

For This lesson:
22-34 - prehistoric world
101-113 - Iron age Europe
114-119 - Mesopotamia, Egypt,
Greece, Rome, Iran

Next 2 weeks:
385-391 - Three Pharaonic achievement

This week

H of G -
1-10

Western Religious traditions

Lecture #1

background

next week
H of G -
middle of 11 -
end of chap. -39
Chapter 2-3

Neolithic religion: pastoralists and planters

the paleolithic culture covered approximately 1 million years which is followed by the mesolithic or old stone age culture.

neolithic culture (new stone age) began at different times in different places. The neolithic period marks the transition from food-gathering and hunter societies to food-producing societies.

in the middle east, the neolithic period began about 5000 B.C. E and ended with the beginning of the bronze age about 3000 B.C.E. in Denmark the neolithic period covers the time 2500 B to 1500 B. and in Australia the aborigines have never begun the neolithic age.

In the Neolithic age the skills of domesticating animals, cultivating farmland, weaving cloth, and making pottery were developed.

this led to the emergence of two new kinds of society: pastoral and agricultural ones.

pastoral societies tend to be "Uranian", that is the prime religious symbol is the sky, which is the abode of the gods.

These societies view power of their dieties in the sky, sun, thunder, and storm which are the forces which herders re much concerned about.

These societies and their gods are usually patriarchal.

This pattern is found in many early civilizations. The Greek Zeus and Roman Jupiter, the semetic (Hebrew) YHWH, Indra and Varuna of the Aryans, Thor of the Scandinavians are examples of "High Gods" of the sky related to pastoral religion.

agricultural or planter religions tend to stress the recurring cycles of springtime and harvest, of the regenerative and reproductive powers of nature.

The prime symbol is the Earth, not the sky. The feminine rather than the masculine.

The basic concern is with birth, fertility, growth, and maturation. Here a goddess often assumes preeminence over a god.

In various ways agricultural religions have oriented themselves toward symbols of a great goddess--"mother of wheat", or "Mother of Maize".

In later religions the Great Mother "appears as the Greek Diana, Demeter, Hecate and Persephone, the Roman Cybele, the Indian Kali. She is Inanna int the Sumerians, Ishtar to the Assyrians and Babylonians, Isis to the Egyptians, and Mary to the Christians.

A key image in agricultural religion is the seed which dies in the earth, only to come to life again as a burgeoning crop.

The pattern of death and rebirth in endless alternation, just as the life of summer always follows the death of winter, is celebrated in myth and ritual.

Human and animal sacrifice played a significant role at times in agricultural religion. In order to influence, encourage, and participate in life processes that are fertile and bounteous, agricultural communities sometimes made ritual offerings of human beings, whose death was believed to release the powers of life and fertility in the community.

The patterns of agricultural religion later merged with those of archaic civilizations.

- Go to "early mother goddesses" →

Mesopotamia and Egypt

civilization is not a synonym for culture. a culture is the totality of learned, socially transmitted behaviour present in a human society. Thus, by definition, every society has a culture.

"civilization" refers to a certain kind of social and cultural organization that emerged in the Near East around 3000 B.

two basic characteristics of civilizations are the use of writing and the greater differentiation of the parts of the social complex when compared to a primitive society.

the development of cities, urbanization, is also a mark of civilization.

finally, metalurgy developed in the bronze age starting around 3000 B. coincides with the rise of civilization.

From 3000 to 536 (the conquest by Persia) there was a succession of great archaic civilizations which emerged in the Tigres-Euphrates valley--the Sumerian, the Babylonian, the Assyrian and the Chaldean.

In the Nile valley during the same period the Egyptian civilization dominated from about 3000 to its fall to the Persians under Cyrus the Great in 525 B.

These civilizations exhibit a common religious form in which the political structure and the divine structure of the cosmos are considered as congruent parts of an external sacred pattern and process. i.e. the human political world is viewed as a micorocosm of the divine macrocosm.

the religions of these Near Eastern civilizations are a fusion of religious forms operatiave in agricultural societies with forms concerned with the political life of the community centered in the great cities.

