

Perspective

Nature, Violence, Consciousness, Sexuality & World Religion: A Roadmap (Part II)

Chris King*

ABSTRACT

In this work, the author strives to provide the knowledge to empower individuals to resist the fallacious claims of religious imperatives and act to correct the diabolical mistakes of the past; to liberate human consciousness, replenish the Earth, protect the tree of life's diversity and safeguard the passage of the generations. If you are a scientist it is a comprehensive source-referenced research review. If you are religious it serves as important reading to understand the actual roots of your beliefs. Thus, this work may serve as a road map to exorcise the founding scriptures abetting violence and homicide in religious traditions. Humans since the dawn of history have used meditation, deprivation and visionary plants and fungi, to enter into internal conscious states that form an inner cosmology, complementing the external cosmology of nature and the physical universe. We need to accept that the pursuit of knowledge requires an attitude of social freedom for individuals to explore their own inner conscious states using visionary species and substances first hand rather than the second and third hand doctrines of prescriptive religions, and accept the lessons of nature in developing our notions of morality as a mechanism to reduce intra-social strife, to in turn achieve social and religious dominance over others.

Part II of this article includes: 4. Creation Myths and Carnal Misadventures; 5. Heaven, Hell and the End of Days; 6. Serpent to Shaitan: The Evolution of the Devil; and 7. Stoning, Enslavement and Genocide.

Key Words: nature, violence, consciousness, sexuality, world religion, roadmap.

4. Creation Myths and Carnal Misadventures

Virtually all peoples with a written, or oral record describe accounts of how they imagine they and the world around them came to be in creation myths the world over as diverse as there are people. This has been happening ever since small bands of people first told stories round the campfire. These stories deal with other-worldly conditions as we have already seen in the San creation story, which has many elements parallel to the sabbatical creation. They are not intended to be practically accurate instructions, as would be how to make a precise poison potion for one's arrows or how to find a particular rare herb in the forest, but are metaphorical tales which help a people makes sense of the world and their place in it.

* Correspondence: Chris King <http://www.dhushara.com> E-Mail: chris@sexualparadox.org



Fig 16. The sabbatical account is a flat earth cosmos made of dark waters where the sky is a great solid dome (firmament) and the plants are made complete with fruit before there is a Sun to shine on them.

Likewise, we find the sabbatical creation account in Genesis to be a charming and deeply endearing creation myth. As already noted, God appears as the 'Elohim (male plural) intimating a dyadic being, who makes woman and man in *their* likeness. The 'Elohim take the Earth *tohu va vohu* – without form or void – and darkness on the face of the deep. It is not said the 'Elohim created this, indeed just that their spirit moved on the face of the waters, merely saying 'let there be light' and there was. The 'Elohim separate the light from the darkness into day and night.

This makes metaphorical sense as a primal division of the existential condition we experience consciously but it makes no sense at all physically, as there is yet no sun to make the day and night. Next day the 'Elohim make a great, dome or firmament, in the midst of the waters, with the part above becoming heaven. The third day 'Elohim gather dry land out of the lower waters, and suddenly, on command, all the plants and grasses appear replete with seed-bearing fruit. But it is only into the fourth day that the 'Elohim get around to fixing the Sun and Moon and stars onto the great dome of the firmament although day and night already existed and the plants had already borne fruit. This makes no real-time physical sense. It is a purely metaphorical 'dreamtime' account. On the fifth day 'Elohim get around to the birds and sea creatures and on the sixth day the land animals, and, almost as an afterthought, make woman and man male and female 'in our image, after our likeness' to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over every living thing. And to enact a ritual observance, on the seventh day, the 'Elohim observed Shabbat.

Taken as a metaphorical creation myth, this is one of the most beautiful accounts ever produced by human culture and a testimony to Hebrew eloquence of culture, but as a literal description of the natural universe clung to by religious believers, in frank rejection of the evidence from nature, it is dangerous in its simplicity and lack of any realistic correspondence with the physical universe as we have later come to discover it.

It has been suggested that this account comes from Northern Israel and the kingly traditions of Solomon, a tradition that later became largely lost in the exile of the ten tribes by the Assyrians and that the Yawistic Eden story is a product of the Southern Kingdom of Judea, which retained its Jewish governance until the exile into Babylon. In any event the Eden story has a starker and more punitive message that has placed women in bondage to man and cast human nature under the pall of recrimination ever since.

Several aspects of the sabbatical creation show parallels with Chaldean cuneiform tablets depicting a genesis myth, including a creation from chaotic waters, the firmaments above and below, the creation of the sun and moon, the animals and humans and their fall from grace. The seven days is also a reflection of the seven layers of heaven and of hell in the Sumerian cosmology. Likewise there is a Babylonian flood myth in which a mountain top is reached and a dove is dispatched which cannot find land. In fig 6 the Temptation seal is shown depicting a man or horned god, a woman, a seven-branched tree and the serpent, predating the Eden story. One of the principal derivations of eden is Akkadian *edinnu* - steppe, or plain, attributed to the plain of the Euphrates river, although a second derivation 'dn as a verb meaning well-watered, or giving abundance, has been found in old Aramaic and Assyrian inscriptions on a statue of Hadad from TelFekhuyeh in northern Syria.

Shortly into the second chapter of Genesis there is a disjunction, when having apparently already made humanity female and male in their likeness, God is suddenly referred to in the singular. There is a mist watering the ground and Yahweh forms man of the dust of the ground, and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life; and man becomes a living soul. This is a very primitive act, akin to the San myth, and far from a creation on a cosmic scale. Yahweh breathes in the same way that we breathe. Yahweh then plants a garden to the East in Eden. He doesn't just say 'let there be a garden' and it is as the 'Elohim did. He 'plants' the garden as we would, and food-bearing trees and the two trees, one of life and the other of knowledge of dark and light. Yahweh then takes one of Adam's ribs and makes Eve.



Fig 17. Eden: Temptation, Fall, and Expulsion from nature and sexual integration, into mortality through a Jealous God (Brothers Limbourg)

Adam says this is "flesh of my flesh", "bone of my bones", "woman taken out of man", pronouncing the token of sexual fertility, to "cleave unto his wife", so they become "one flesh" and they were "naked and unashamed". Then the serpent beguiles the woman who seeks wisdom into eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, saying "you will not surely die but your eyes will be opened and ye shall be as gods knowing", and she also gives the fruit to Adam. The only ostensible result is that they cover

themselves with fig leaves, something no married couple bother to do unless someone else might be looking, and indeed there was, for Yahweh noticed and became angry and Adam hid and then blamed the woman Eve.

Yahweh then curses everyone, man, woman and serpent, making woman suffer pain in childbirth to be ruled over by her husband, the serpent to crawl in the dust, and man to live by the sweat of his brow among the thistles and thorns. They are shut out of the garden with a flaming sword and cursed with mortality, lest they also eat of the Tree of Life and become immortal like the gods – as 'one of us' – intimating Yahweh is not a lone deity after all. As an afterthought, Yahweh, ever the humble artisan, makes leather clothes for them. Adam now impregnates his wife and the generations of humanity ensue.

Taken metaphorically, this can be seen both as a myth about the origin of mortality and its relationship with sexuality. Before the fruit were eaten Adam knew Eve in the sense of cleaving unto her, but it is only afterwards that she becomes pregnant. So the myth is explaining that mortality is the price for sexual fertility. This is in a sense a deep truth. The very variety created by sexual recombination means individual mortality because our children are all diverse mixtures of their parent's identities. It is also intimating that humanity has fallen out of paradisiacal relationship with nature through the knowledge of good and evil, just as urban civilizations have succeeded gatherer-hunter societies in the wilderness. This is the principal and key message we should take as a warning for the future.

