

Section 9 – Patriarchal Monotheism

Two Testaments: two views

At every step along the path of human cultural development since the beginnings of the patriarchy, we see the Goddess' powers progressively stripped from her to be given to a male god, just as, in the society at large, women's status and rights were stripped away and given to the men who legally possessed them.

Female deities have their powers given to male deities in order to justify the ongoing suppression of real women in the real world. Nephthys is cognate with Ereshkigal, but while Ereshkigal is absolute ruler of the Underworld, that power is given to Set in the Egyptian version. In Sumer, Inanna condemns her husband Dumuzi to death for sitting in her throne while she was absent – in other words, demonstrating that she is in charge. It was her throne, just as the throne of the Underworld was Ereshkigal's. Aset/Isis' relationship to Osiris is what we expect in later, more patriarchal yet still Goddess culture: political power flows from her to Osiris as king. The Goddess remains the source of power, but the man wields it in her name; he sits on the throne, but she stands behind him. We see something similar in the relationship of Asherah to El and Astarte to Ba'al.

It should be no surprise that such a deeply misogynistic cult as first-century Judaism should be associated with two things: the absolute condemnation of the Goddess as 'an abomination' and the reduction of women to virtual and practical slavery. In a culture so determinedly patriarchal it is inevitable that women must seek something more, so that their spiritual needs may be met.¹

While Jesus may or may not have been a real man, he most certainly is a real myth, which persists to this day, and so obeys the rules of mythology. The Goddess' message of forgiveness and resurrection and the cyclical understanding of life which is encapsulated inside it remain deeply appealing to both women and men. Although the hard-line successors to Hilkiyah had excised the Goddess, she could not be killed and to think so was pure conceit.

The male gods of the patriarchy reward those most successful in its terms, the materialist aggressors, and they condemn those who do not measure up. Men are judged solely on their behaviour in the one life that the patriarchy permits and by how well they perform under the

¹ That the iron fist of patriarchy can never destroy the spirit of women – which is the Goddess – is shown today by the 'My Stealthy Freedom' movement in Iran, in which women take pictures of themselves unveiled and post them to social media. The apoplectic reaction of the misogynist mullahs shows how effective such a seemingly simple protest can be: the patriarchy can tolerate no sign of rebellion.

abstract rules of the patriarchy. We all make mistakes and we all crave forgiveness, yet within the cult of first-century Judaism there was no forgiveness or resurrection, no cyclical foundation, none of the Goddess. All that was left was a harsh, barren code of male 'honour', misogyny, obedience to bizarre and arbitrary codes of conduct, and judgement.

The Jewish culture of the time was heavily predicated on the primacy of cities, principally Jerusalem, over the countryside. Success in the culture was to become a wealthy, powerful, city-dwelling man. Failure, therefore, was to be a poor country person, particularly one who clung to the old ways.²

In such a resolutely misogynist culture, women had no significance except in terms of the men they served with sons. All they were left with was the expectation that they would wear the yoke of enslavement to men, either their fathers or their husbands, or even their brothers, without protest or breach of the patriarchy's many rules controlling their sexuality. By far the most important of these is that they bear male children who are known to be their fathers' sons, so that patriliney, the basis of the patriarchy, may be ensured. Within the patriarchy, just *being women* made them failures.³ To be judged solely on the basis of how well one plays the meek, dutiful and obedient wife of a powerful and rich man, is a condemnation for women.

In a very real sense, Jesus, whether he lived or not, was indeed a saviour. He saved many people, starting with the rural poor and women, from suppression under the most rigid and divisive version of the patriarchy that had till then existed. This salvation was not by virtue of his being the 'son of god' or whatever other fiction about his divinity had to be concocted, but by his message. Forgive those who sin against you; love your neighbour; share with the poor; through me everyone is born again. The Gospels are filled with notions and ideals that come directly from Goddess culture. At every turn, Jesus sympathises with the rural poor and women, and rails against the establishment, its patriarchal hierarchy, and the men who serve it. Despite the fact that the texts were chosen to fit within a patriarchal framework, the Gospels are deeply subversive works.

² As seen in the pejorative terms 'pagan' and 'heathen' which originally meant 'from the countryside' (Latin '*paganes*') and 'from the heath'.

³ A morning prayer, originating in the Babylonian Talmud, that is still in use, says: 'Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a Gentile. Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a slave. Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a woman.'
(<http://originaljewish.com/static/posts/35>)