The city and the surrounding areas devoted to farming were parts of an integrated social system. In Mesopotamia many of the townspeople worked their own fields and their lives were regulated by a calendar which harmonized societies progress thru the year with the change of seasons.

the Sumerians worshiped a pantheon of gods that included

8

Enlil, head of the pantheon who was the beneficent and fatherly creator of sun, moon, vegetation and implements essential to human control.

Enki and Ninke (lord and lady of the earth) are in some myths said to be the parents of Enlil.

Dumuzi is a hero who later assumes the role of a fertility god, representing the dying and reviving vegetation. He was, according to myth, the consort of Inanna, the love goddess, who sends him to the region of the dead to abide there in her place.

With the Assyrians and Babylonians, Inanna is called Ishtar or Astarte, and Dumuzi is Tammuz mentioned in the Bible in Ezek. 8:14 with the women weeping for him.

When the Babylonians became powerful the god Marduk assumes the role of the highest god.

in the document from that period called the Enuma Elish the epic of creation is given in which Marduk defeats the dragon Tiamut and her consort Apsu and creates the world from her body, including humans. Thus he is the controller of the destiny of the world. he founds Babylon and its temple and becomes its national god.

this is an excellent example of a myth of transition when one civilization overwhelms another and replaces its gods with their own.

the myth of Adam and Eve is another such myth in which the symbols sacred to the fertility religion of the

When the Babylonians became powerful the god Marduk assumes the role of the highest god.

in the document from that period called the Enuma Elish the epic of creation is given in which Marduk defeats the dragon Tiamut and her consort Apsu and creates the world from her body, including humans. Thus he is the controller of the destiny of the world, he founds Babylon and its temple and becomes its national god.

this is an excellent example of a myth of transition when one civilization overwhelms another and replaces its gods with their own.

the myth of Adam and Eve is another such myth in which the symbols sacred to the fertility religion of the Caananites (the fig tree, the serpent) are shown to be the cause of the fall of humans into sin.

The creation myth is connected with certain ritual ceremonies in which agricultueal and political myths are combined.

thus the Babylonian king begins his reign on New Year's day in the month of Nisan at the time of the spring rains.

the Akitu festival was usually performed. It apparently included ceremonies where the king was divested of his crown, ring, and scepter, only to be re-invested with them after he declared his innocence of wrong-doing before Marduk.

This ceremony was correlated with other symbolic acts

acknowledging the threat of chaos.

the Enuma Elish was read and ritual enactment of Markuk's victory over Tiamat was performed.

evidently at the end of this sacred festival, the king and queen or a selected priestess engaged in ritual intercourse symbolizing the union of Ishtar and Tammuz, which ensured the continued fertility of the earth.

These civilizations of the Near East were centered in the idea of kingship.

the king was the mediating point that joined the world of the gods and the world of human society into a single dynamic interacting process.

Thru the agency of the king, human society functioned according to the norms and patterned decreed by the gods and which the gods also exemplified in their relations to one another.

The king in Mesopotamia was expected to deal justly and without favor, to "defend the weak against the strong" and to take the part of the fatherless and of the widow.

thus, the political patterns in human society reflected the pattern of authority that also operated among the gods themselves.

There is an important difference between Mesopotamis and Egypt in the idea of kingship.

In Mesopotamia the king was the agent of the gods and ruled in their name but he himself was human and subject to

death

the famous epic of Gilgamesh, a great king tells of the search for eternal life that even he cannot obtain. The myth shows the essential finitude of man, even the king. only the gods are immortal.

Egypt on the other hand, has the Pharaoh himself regarded as one of the gods who had descended among men.

In the Egyptian scheme, the social order, thru the authority of the divine pharaoh, has itself been divinized.