But as a moral tale it is incendiary and profoundly disabling to human integrity. This is a patriarchal fraud. Woman becomes the devil's gateway as Augustine put it, casting women into an inferior status from alpha to omega of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, leading to all manner of diabolical punishments and disrespect of the immortal sex. Patriarchal monotheism is also a device for men to gain control over female reproductive choice because of the overweening fear of paternity uncertainty. We can also see in the later stories of Laban asking Jacob to tarry for seven years at a stretch at the matriarchal household and Jacob rejecting the matriarchal order and escaping with his wives Rachel and Leah, with Rachel hiding the teraphim – the house gods – under her menstrual skirt to participate in founding the ten patriarchal tribes of Israel. The Eden story thus becomes a central motif to assert reproductive control of man over woman.

Finally, and most tragically, the moral of the Eden story is that humanity is doomed from the start to have sinned by disobedience to God, resulting in the knowledge of good and evil becoming an endless expression of original sin, woven into the entire sweep of human history, from the very beginning to the end of days. By this means the Eden story dooms humanity to the status of flawed beings, doomed to mortality through transgression against the almighty. Beings who cannot be trusted, who cannot trust themselves, whose only salvation is to pray to god and submit their flawed identities to the divine.

Neither does it satisfactorily explain mortality. The story of Maui shows us that even the great hero's attempt to conquer death was laughable pomposity. This is a reasonable assessment of the nature of life, which the Eden story is not, because it falsely seduces us into thinking we might have had immortal life if Eve hadn't sinned. It is clear that before the fruit humans were already

fertile because they were admonished to leave the parents to cleave unto one another. You can't have parents without sexual fertility, so eating the fruit didn't change the situation. We are mortal because sexuality causes our offspring to be part of each of the parents, not just a clone of one parthenogenetic being. It is the teeming diversity of sexual offspring that enables us to resist disease and to evolve as complex organisms. We owe to it our very existence. If the Polynesians knew immortality was a pretentious hope, the exilic Yahwists blaming it on women is simply a device to control women of no credible virtue.

5. Heaven, Hell and the End of Days

The historical span of Christianity has become like a great epoch-spanning bow, with Jesus the arrow at the centre representing the violence of confrontation between God and the Devil, as expressed in the crucifixion. At one end of the bow lies Eden and the Fall from paradise. At the other end is the apocalyptic Day of Judgment when sinners are condemned to Hell and the righteous go to Heaven, with the Jesus of the Second Coming standing over all in military might like a feudal lord of power, as expressed in the hyperbolic tones of the Book of Revelation.

We know the Christian church was only supposed to be a temporary guardian of the faith until the imminently expected return of the Lord in Power, claimed by Jesus to be in the very same generation:

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 (Mark 9:1).

*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 (Luke 21:32).*

But the promised Kingdom never came so finessing the script, the gospels also had Jesus leave it up to Abba to determine the time, while at the same time claiming it could happen at any moment:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father (Mark 13:32).

*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 (Luke 12:39).*

However in the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus denied the Kingdom was any other realm than the natural world in which we live and our inner experience of reality:

*If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,'
then the birds of the sky will precede you.*

*If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you.
Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you.*

*When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize
that it is you who are the sons of the living father (3).*

His disciples said, "When will the kingdom come?"

*Jesus said, "It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying 'here it is'
or 'there it is'.*

*Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it."
(113)*

Two millennia later, the church, which was conceived as just a temporary steward, clings onto power in perpetuity, while Jesus hangs idolatrously dripping sacrificial blood beside every church altar, while the faithful continue to eat his flesh and drink his blood as the *soma* and *sangre* of the Eucharist – the central blood-letting *sine qua non* of the Christian faith.

But these notions of eternal salvation and damnation in triage and cosmic cataclysm are not part of the original Hebrew tradition at all. Older passages in the Hebrew bible simply refer to She'ol, the common grave of all humans, a place of darkness to which all the dead go, both the righteous and the unrighteous, regardless of the moral choices made in life, a place of stillness and darkness, cut off from life and from God. In some texts, Sheol is considered to be the home of both the righteous and the wicked, separated into respective compartments; in others, it was considered a place of punishment, meant for the wicked dead alone. In the Hebrew Bible, *abaddon*, with the meaning of destruction, is used with reference to a bottomless pit, often appearing alongside sheol. The Babylonians had a similar underworld called Aralu, and the Greeks had one known as Hades. When the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek in ancient Alexandria around 200 BC Hades was substituted for Sheol, and this is reflected in the New Testament, where Hades is both the underworld of the dead and the personification of the evil it represents. In Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scripture, Gehenna is also named as a destination of the wicked. Gehenna was originally the Valley of the Son of Hinnom outside ancient Jerusalem - the site was where followers of various Ba'als and Caananite gods, including Moloch, sacrificed their children by fire, thereafter deemed to be cursed.

Later Jewish thought, which is focused on work in this life, has a looser set of beliefs in the afterlife, with room for individual shades of opinion. Truly righteous souls ascend directly to Gan Eden. The average person descends to Gei Hinnom. Some view Gehinnom as a place of torture and punishment, fire and brimstone. Others imagine it less harshly, as a place where one reviews the actions of his/her life and repents for past misdeeds. The soul's sentence in Gehinnom is usually limited to a twelve-month period of purgation before it takes its place in Olam Ha-Ba, the World to Come, loosely associated with the resurrection of the dead in the messianic age, but used generally to refer to the spiritual afterlife. Only the utterly wicked do not ascend to Gan Eden at the end of this year. Sources differ on what happens to these souls at the

end of their initial time of purgation. Some say that the wicked are utterly destroyed and cease to exist, while others believe in eternal damnation.

We can of course trace the origins of heaven and hell back to the astral religions, where there were seven layers of the heavens and of the underworld. In Sumeria, Inanna, the Queen of Heaven, having made sweet love to her consort Dumuzzi, completes her knowledge of the universe by making a journey to the seven levels of the underworld, losing her protective seven veils of clothing, to become stark naked, before returning to the world of men, then sacrificing her husband Dumuzzi for assuming the instruments of power in her absence, becoming an archetype of seasonal male sacrifice, recounted in the Baptist's beheading after Salome's dance.

Then we can turn the coin over and ask about the Biblical origins of angelic heaven, which we will find of course as far back as Genesis in terms of the Sons of God – *bene 'Elohim* – echoing the Canaanite notion of the Ba'alim as offspring of El. So while the Host of Heaven, consisting of the astral deities was cursed as heathen, the Lord of Hosts continued as the same spiritual host albeit clearly subordinate to God.



Fig 18: Fra Angelico Day of Judgment Paradise and Hell separated by the graves of the undead.

Monotheists, including Christians and Muslims, believe biological life in the physical universe is just a testing ground for God to see if we have obeyed His will, our free-will having been dispensed by Him only as an illusory precursor to His ultimate rewards, or dire punishments, if we deviate in any way from His divine plan. Some Christian fundamentalists go so far as imagining we will all float up into the sky in the Rapture, leaving the flawed realm of nature behind, and would-be Muslim martyrs fantasize they will see Allah's face and sexually cavort with black-eyed virgins in paradise, even when they blow themselves up in gruesome and violent suicide bombings, frequently killing many innocent people along the way.

The nature of Hell is generally palpable enough, namely unrelenting torture by beastly beings in the fires of hell. Little attention is paid to how such a painful and protracted scenario of

borderline destruction of the body can be maintained, except as some kind of conscious nightmare devoid of any physical substance, or meaning, despite the all-to-real haunting visions of fires and physical torment.

Few questions are asked by such believers about the inconsistencies in their views of heaven or paradise, the Christian one a sexless world of angelic devotion to God, with little or no free choice, and the Muslim one sexually skewed and ultimately hedonistic, with black eyed virgins recreated undefiled each morning for the pleasure of men. Neither the Christian, nor the Muslim paradise, are real places, with the manifest complexity, or verifiable reality of nature, but physically unrealizable imaginary fantasy spaces lacking biological meaning and consistency.

