlike his Near Eastern contemporaries acknowledges no consort. While Mary is the mother of the Son, she is not 'god the mother'. The trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost would closely resemble the Mother with her resurrecting Father/Son except that the Greek word for holy Ghost (pneuma) is a neuter entity, although its Hebrew counterpart (ruah) is feminine (Pagels 1979 71).

In the Apocryphon of John we see the Holy Ghost become again the mother in a post-crucifixion vision of the totality "He said to me, 'John, ... why do you doubt, and why are you afraid? ... I am the one who [is with you] always. I [am the Father]; I am the Mother; I am the Son.' ... The Secret Book goes on to describe the divine Mother: '... (She is) ... the image of the invisible, virginal, perfect spirit... She became the Mother of everything, for she existed before them all, the mother-father [matropater]' (Pagels 1979 74).

"The Apocalypse of Adam, discovered at Nag Hammadi, tells of a feminine power who wanted to conceive by herself: '... from the nine Muses, one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent time seated there, so that she desired herself alone in order to become androgynous. She fulfilled her desire, and became pregnant from her desire...' (Pagels 1979 76).

Valentinus attributes the paradox of the creation of the imperfect world to Wisdom: "Desiring to conceive by herself, apart from her masculine counterpart, ... she became the 'great creative power from whom all things originate', often called Eve, 'Mother of all living'. But since her desire violated the harmonious union of opposites intrinsic in the nature of created being, what she produced was ... defective; [causing] the terror and grief that mar human existence. To author her creation, Wisdom brought forth the demiurge, the creator-God of Israel, as her agent. ... Besides being the 'first universal creator', who brings forth all creatures, [wisdom] also enlightens human beings. Followers of Valentinus and Marcus therefore prayed to her as the 'mystical, eternal Silence' and to 'Grace, She who is before all things', and as 'incorruptible Wisdom' for insight (gnosis). Valentinus reasons that Silence is the appropriate complement of the Father, designating the former as feminine and the latter as masculine He goes on to describe how Silence receives, as in a womb, the seed of the Ineffable Source; from this she brings forth all the emanations of divine being, ranged in harmonious pairs of masculine and feminine energies. Followers of Valentinus prayed to her for protection as the Mother, and as 'the mystical, eternal Silence' ." (Pagels 1979 76).

The Great Announcement ... explains the origin of the universe as follows: From the power of Silence appeared 'a great power, the Mind (nous) of the Universe, which manages all things, and is a male ... the other ... a great Intelligence (epinoia) ... is a female which produces all things.' ... This is one power divided above and below; generating itself, making itself grow, seeking itself, finding itself, being mother of itself, father of itself, sister of itself, spouse of itself, daughter of itself, son of itself - mother, father, unity, being a source of the entire circle of existence" (Pagels 1979 73).

"A work attributed to Simon Magus suggests a mystical meaning for Paradise, the place where human life began: Grant Paradise to be the womb; ... I am He that formed thee in thy mother's womb' (Isaiah 44:2) ... Moses ... using allegory had declared Paradise to be the womb ... and Eden, the placenta ... " (Pagels 1979 75).

The divine mother is portrayed by gnostics as mystical silence, Holy Spirit, the image of thought (ennoia) and wisdom Sophia .

Other gnostics attributed to Sophia the nourishment and self-awareness that Adam and Eve received in Paradise ... When the creator became angry with the human race because they did not worship or honor him as Father and God, he sent forth a flood upon them, that he might destroy them. But Wisdom opposed him ... "and Noah and his family were saved in the ark by means of the sprinkling of the light that proceeded from her, and through it the world was again filled with humankind" (Pagels 1979 76). Yet others point out that for Adam to produce Eve he must have been androgynous, as is suggested by the first Genesis account.

"Some concluded that the God of Israel ... was merely instrumental power whom the Mother had created. ... They say that he believed that he had made everything by himself, but that, in reality, he had created the world because Wisdom, his Mother, infused him with energy/ and implanted into him her own ideas. ... "It was because he was foolish and ignorant of his Mother that he said, 'I am God; there is none beside me'. According to another account, the creator caused his Mother to grieve by creating inferior beings, so she left him alone and withdrew into the upper regions of the heavens" (Pagels 1979 79).

The Secret Book of John notes the paradox of a sole and jealous god: "he said: 'I am a jealous God, and there is no other God beside me'. But by announcing this he indicated to the angels ... that another God does exist; for if there were no other one, of whom would he be jealous? ... Then the mother began to be distressed" (Pagels 1979 79).