The Egyptian pantheon of gods included Horus depicted in human shape with a falcon's head. He was the god of political authority and the pharaoh was sometimes regarded as the kingly incarnation of Horus on earth.

the cult of Isis and Osiris

In the myth, Osiris is killed by his brother Seth. Isis his sister/wife mourns him and thru magic spells gets herself impergnated by her dead husband.

She gives birth to Horus to whom the gods give the rights and dignity originally belonging to his father..

Osiris is then restored to life and made sovereign over the realm of the dead.

It seems the cult was directed toward the idea that the dying pharaoh assumes the role of Osiris and his successor that of Horus.

The vigor of egyptian belief in life after death empowered the Egyptian religion to persist in some form as

late as the sixth cent. A.D. in the cult of Isis and Osiris.

The Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) tried to institute a monotheistic cult centered on the worship of the sun disk under the name of Aton. it was short lived and destroyed by the Egyptian priests on his death. This is where the curse on the tomb of Tutankamen originates as he was the son of Akhenaten.

Greek Religion

Greek religion is the product of a fusion of the cults of a native population, the Pelasgians, with those of northern invaders (Aryans).

behind the pantheon of gods with which most are familiar are rituals and practices tied in with tribal patterns of thought and behavior.

Homer, author of the Iliad and the Odyssey seems to be responsible for the formalization of the various ritual beliefs into a systematic pantheon of gods in which each divinity possesses a distinctive individuality.

The pantheon which emerged during the classical period included Zeus, the sky god, Hera his wife; Ares, god of war; Hephaestus, god of fire and of the smithy, Pallas Athena goddess of wisdom who guided Athens; Apollo the sun god and god of music. he is the exemplar of calm, clear reason, and light.

The Olympian gods comprise the uranian (pastoral) element in Greek religion which is dominant during the classical period. This was brought in by the Aryan invaders and the pantheon has equivalents in India which the Aryans brought in there.

However, there are other important elements.

first, the cult of the Chthonoi, spirits who live in the dark recesses of the earth. They are connected with fertility and death. These spirits have the qualities of demons, hobgoblins, gods of the night, darkness, terror, and death.

they are not evil in the absolute sense but represent the darker passions and fears of humans contrasted with his aspiration after light, clarity and freedom.

the other non-Olympian element in Greek religion is the presence of various "mystery religions". Don't know if they are indigenous to Greece or brought in from Asia Minor.

Three are important: Orphism, the Dionysian cult and the Eleusinian mysteries.

The Eleusinian mysteries celebrates the story of Demeter and her daughter Kore, who was abducted by Hades, god of the dead, and taken to his realm.

Demeter, one form of the great mother of fertility, mourned and did not allow the agricultural realm to rejuvenate itself.

Zeus convinced Hades to give up Kore but while there she had eaten a pomegranate seed and thus had to return to Hades

104

each year. Winter and summer were the seasons of her descent and return.

The rites of this cult enabled the members to feel they were participating in the divine events proclaimed in the myth. This was a nine day ceremony and was the "thing to do" in the ancient world.

the cult of Dionysus still present in the Mardis Gras, cultivated frenzied and orgiastic emotions and dances and is often contrasted with the calm and clarity of Apollo.

He was the son of Zeus, born from his father's body when his mother died before giving him birth.

The Orphic cult has a similar story to tell about Orpheus but is mainly concerned with Orpheus search for his love in the land of the dead.

These mystery cults promised the initiate access to a kind of immortality not available to the outsider.

Other cults that influenced Mediterranean cultures include the mysteries of the Phrygian Cybele and Attis (made the official religion of Rome by Claudius in 51 A.D.) and the cult of Isis and Osiris. In the second cent. the cult of the Persian light-god Mithras was popular. (B. day on Dec. 25)

The important feature of these cults is they reveal a growing independence from their original culture. Most of the mystery cults are not tied to a specific tribe, or

nation, but form universal societies composed of members from a variety of places.