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven (Matt 20:30).

In the Christian heaven, angels are portrayed, as if still in a human body except sexless, even if in nominal male and female form echoing the debased sexuality of their earthly biological existence, with large feathered bird-like wings attached, consistent with their need to fly up in the air into the flat-Earth heaven, as a place in the firmament of the sky, ignoring the fact there is no resting place in the stratosphere, the lack of air to give such wings lift at high altitudes, and the endless frozen vacuum that permeates space. Why or how God would create an eternal heaven in outer space is an astronomical absurdity.



Fig 19: Left: The Soul taken up to Heaven – Bouguereau. Right: The 72 black-eyed virginal houris in Muslim Paradise.

Muslim paradise is even more fraught with contradictions - a veritable hedonistic pornographic cornucopia, with every righteous man able to command multiple wives, as well as having 72 black-eyed virgins to wait on his every whim, recreated each morning so that they can be enjoyed sexually to the full without ever having been defiled:

*Surely those who guard (against evil) are in a secure place, In gardens and springs;
They shall wear of fine and thick silk, (sitting) face to face;
Thus (shall it be), and We will wed them with houris - pure, beautiful ones (44:51).*

The chaste virginity of the black-eyed houris is neither violated by man nor jinn:

And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are two gardens. Having in them various kinds. In both of them are two fountains flowing. In both of them are two pairs of every fruit. Reclining on beds, the inner coverings of which are of silk brocade; and the fruits of the two gardens shall be within reach. In them shall be those who restrained their eyes [bashful virgins], whom neither any man nor jinn has touched before. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? (55:46)

No mention is made of what such a heaven offers for women, or what happens to these feminine hours in the dead of night to repurify them, or mercilessly annihilate them only to regenerate them de novo, or whether they also have immortal souls, their own free-will, or how such sex and so much of it, apparently without reproduction, can have any meaning, or how the many kinds of trees which sport pleasurable drinks, bunches of grapes, jewels (fig 29) or gold and silver cups, can exist, except in a fantasy version of the physical universe. Of course confirmed believers will always say this frank dreamscape is simply beyond the conceptual capacity of humble humanity to even comprehend, leaving themselves completely credulous to these contrivances.



Fig 20: Purgatory Carracci

In neither the Muslim nor the Christian case is there any constructive purpose for the eternal paradisiacal existence. There is no natural evolution of the existential condition, except for endless hymns praising God, or worthy utterances of "Salaam" and yet more unmitigated sexual pleasure. No new journeys appear to be made. No new learning experiences, or startling discoveries. It is as if the eternal heaven has become a sterile experience frozen in time, as when a drowning man sees his life flashing before his eyes and everything that has ever happened takes place in the brief moments before unconsciousness takes over.

To add to the cultural evolutionary diversity of heaven and hell, Catholics have added a third realm, purgatory, an intermediate state after physical death, in which those destined for heaven "undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven". Only those who die in the state of grace but have not in life reached a sufficient level of holiness can be in purgatory, and therefore no one in purgatory will remain forever in that state or go to hell. To add to the cultural variety, the status of purgatory is contested by large sections of the Orthodox and Protestant communities, who variously regard it as an ambiguous condition, tacitly accept its role, or condemn it outright as an evil heresy.

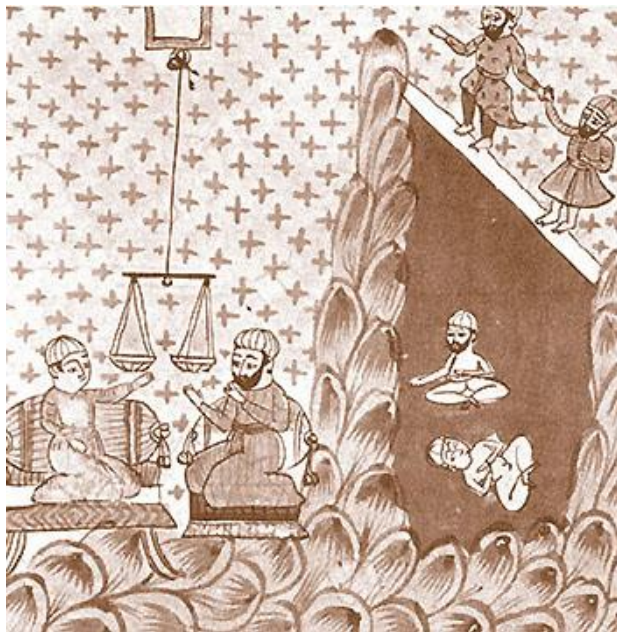


Fig 21: Zoroastrian Chinvat Bridge and the Judgment

The end of days notion of a Day of Judgment involving the alternate fates of heaven and hell was first pictured by Zoroaster as the cleansing fire of Ahura Mazda burning out the ignorance of Angra Mainyu in our first full model of the nature-violating hell fire and damnation later pictured in apocalyptic scenarios, from Revelation to the Quran.

The paradise of Zoroastrianism is attained the fourth day after death by crossing the Bridge of the Separator, which widens when the righteous approach it. The righteous soul crosses the bridge and is met by a beautiful maiden who is the physical and feminine embodiment of all his good works on earth. He is then escorted into the House of Song to await the Last Day. On this day, everyone will be purified and live in a new world absent of evil and full of youthful rejoicing. But for the less than righteous, the bridge turns on its side and becomes like a razor. The god Mithra is there with a scale to balance the good and evil deeds done during one's lifetime, and if evil deeds prevail, then the soul is tormented by an old hag before it falls off the bridge into a hell of purification worse than Dante's inferno, portrayed in the Vision of Arda Viraf. However note carefully that the Zoroastrian hell was only a temporary state before one became purified and entered the paradisiacal realm, so although the fires of purification were gruesome in the extreme, the idea of eternal damnation is a perversion of the entire purification concept. Like Upanishadic and Buddhist traditions, Zoroastrianism seeks integration of the psyche through purification of faults, not eternal damnation.



Fig 21b: Ancient Egyptian papyrus depicting the journey into the afterlife.

But the idea of a moral judgment to enter the afterlife is very ancient. The afterlife and its belief system in Ancient Egyptian religion, is one of the earliest known in recorded history. The Egyptians believed that when the body died, parts of its soul known as *ka* (body double) and the *ba* (personality) would go to the Kingdom of the Dead, while the soul dwelt in the Fields of Aaru. Arriving at one's reward in afterlife was a demanding ordeal, requiring a sin-free heart and

the ability to recite the spells, passwords and formulae of the Book of the Dead and a sarcophagus with inscriptions to ferry one on one's way. In the Hall of Two Truths, the deceased's heart was weighed against the Shu feather of truth and justice taken from the headdress of the goddess Ma'at. If the heart was lighter than the feather, they could pass on to Aaru, where they would exist in pleasure for all eternity, but if it were heavier they would be devoured by the demon Ammit.



Fig 22: The Last Judgment - Giovanni da Modena, depicts the fate of Muhammad, bound to a rock in Hell, centre right, being clawed by demons. It has been the subject of a thwarted terror attack.

We need to ask here of the so-called god acting in history, cursing and redeeming his people, that if the entire notion of the Judgment was an alien idea spawned by a “heathen” religion following an alien sun-god of light, what does this mean about the notion of the “true god”? Is Ahura Mazda also a manifestation of the ‘true deity’, acting with the Hebrew deity to bring about a knowledge of the impending Judgment? If so, how far does this go? Is Vishnu also a manifestation? Is Kali, Inanna or Asherah in some way? We rapidly converge on a form of universal animism of the deities. The reality is clearly that cultures evolve through human insight generating novel religious concepts that purport to underlie the nature of conscious experience. Rather than the gods being absolute, they are shifting miasmas of the human spiritual imagination.