"Others declared that his Mother refused to tolerate such presumption: [The creator], becoming arrogant in spirit, boasted himself over all those things that were below him, and exclaimed, 'I am father, and God, and above me there is no one.' But his mother, hearing him speak thus, cried out against him, 'Do not lie, Ialdabaoth' " (Pagels 1979 79).

"According to the Hypostasis of the Archons, ... both the mother and her daughter objected when he [said], 'It is I who am God, and there is no other apart from me'. . . And a voice came forth from above the realm of absolute

power, saying, 'You are wrong, Samael' [which means, 'god of the blind']. And he said, 'If any other thing exists before me, let it appear to me!' And immediately, Sophia ('Wisdom') stretched forth her finger, and introduced light into matter, and she followed it down into the region of Chaos.... And he again said to his offspring, 'It is I who am the God of All.' And Life, the daughter of Wisdom, cried out; she said to him, 'You are wrong, Saklas!' " (Pagels 1979 79).

In the Apocalypse of Adam, it is revealed to Seth that God struck Adam and Eve apart in wrath for Eve's vision: "When God created me out of the earth along with Eve your mother, I went about with her in a glory which she had seen in the aeon from which we had come forth. She taught me a word of knowledge of the eternal god. And we resembled the great eternal angels, for we were higher than the god who had created us and the powers with him whom we did not know. Then god, the ruler of the aeons and the powers divided us in wrath. Then we became two aeons. And the glory of our hearts left us, me and your mother Eve, along with the first knowledge that breathed within us ... and went into the great aeons. ... Then we recognised the god that had created us ... and we served him in fear and slavery" (Robinson 277).

The gnostic teacher Justinus describes the Lord's shock, terror, and anxiety when he discovered that he was not the God of the universe. Gradually his shock gave way to wonder, and finally he came to welcome what wisdom had taught him. The teacher [ironically] concludes: "This is the meaning of the saying 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' " (Pagels 1979 79).

Trimorphic Protennoia (literally, the 'Triple-formed Primal Thought'), celebrates the feminine powers of Thought, Intelligence, and Foresight: 'I am Thought that [dwells in the Light]. [She who exists] before the All ... I move in every creature. ... I am the Invisible One within the All. I am perception and knowledge, uttering a Voice by means of Thought. I am the real voice. I cry out in everyone, and they know that a seed dwells within. ... Now I have come a second time in the likeness of a female ... I have revealed myself in the Thought of the likeness of my masculinity. ... I am androgynous. [I am both Mother and] Father, since I [copulate] with myself ... [and with those who love] me ... I am the Womb [that gives shape] to the All ... I am ... the glory of the Mother' (Pagels 1979 77)

'Thunder, Perfect Mind' extends this revelation into a metaphysical koan abrogating all authority except gnosis itself, and a female (or androgynous) gnosis of the valley. The awareness of the paradox of the nature of deity in this work is mysterious and profound (Pagels 1988 67):

'Look upon me you who reflect upon me
and you hearers hear me
You who are waiting for me take me to yourselves.

For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned one.
I am the whore, and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am (the mother) and the daughter....
I am the barren one, and many are her sons
I am she whose wedding is great,
and I have not taken a husband....
I am knowledge, and ignorance....
I am shameless; I am ashamed.
I am strength, and I am fear....
I am senseless, and I am wise. ...
I am the silence that is incomprehensible
and the idea whose remembrance is frequent.

I am the one whom they call Life
and you have called death

I am the one you have pursued
I am the one you have seized
I am the one you have scattered
and you have gathered me together.

I am the one before whom you have been ashamed
and you have been shameless to me.
I am godless, and I am one whose God is great.

I am the union and the dissolution.
I am the judgement and the acquittal.

I am the sinless
and the root of sin derives from me
I am lust in (outward) appearance
and interior self-control exists within me

For many are the forms ... and fleeting pleasures
which men embrace until they become sober
and go up to their resting place.
And they will find me there
and they will live
and they will not die again.'

In Pistis Sophia, a later work of the 4th century AD forming the central myth of the Valentinian system, Sophia becomes lost to the lower Aeons of darkness when she follows a light which she thinks will take her to the Treasure House of greatness. Jesus travels through the complex abyss to banish the evil powers of fate magic and astrology (Haskins 49) saving Sophia in the process, while confirming his mission in a dialogue with [Mary Magdalen](#).

Jesus was worshipped by the early Ophites as Christ-Ophion, the serpent of Eden, and the serpent of Moses: John 3:15 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up". According to the Pistis Sophia Jesus was the serpent who "spoke from the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, which were in the paradise of Adam" (Walker 907-9).



The Death of Adam- Gaddi : Seth planting the Branch of Good and Evil (Lavin)