We can see this evolution again in the comparison between the more vestigial references to the Judgment in Luke and the fully-fledged dysphoria in Revelation. In Luke the apocalypse is largely worldly - falling by the sword, captivity, Roman occupation – followed by largely natural signs in the sun, moon and stars usually referring to eclipses, the sea and waves roaring referring

to natural storms, with a final hint of the powers of heaven shaken before the Son of Man comes with power and glory:

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 21:23).

In Thessalonians Paul has a somewhat different vision of the unbearable lightness of being:

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 (1 Thess 4:16).



Fig 23: We now know the heavens are full of galaxies and stars and the Earth is a planet orbiting around the Sun, whose biosphere is under threat of mass extinction from human impacts partly driven through scorched Earth religious attitudes. The rapture is a fallacy. Above all religion needs to

adapt and evolve towards cherishing and protecting the Earth and its living diversity for the passage of the future generations.

Paul's 'rapture', is both completely unnatural, and profoundly dangerous because it leads to many Christians today imagining the second coming of Jesus as the heavenly rapture in which the 'late planet Earth' is carelessly discarded for an eternal life in mid-air.

By contrast, Revelation is a fully-fledged apocalyptic fantasy of the triage of all life amid conflict of nations in which there are cataclysmic cosmological phenomena - a great earthquake where the sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon like blood, mixing an eclipse of the sun, an eclipse of the moon and an earthquake. The stars of heaven fall to the earth, the sky recedes like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island is moved out of place. This takes us straight back to the flat-Earth cosmology of the sabbatical creation. There is no way that the islands and mountains would just move a bit when the stars fall and the sky rolls up. This only makes sense as a conscious nightmare vision, or a political hyperbole, not a genuine cosmological event.



Fig 24. Panorama of the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane centre left, the cemetery where the 144,000 undead are believed to rise, centre, and right, the Gates of Mercy filled with rubble by the Muslims for fear the messiah will return, as in Ezekiel.

It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same (Ezek 44:3).

Revelation is replete with ornate details, from the seven seals to the seven trumpets sounding, to the four horsemen, with everyone hiding from the wrath of the lamb having seven horns and seven eyes. The 144,000 Hebrews are sealed. Gradually more and more apocalyptic phenomena are revealed from hail and fire mingled with blood falling from the sky, as well as a mountain and the star of wormwood killing a neat third of the sea creatures and ships, a third of the rivers and a third of the vegetation. Then a third of the heavenly bodies go out too and another star opens up the bottomless pit.

Further battles ensue, in which a third of all humans are killed yet another triage, the powers of the beasts become for a time ascendant, we see the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars in labour with a male child, and the great whore of Babylon arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Eventually the forces of the 'Lord' become ascendant amid further poisoning turning the seas to blood and other forms of destruction.

Ultimately all this tumult and desecration leads simply to the new Jerusalem surrounded by the Tree of Life. By contrast with the cosmological hyperbole of the intervening chapters, we thus come right back to the all-too-physical gates of the heavenly city, and the all-too-botanical Tree of Life with its twelve monthly fruits for the healing of the nations.

However there is no clearly unambiguous acceptance within Christian eschatology about either the afterlife, or the nature of eternal damnation. Many formative Christian thinkers, from Luther to Calvin, and several existing denominations, such as the Seventh Day Adventists adhere to *mortalism* - the notion that the soul is not eternal and that when we die we enter into an unconscious state, as the Sadduces did in Yeshua's time. However, unlike the Sadduces, Christian mortalists believe they will nevertheless be revived on the Day of Judgment. There is also a continuing sentiment of *universal reconciliation* within Christianity, although it is rejected by the church hierarchy, that eternal damnation in hell is inconsistent with a forgiving God, and

that hell is a kind of purgatory so that, as in the Zoroastrian account, all souls are eventually redeemed.

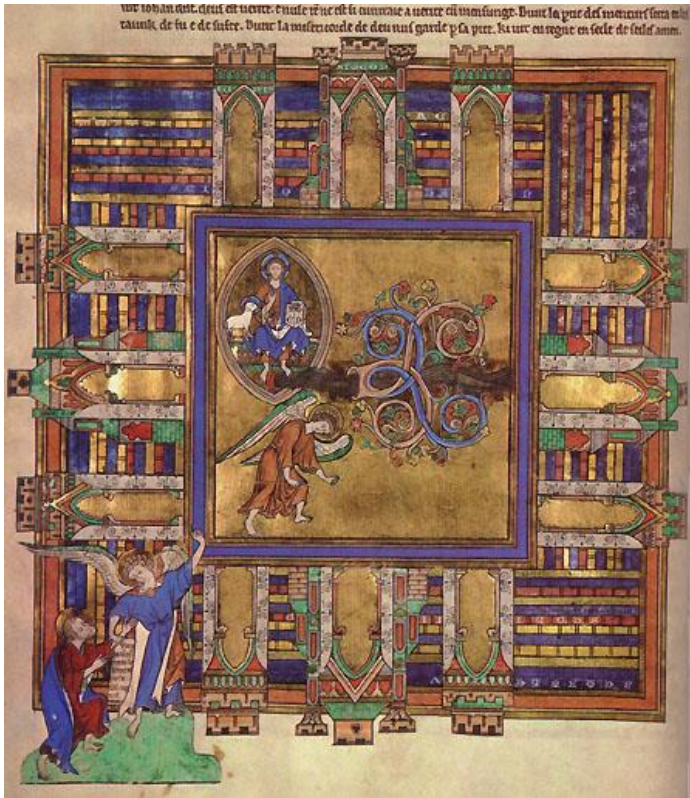


Fig 25: The Tree of Life in the new Jerusalem with the twelve gates, the throne of the lamb, and the twelve monthly fruit for the healing of the nations conflating the transcendent and the accursed physical into one contradictory fantasy.

In the Quran, Hell (fig 29) is often described as 'an evil resting place' and the 'Fire.' But fire is just the beginning of the torment in hell because the fire is like a wall enclosing the wicked, and when they cry out, they are showered with water as 'hot as molten brass,' which scalds their faces. It gets worse. The unbelievers wear garments of fire and are lashed with rods of iron, and if they try to escape, they are dragged back and told to 'taste the torment of the Conflagration.'

There are also clear indications of the Zoroastrian Judgment woven into the Quranic account alongside Jewish and Christian material. The sexy houris of paradise seem to be an inflation of the maiden waiting for the blessed over the Chinvat Bridge. The bridge is likewise in the Quran sura 19, and even more explicitly in the hadith, as the Sirat bridge, which is sharper than the edge of sword and thinner than a hair:

We will call them to account in the company of all their Satans and set them on their knees around the Fire of Hell; then from every sect. We will certainly drag out its stoutest rebels against the Compassionate (Allah). Certainly We know best who deserves most to be burned therein. There is not a single one of you, who shall not pass over it [the Sirat Bridge], this absolute decree of your Lord is unavoidable; then We will deliver those who were pious and leave the wrongdoers therein humbled on their knees (19:68).

Ironically the Islamic hell allows for the Muslim believers, whatever their sins, to be purified in the Zoroastrian and later Jewish manner, but infidels to suffer eternal damnation, as in the Christian condemnation:

Most of the ancients went astray before them, though We had sent Warners to them. See what was the end of those who had been forewarned:

they all perished, except the sincere devotees of Allah (37:71).

In a description reminiscent of Revelation, the angel Israfil [the Burning One] will sound the trumpet and all living creatures, mankind, angels and jinn then living, will die. Another blast and all will be raised to life. Allah's throne will appear in the clouds, carried by eight angels. Believers will receive a book of their deeds in their right hand, and unbelievers their left hand. The books will be opened and men's works weighed on scales (*mizan*) as in the Zoroastrian description. In fear, men will look for someone to plead with Allah. They will go to Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, but find no help. At last they will turn to Muhammad and Allah will judge, as in the Earthquake:

When the earth will be shaken to her utmost convulsion, and the earth shall bring out all her inner burdens, man shall say: "What is happening to her?" On that Day she shall report whatever had happened on her, for your Lord shall have commanded her to do so. On that Day men shall proceed in sorted out groups to be shown their 'Book of Deeds.' Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it there, and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it there (99:1).

The Quranic Day of Resurrection also has signs in the form of an eclipse:

"When will this Day of Resurrection be?" Well, it will come when the sight shall be dazed, the moon becomes dark, and the sun and the moon are brought together (75:6).

We even witness the splitting of the Moon, although this supposed astronomical calamity has little enough effect on the Earth for the unbelievers to think it a mere magic trick:

*The hour drew nigh and the moon did rend asunder.
And if they see a miracle they turn aside and say: Transient magic.
And they call (it) a lie, and follow their low desires; (54:1).*

This is consistent with an archaic view of the heavens in the Quran as a firmament with lamps erected on it as in the original sabbatical creation:

Blessed is the One Who has decked the sky with constellations and placed in it a lamp and a shining moon (25:61).

This leads to a misunderstanding of the fact that the difference between the Sun's and Moon's orbital periods means the Sun does effectively overtake the Moon during the day, in the time between the old and new Moon:

Neither it is possible for the sun to overtake the moon, nor for the night to outstrip the day: each floats along in its own orbit (36:40).

The night outstripping the day is again an archaic reference to the sabbatical cosmology in which day and night are created before the Sun and Moon. This view is clearly physically incorrect and

cannot represent an accurate description of a theistic cosmos any more than the sabbatical creation does.

Fig 26. The Islamic Day of Judgment, attributed to Mohammad Modabber

There are several pointers here. The entire concept of the End of Days is an ultimate scene of religious violence, not just violence committed by those portrayed as evil characters, but unmitigated violence on the part of God. This is a hideous projection of the sacrificial principle to the whole universe.



There is no evidence whatever in nature that the world has to undergo a mass extinction of all forms of life and a cosmological disruption of the stars and planets for moral redemption to ensue. Sacrificing the entire natural universe to achieve a violent victory by God and in the case of the Christian Revelation, his rather feudal looking Lord of the second coming on a charger is an utterly dangerous self-destructive myth of diabolical proportions and utterly violent intent. What hope could there be for us in the new Jerusalem if this is the way it had to be achieved and we are to be forever subject to such a needlessly destructive power structure? The only legitimate way it can be read is as a warning of the consequences of the apocalyptic tumult as an end game we run perilously ever closer to through our utopian religious quest to the exclusion of healing and regeneration. Perhaps apocalypse is a fundamental feature of the future shock of our fall from paradisiacal integration with nature as gatherer-hunters in spawning the epoch of clash of the civilizations. Maybe it is engrained in our psyche and world view, not as a divinely ordained inevitability, but a disastrous scenario we fearfully anticipate and slide far too close to, through our religious fervour as moths to a candle flame which is more likely to incinerate us than to enlighten us.

6. Sepent to Shaitan: The Evolution of the Devil

In 'The Origin of Satan', Elaine Pagels outlines the social history of how Satan came to be the arch figure of darkness portrayed in Christian scripture. The earliest references to an opponent of God are prophetic references to the monsters of Canaanite mythology in the context of condemning those who have assimilated with idolatrous culture:

the Lord will punish the Leviathan, the twisting serpent and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea (Is 27:1).

The first evidence we see of Satan is as a tester, one of the Sons of God, or bene 'Elohim, referred to in Genesis in their corrupted union with the daughters of men who became giants, and in Numbers in the form of an angel testing Ba'alam. In Job however, he is referred to as Satan, not as an adversary of god, but again as a tester:

there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life (Job 1:6).

Clearly there is no sense of rebellion here on Satan's part, but also clearly we have a cosmology in which there are other divine agents, each with their own intentionality, forming a polytheistic host, although clearly with the Lord at the head of a militaristic royal court.

In Chronicles, Satan also plays a role as tester but this time he causes mayhem when David heeds his enticement and institutes a census over Israel:

*And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.
And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people,
Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan;
and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it (1 Chr 21).*

This causes social unrest and displeases God, who sends an angel standing between the earth and sky to smite Israel. David is given a poisoned chalice of one of three unpalatable options by God and seventy thousand men dies in the plague before David sets up an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan and the crisis is appeased.

By the time of the returning exiles Zechariah portrays a situation in which there is internal division when the returnees try to impose their purist doctrines and take charge of the priestly offices:

*And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord,
and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan,
The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem
rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? (Zech 3:1)*

Satan is here speaks for a disaffected and unsuccessful party against another party of fellow Israelites who wanted to continue their more inclusive religious worship, but he is also coming to be portrayed more as an adversary of God, who sides with the purist returnees.

Israel, having been annexed by the Assyrians, put in exile by the Babylonians, and returned under the presiding influence of the Persians, now found themselves under the Hellenistic dynasty established by Alexander. When Antochus Epiphanes imposed Greek worship and stormed the Temple the Maccabean revolt ensued, which ultimately led to the Hasmonean family gaining control of the priesthood in what was now a theocratic state. However, as they in turn abandoned the austere habits of their predecessors, the Pharisees, farmers and tradespeople demanded that the Hasmoneans relinquish the high priesthood to those that deserved it. Other more radically dissident groups including the Essenes, and followers of John the Baptist and Jesus denounced the high priestly family and its allies. The religious invective had now moved from Israel versus the nations to who was on the side of God and who was of Belial, the power of evil called by many different names, Satan, Beelzebub, Semihazah, Azazel, Prince of Darkness – the evil in our midst, echoing again the Zoroastrian division of the universe between the enlightenment of Ahura Mazda and the ignorance of Angra Mainyu. Thus begins the story of Satan as the fallen angel in a heavenly rebellion, echoing the story of the fall of the Prince of Light in Isaiah:

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:
I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit (Is 14:12).*

Fig 27. Asmodeus (Greek: Ασμοδαίος) or Ashmedai (Hebrew: אַשְׁמֵדַי) a king of demons of Hell from Tobit (Dictionnaire Infernal Collin de Plancy).

Later an apocryphal version of the life of Adam and Eve, 'Vita Adae et Evae' pictures Satan's supposed fall arising from his jealousy over God's creation of Adam. In various apocrypha, from the Book of Watchers to Jubilees, the union of the Sons of God to the Daughters of men is attributed to the emergence of various forms of evil, from bad spirits subverting humanity, to metallurgy and the lust for material wealth. By the time of the Essenes, the polarization of the cosmos between the forces of light and dark had become supreme in the Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness:



*The Prince of Light thou hast appointed to come to our support; but Satan, the angel Mastema,
thou hast created for the pit; he rules in darkness, and his purpose is to bring about evil and sin.*

So finally we come to the form of Satan as represented in Christian scripture in Luke, as a fully-fledged adversary of God and the Lord:

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Luke 4:5).

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Then of course Jesus is accused of blasphemously having dealings with the devil:

If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you (Luke 11:18).

And although God has sacrificed his only begotten Son so that we can be forgiven our sins, and Jesus has intentionally passed the sop to Judas assigning him the role, Satan is nevertheless blamed for the betrayal:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me...

*He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.
And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly (John 13:21).*

When we turn to the Quranic Satan, or Shaitan, sometimes called Iblis, described as one of the jinns who are collectively referred to as satans, we find a less threatening character who has no real powers, but leads believers and non-believers alike astray by enticement and invitation, until the Day of Judgment, when he confesses that he has no powers, fears al-Llah, and that it is their own fault for being so gullible:

Satan will say: "In fact, the promises which Allah made to you were all true; I too made some promises to you but failed to keep any of them. However, I had no power over you. I just invited you, and you accepted my invitation. Now! Do not blame me, but blame yourselves (14:22).

In several repeated passages, the Quran follows the apocryphal line of attributing the fall of Iblis to pride in the face of al-Llah's creation of Adam:

We said to the angels "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," they all prostrated themselves except Iblees (Satan), who refused. Then We said: "O Adam! This Satan is a real enemy to you and to your wife. Do not let him get you both out of Paradise and get you in trouble. Here in Paradise you shall go neither hungry nor naked; you shall neither suffer from thirst nor from the scorching heat." - But Satan seduced him saying: "O Adam! Should I show you the Tree of Immortality and an everlasting kingdom?" They both ended up eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. As a result their private parts became apparent to them and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves from the Garden (20:116).

Again the satans have little power in heaven and are chased every which way to keep them out:

We have indeed decked the worldly heaven with beautiful stars and have secured it against all obstinate rebellious Satans. They cannot even hear the words of the exalted assembly of angels and they are darted at from every side they are repulsed and are under a constant chastisement. Eavesdroppers are persuaded by a flaming fire of piercing brightness. Ask them: "What is more difficult - their creation or the rest of Our creation? - Them We have created out of a sticky clay (37:6).

Satan himself is given respite until the day of Resurrection by al-Llah, but is cursed to eventually be thrown in the pit when he pledges to be a tester in the Old Testament mold and seduce the generations of mankind:

Satan requested: "Give me respite till the Day of Resurrection." Allah said: "The respite you requested is hereby granted." Satan declared: "Since You let me deviate, now I will lie in ambush for mankind on Your Right Way. I Will come upon them from the front, from the rear, from the right, and from the left, and You will not find most of them to be grateful." Allah said: "Get out from here, you despicable outcast; I will certainly fill hell with you and all of them who follow you." (7:14)

Critical to submission to al-Llah is belief in the Day of Resurrection where everyone's sins will be weighed, and here it becomes clear that the enticements of the satans are actually part of al-Llah's and the angels plan:

In their case, Iblees' (Satan's) suspicions proved true, as they all followed him except a small group of the believers, even though he had no authority over them. It all happened because We wanted to see who among them believed in the hereafter and who is in doubt concerning it (34:20).

*Conspiring in secret is the work of Satan, who means to vex the believers;
but he cannot harm them at all except as Allah permits; so in Allah let the believers put
their trust (58:10).*

But the people of Mecca were to accuse Muhammad himself of listening to Satan in the notorious episode of the Satanic verses:

*O people of Mecca! Your companion has not gone mad; he (Muhammad) indeed saw
him (Gabriel) in the clear horizon and he is not stingy to withhold the knowledge of the
unseen.*

This (Qur'an) is not the word of an accursed Satan (81:22).



Fig 28: Defeating the Shaitan, Satanic Verses cover Salman Rushdie.

Early Islamic historians recount that Muhammad at first accepted the goddesses al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat highly popular around Mecca, sometimes called thebanat al-Lah, or daughters of al-Llah, as intermediaries. The historians Ibn Sa'd and al Tabari describe the origin of the 'Satanic Verses' from an early tradition 70 years after his death.

The prophet is approached by the Quraysh and persuaded to utter the verses in return for promise of admission to Mecca's inner circles. He tries to find a place for the goddesses without compromising his monotheism. "When the apostle saw that his people had turned their backs on him and he was pained by their estrangement from what he brought them from God, he longed that there should come to him from God a message that would reconcile his people to him. One day, Tabari says, while he was meditating in the Ka'aba, the answer seemed to come in a revelation that gave a place to the three 'goddesses' without compromising his monotheistic vision:

*"Have you then considered the Lat and the Uzza, And Manat, the third, the last?
these are the exalted birds [gharaniq] whose intercession is approved"*

Fig 29. Muhammad meets Gabriel on his night journey on the axis mundi to hell (left) and jewelled tree in paradise (right) Muhammad's face is revealed here - often a cause for a death fatwa (Mi'raj-nameh Turkey 15th c).



In 'Muhammad' p 112, Karen Armstrong recounts that according to this version of the story, the Quraysh were delighted with the new revelation, which in al-Kalbi's words was the traditional invocation made by the Quraysh to the goddesses as they circumambulated the Ka'aba. The gharaniq were probably Numidian cranes which were thought to fly higher than any other bird. Muhammad, may have believed in the existence of the *banat al-Llah* as he believed in the existence of angels and djinn, was giving the 'goddesses' a delicate compliment, without compromising his message.

It is said that Muhammad later removed these verses because he was later told by the angel Gabriel they were "Satan inspired":

*Have you then considered the Lat and the Uzza, And Manat, the third, the last?
What! for you the males and for Him the females! This indeed is an unjust division!
They are naught but names which you have named, you and your fathers;
Allah has not sent for them any authority. They follow naught but conjecture and their
low desire (53:19).*

Immediately he decries angels with female names – despite the black-eyed houris of paradise: *Most surely they who do not believe in the hereafter name the angels with female names (53:27).*

The rejection of the Manat, which follows immediately on his night flight on the axis mundi, led to the historic conflict with the Qura'sh, which resulted in the flight to Medina.

7. Stoning, Enslavement and Genocide

This brings us in turn to the person of Muhammad and the foundation of Islam. Muhammad was the beneficiary of a strong woman Khadijah, his first and only wife until the age of 50, who was a merchant trader whose resources made it possible for him to embark on a visionary quest formulating a religious viewpoint that attempted to assimilate the patriarchal religion of the Jews into the astral worship of gods and goddesses that was a heritage of the high culture of Arabic Nabatea at the time of Jesus. The Kaaba had a tradition of religious tolerance that saw 360 images representing the syncretic astral beliefs of the region, including portraits of Jesus and Mary. The region around Mecca was rich with the worship of the three goddesses al-Uzza the mighty, al-Lat, which simply meant goddess, and Manat. One can find very ancient inscriptions to both al-Llah and al-Lat - god and goddess - in Sinai attesting to their ancient names and al-Uzza, al-Lat and Dhushara hark back to Nabatea, integrating ancient deities of stone cubes, of Ka'aba with later Greek motifs of fertility worship.

Muhammad claimed to have his inspiration from visions in a cave imparted by the Angel Gabriel, in a clear reference back to the Jewish roots of his belief, just as was his initial invocation to pray towards Jerusalem and the Jewish folklore and biblical history permeating the Qu'ran from end to end such as Solomon's hoopoe. In this he is acting as a visionary religious

innovator just as Jesus did, but with a very different agenda. While Jesus confounded peoples assumptions by his actions, creating chaos as a rebel against the unjust social order of his time, resulting in his been accused of blasphemy, Muhammad sought to set up a new Arabic monotheistic religion based on the Jewish heritage, cementing it with liberal tracts of archaic Arab tribal law, defining the status of women in law to be only half that of man. Through his own desire to sequester his own many wives after an incident when a male relative stayed too long on his marriage night to a new bride, Muhammad handed down a heritage where women are veiled, sequestered and chaperoned by their male relatives in a way which denies them freedom of reproductive choice and leaves women in many Muslim countries unable to become fully educated or to live as independent autonomous people. Islam is the only religion today in which women are stoned for adultery in the same archaic manner they were in the sixth century, a punishment blamed on the Jews for setting the precedent. This is not the seal of a text revealed by God, but the mark of a man imposing a social order based on his own personal interpretations of conditions in the sixth century. To suggest it is a divine work of God is bibliolatry.

At first Muhammad lived in peace with the people of Mecca, but when he decided that his verses accepting the three goddesses as intermediaries were a heresy spawned by satanic influence, and began to preach a more firebrand monotheism, this offended the sensibilities of the Quraysh of Mecca and he ended up having to escape to Medina with a small band of followers. There was a large Jewish community at Medina occupying an entire sector of the walled oasis settlement. Many Jews had settled in Arabia from the time of the Roman diaspora. However Muhammad found his new Arab religion, cast in the model of the Jewish heritage, was not respected by the Jews of Medina. Ostensibly, in response to this perceived insult, Muhammad turned the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca.

The situation soured and finally turned to genocide when the Quraysh, angered by his disruptive influence, laid siege to Medina. The plight in the oasis became desperate. Not knowing which side would eventually win, the Jews sent a party to parley with the Quraysh to try to preserve themselves from being overrun by one side or the other. But then in a superstitious misjudgment, the Quraysh deserted the siege when a severe desert storm struck the region. According to Karen Armstrong's "Muhammad" p 206, fearing the Jews might have opened their gates to the enemy, Muhammad appointed a mortally wounded fighter as judge over their fates, causing a Muslim friend of the Jews to draw his finger over his throat to warn them of their impending fate. Seven hundred Jewish men were taken down to the souk and beheaded in an unmitigated genocide. The women and children were taken into slavery. I say unmitigated because the Jews never actually betrayed the Muslims and never did open their gates, so there was no excuse and no valid rationalization for this slaughter.

Karen Armstrong notes: *It is probably impossible for us to dissociate this story from Nazi atrocities and it will inevitably alienate many people irrevocably from Muhammad. But Western scholars like Maxime Rodinson and W. Montgomery Watt argue that it is not correct to judge the incident by twentieth-century standards. But the problem is that in the 21st century these genocidal standards are still legitimized and applied by Muslims today.*



Fig 30. The genocide at Medina
Traditional illustration from
Fitna - The Movie

This slaughter and slavery is used as a spiritual justification for IS to commit genocide on yazidi men and take Yazidi and other women as slaves even to their children in a case of crimes against humanity by demographic rape.

The Islamic State group said it enslaved families from the minority Yazidi sect after overrunning their villages in northwestern Iraq, in what it praised as the revival of an ancient custom of using women and children as spoils of war. The ancient custom of enslavement had fallen out of use because of deviation from true Islam, but was revived when fighters overran Yazidi villages in Iraq's Sinjar region. *"After capture, the Yazidi women and children were then divided according to the Shariah amongst the fighters of the Islamic State who participated in the Sinjar operations, after one fifth of the slaves were transferred to the Islamic State's authority to be divided as khums [a traditional tax on the spoils of war]. This large-scale enslavement of mushrik (idolator) families is probably the first since the abandonment of Shariah law".*

Dabiq magazine, an IS vehicle, tries to justify this profligate enslavement as a sign of the Day of Resurrection, condemning mothers to become slaves even to their own offspring: *"This interpretation is like the one before it, indicating that one of the signs of the Hour is the increased conquests and bringing in of slaves from the lands of kufr. It has also been stated that the meaning of the slave girl giving birth to her master is that people turn away from marriage sufficing with concubines alone. And Allah knows best" [Fathul-Bari]. Ibn Rajab also said, "This indicates the conquest of lands and the high occurrence of taking slaves until concubines and their children increase in numbers. The slave girl becomes a slave to her master while his children have the status of her master over herself. This is because the child of the master has the rank of the master, and thereby the child of the slave girl has the status of her owner and master" [Jami al-Ulum wal-Hikam]. An-Nawawi explained the hadith by saying, "The majority of scholars say that this foretells the increase of concubines and their children in numbers, because the child of a concubine has the status of her master" [Sharh Sahih Muslim]"*.

The genocide at Medina comes on top of a grisly sequence of episodes of religious war in the Arabian peninsula. In 522, King Dhu Nawas Yusaf "Lord of Curls" laid siege to Christian Najran further south. Up to 2000 Christians of Narayan were burned alive allegedly when he offered them Jewry or death, just as Muslims have done, in conversion by the sword, over succeeding centuries. He was in turn killed when a Christian army from Ethiopia, supported by Byzantium, overthrew him and for a time Christian Saba became a rival to Mecca. Then the Persians invaded

and made the peninsula a satrapy. The genocide at Najran is allegedly referred to in the Quran, so Muhammad knew of it as a precedent:

Doomed be the makers of the ditch, who lit the fuel-fed fire and sat around it, to watch what they were doing to the believers (85:4).

But none of these events are an excuse for Muhammad's genocidal actions. Muhammad is cut as a divine prophet, indeed the final prophet, so that any other who would make the claim receives the death penalty, yet he committed a needless genocide in error. This is the mark of a brutal general, not a man of religious insight. The Jews neither betrayed the Muslims nor did they make war on them, or history would have played out very differently. It is this slaughter that ever since has given the justification for Muslim genocides of people of other faiths. It is directly Muhammad's folly and was a homicidal misjudgment because, in the end, he never had to pursue a final military battle with the Quraysh.

The history of Islam then moves on to the Treaty of Hdaybiyah where Muhammad cited the principle of peace, or tranquility, *sakina* when meeting an opponent too strong to defeat at the time, only to abrogate it later:

He it is Who sent down the Sakina into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith (48:4).

Sakina is an expression again echoing Jewish tradition in the form of the Shekhinah or indwelling feminine face of God. However for Muhammad, citing sakina is not really suing for peace but just for a temporary peace treaty that he intended to overthrow later in ultimate victory. In three distinct passages in the Qu'ran, at Hdaybiyah (48:4), under the tree (48:18), and in the cave (9:40), where *sakina* (tranquility) enables Abu Bakr and Muhammad, hiding in the cave, to avoid capture, only later to regroup in greater strength in Medina, *sakina* is associated with another concept, *takiya*, the right to hide the truth, so as to ultimately defeat your enemy in religious victory when you are stronger.

Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts,

so He sent down the sakina on them and rewarded them with a speedy victory (48:18).

The early Islamic historian al-Bukhari noted that al-Hasan the son of Ali and Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, said the Tuqyah, or deceptive outward behaviour, continues to the end of days:

The Tuqyah is allowed until the Day of Resurrection.

Al-Ghazali notes:

it is permissible to lie if attaining the goal is permissible..., and obligatory to lie if the goal is obligatory.

Muhammad abrogated the ten-year Treaty of Hudaibiyah after two-years under the pretext that a tribe the Bakr associated with the Quraysh, were sworn enemies of the Khuza'ah who had sided with Muhammad and violence had broken out. Muhammad assembled an army and marched on Mecca with an assembly so great that resistance was futile. Pivotaly Abu Sufyan who was the husband of Hind-al-Hunud a very prominent tribal warrior queen whose clan had repeatedly fought the Muslims, met them agreed to persuade the people of Mecca to accept the Muslim his shelter in return for guaranteeing their lives in the event the Muslim army entered and attacked Mecca. In the event this enabled the Muslims to march into Mecca unopposed except for the peripheral skirmish.

Ending the period of religious tolerance, Muhammad smashed all the icons in the Ka'aba, leaving only the portraits of Jesus and Mary and ironically, the vagina-like meteoric Black Stone, the most sacrosanct symbol of the old religion. Likewise the images of al-Uzza and Manat and a year later also those of al-Lat at Taif, were destroyed, although the people there initially resisted and raised an army leading to an indecisive siege. Although Muhammad issued an amnesty to those who accepted his rule, a list of prominent opponents were summarily executed. Within two and a half years, Muhammad would pass away. Nawal el Sadaawi in "The Hidden Face of Eve" notes the effect on women who opposed Muhammad's rule:

Sarah was a famous slave singer who aimed her barbed words against the Moslems. She was among those whom Mahomet ordered to be executed on the day of his victorious entry into Mecca. In the region of El Nagir, it was recounted that some women had rejoiced when the Prophet died and Abu Bake, the first of the Caliphs, ordered their hands and feet to be cut off. Thus women who dared to give voice to their protest or opposition could be exposed to cruel punishment. Their hands might be cut off, or their teeth pulled out, or their tongues torn from their mouths. This last form of punishment was usually reserved for those who were singers. It was said of these women that they used to dye their hands with henna, brazenly display the seductions of their beauty, and beat time with their fingers on tambourines and drums in defiance of God, and in derision towards the rights of God and his Prophet. It was therefore necessary to cut off their hands and tear out their tongues.

Muhammad was particularly unforgiving to anyone who ridiculed him or his Quranic verses. According to al-Tabari's *Alseera Al Nabawiya* (2:463) Muhammad explicitly ordered the murder of Om Kerfa (Mother of Kerfa), one of the most revered Meccan matriarchs who was torn in half by camels at the age of 90 for writing poetry ridiculing him:

"She is Fatima daughter of Rabia son of Badir son of Amru al Fazari. Mother of Kerfa married a prince of the tribe of Hathifa and bore for him 13 children the first of whom was Kerfa by whom she is surnamed. All her children became leaders of their tribes. She was the dearest of all Arabs, and an example of honor and pride to them.. It was said if two tribes fought and Mother of Kerfa sent her scholl on a spear that was displayed to both parties, then they would reconcile out of respect for her. She used to annoy the prophet with her poetry so in the sixth year of the Hijra he sent Zaid son of Haritha on a military expedition to kill her in the most heinous of ways. For he tied her legs with ropes and tied each of the ropes to a camel so that she was split in two. She

was an old woman when this happened and her head was severed as proof to all that she had died. "

Each ancient temple was demolished or burned to the ground, and the priests and priestesses put to the sword. Nabih Faris in "The Book of Idols" notes that when the banu-Umahmah were slaughtered and the women debased for defending dhu-al-Khalasah which stood half way to San'a, a woman cried

*"The banu-Umamah, each wielding his spear,
Were slaughtered at al-Waliyah, their abode;
They came to defend their shrine only to find
Lions with brandished swords clamouring for blood.
The women of Khath'am were then humiliated
by the men of Ahmas and debased".*

Faris notes that it is said by al-Bukhari that the Prophet himself, acknowledging this, said:

This world shall not pass away until the buttocks of the women of Daws wiggle [again] around the dhu-al-Khalasah and they worship it as they were want to do [before Islam].

The Quran specifies a veil only for Muhammad's wives although there are general admonitions to modesty (24:30), asking women to draw their khimar over their bosoms and not display their beauty to unrelated men (24:31), to cast their outer garments over their persons in public (33:58) and not make a dazzling display like that of the former times of ignorance (33:32), confirming a patriarchal shift from the older Goddess traditions. Geraldine Brooks in "Nine Parts of Desire" notes that the passage on veiling the prophet's wives came after a controversial marriage to one of Muhammad's nine wives Zeinab, who was originally the wife of his son-in-law Zaid, who agreed to divorce her for the prophet's sake. Muhammad then recited the verses on his wedding night after he became impatient with guests lingering, delaying his could consummation of their sexual union:

And when you ask his wives for anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain (33:53).

Upon Muhammad's death, the rule passed on to highly repressive misogynistic rulers. Veiling and sequestering of women became mandatory. Stoning for adultery was made official. Geraldine Brooks comments:

And much worse was coming. Repression of women was about to be legislated into the religion on a large scale by Abu Bakr's successor as caliph, the violent misogynist Omar. That Aisha supported Omar's bid for leadership shows the depth of her loathing for Fatima's husband, Ali. Her opinion of Omar was not high. Knowing his cruelty to

the women of his household, she had cleverly helped foil a match between him and her sister. Omar cracked down on women in ways that he must have known flouted Muhammad's traditions. He made stoning the official punishment for adultery and pressed to extend the seclusion of women beyond the prophet's wives. He tried to prevent women from praying in the mosque, and when that failed, he ordered separate prayer leaders for men and women. He also prevented women from making the Hajj, a ban that was lifted only in the last year of his life.



Fig 31. Left: Burying for stoning. Right" A woman stoned dead in her hole (Mazar-i-Sharif).

The same archaic attitudes of violence obvious in the genocide at Medina apply to punishments such as stoning. The Hadith say Muhammad ordered stoning and himself performed it and that it was somehow accidentally left out of the Quran, which specifies only flogging, ostensibly because it was written on a note which Aisha had under her pillow along with the provision on breastfeeding adults and a goat ate it when Muhammad died (Ibn Majah 3:9:1944). In two accounts in the Hadith Muhammad forced Jews against their will to have a couple stoned for adultery because of the old Deuteronomic curse:

The Jews came to the Prophet and said, "A man and a woman of our nation have committed adultery." The Prophet asked them, "What does the Torah says about pelting stones?" They replied, "We humiliate them and give publicly to their evil act and punish them by flogging." Abdullah bin Salam said, "You are telling a lie. Bring the Torah which also ordains pelting stones." So they brought the Torah and one of them having covered his hand the verse relating to the pelting of stones read out the verse preceding it and the verse after it. Abdullah bin Salam said, "Take off your hand." And the verse about pelting stones was seen clearly. The Jew said, "Abdullah bin Salam is right. The verse about pelting stones is there." Then the Prophet directed that both the committers of adultery be stoned to death and they met their fate (al-Bukhari 2:23:413,4:56:829).

Both stoning for adultery and death for apostasy appear in Deuteronomy (22:24 and 13:10), but in 30AD, the Sanhedrin effectively abolished capital punishment, making it a hypothetical upper limit on the severity of punishment, fitting in finality for God alone to use, not fallible humans. Muhammad's malicious use of Deuteronomy to invoke cruel, archaic and homicidal punishments, over 1000 years after the text was allegedly discovered in dubious circumstances during a temple reconstruction in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22), and 600 years after Jewish death penalties were effectively quashed, has become a 1400 year long crime against humanity.

Subsequently Islam has used jihad as holy war to justify military invasion, the summary homicide of people who follow other beliefs and will not submit to becoming Muslims, conversion by the sword, as well as a raft of archaic tribal laws in sharia, including stoning women for infidelity or even entering a relationship outside marriage, amputation of limbs for felony, and whiplashing for a variety of minor offenses. The only exceptions for the death penalty for infidels who would not convert were the people of the book, comprising Jews, Christians and ironically the astral worshipping Sabians, but these remained second class citizens having to pay a poll tax for not being within the Muslim fold. The lure of martyrdom, which remains hauntingly strong in both Sunni and Shia sects, which divided over the martyrdom of Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali, is a direct transposition of Yeshua's own demise, which has been enshrined in Muslim scripture, as if he felt no pain in ascending straight to heaven. When Muslim terrorists blow themselves, and a host of innocent people along with them to pieces, we can thus thank Jesus and his all-too-reckless demise, for the carnage and destruction. Would-be martyrs are reassured that as the blessed they will see the face of God, and enter a paradise in which 72 black eyed houris made virgins anew every day, will wait on them hand and foot.

The lessons are twofold. The invocation to jihad or holy war, sometimes depicted as the right to endless religious struggle to victory, is a violent religious misjudgment that never resulted in an actual military victory for Muhammad and his followers, but a despicable unnecessary genocide at Muhammad's own contrivance. It has been used ever since the time of Muhammad to justify slaughter of unbelievers in the name of religion, conversion by the sword and other atrocities. Secondly the claim that Islam is a religion of peace is the calculated lie of *takiya* in operation. Islam has a utopian agenda of world domination. It divides the world between the region of submission (Islam means submission to God) and the region of war - *dar al harb*. It seeks a monolith of the Qu'ran as revealed scripture, sharia as law and the Islamic state as society, rejecting all principles of the democratic right of choice of the people. It is legitimate to force conversion under penalty of death and apostasy likewise faces the death penalty. No religion which enforces utopian aims by homicidal violence is a religion of peace, nor is it a religion of the god one can claim created the natural universe.

But these errors of violence are not just limited to Islam, they permeate all major religious traditions, so in section 10 we examine how founding religious cosmologies and social constructs threaten the future of humanity in the closing circle of the biosphere.

(Continued on Part III)