Religions of Roman civilization

The religious practices of the ancient Romans were centered around the family and civic life.

thru symbol and rite a respect was paid to the numinous powers and forces believed to be present in natural phenomena and in hearth and home. Otto coined the term "numinous" to characterize the feeling of religious awe on the basis of this Roman usage.

Later the numina, which at first were felt as vague forces in archaic symbols and rituals, took on more specific forms in the familiar pantheon of Roman gods which were in many instances patterned after Greek models.

Thus Jupiter is the sky god; Juno, his consort; Diane, the moon goddess; Neptune, the sea god; Mars, the war god.

as the Roman empire emerged in the first century its approach to religion changed. it created a cosmopolitan approach as philosophers noted similarities between the gods of different religions and cultures.

two attitudes existed among educated romans. one was skepticism about the truth of any religious system. thus many romans of the period treated the gods a poetical expressions

not as matters of conviction.

the other attitude was the attempt of some philosophers to create a syncretistic comprehensive religious system in which gods from a number of different cultures are included. the Emperor Julian attempted w/o success to impose such a system as the official religion of the empire as a whole.

One Roman philosopher, Varo, summarized the forms under three headings:

mythological religion, represented by the gods referred to in the writings of poets and sometimes worshiped by numerous groups of the populace;

Civic religion, represented by those rites that maintained loyalty to the Roman state; and

natural religion, represented by the speculations of philosophers like the Platonists and the Stoics.

The Romans had to develop a sense of loyalty to Roman authority to control its empire. thus, rites of obeisance to the emperor as a divine personage were instituted as a supplement to other existing religious practices. This resulted from a pragmatic desire to achieve political unity.

In 312 C.E. the Roman empire adopted Christianity as the state religion.

Iranian influence on western religions.

spoke of Zoroastrian belief in lectures on India so will cover others.

Mithraism

Mithra was originally an Aryan god and was worshipped in Iran as the god of contracts. He preserves truth and order, destroying the disruptive forces of evil, anger, greed, pride and procrastination, all evil gods and men.

as guardian of contracts, he determines when the period of the devil's rule will end and as guardian of truth, is the judge of the soul at death. His coming 'amid the homage of the meek and lowly' in days of victory is awaited.

some christian writers mention an Oracle which foretells the god's coming at the end of the world to destroy the wicked with fire and to save the righteous. many Roman monuments depict his birth and some 5th cent. Christian texts imply there was a Mithraic myth foretelling the appearance of a star which would lead magi to the birthplace of Jesus.

Mithra is an important and popular diety and still occupies an important place in Zoroastrian ritual.

His cult was popular east to India and west to Asia Minor.

Mithraism first entered Rome in 60 B. and in the 2nd cent A. it spread as far as northern Britain. It was exclusively a male cult carried by soldiers.

Baptism was the sacrament for entrance and the initiate had to submit to both physical and spiritual tests. He was expected to adhere to a strict moral code. in return he was

promised a share in the resurrection.

The central belief of the cult was the sacrifice of a bull by Mithras. This act was both creative and redemptive. The worshipper looked back to a sacrifice at the beginning, when life had come out of death, and forward to the final sacrifice by Mithras when the last animal to die would give men the elixir of immortality. A foretaste of this gift could be shared in the regular communion meal of bread and wine in which the priest represented Mithra.

The Mandeans

or Nazoreans, are a small sect still in existence in southern Iraq and neighbouring Iran. claim descent from John the Baptist and believe their ancestors fled with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.

they are a mixture of Semitic, Iranian elements and much Gnostic content.

They use no anthropomorphic language but call God things like "king of light" "Lord of greatness". the world is created by emanations from the King of light, one of the most important of these being the saviour, Manda d'Hayye (the knowledge of Life, whence the name of the sect.

Everything in the material world has its heavenly counterpart. the light is trapped in people and in matter at the end of the world, the soul of the pious will be liberated. feel Judaism and Christianity are false religions which inhibit the release of the soul along with

the planets, stars and material world.

Baptism wards off evil spirits and is essential to salvation. a ritual meal is associated with it and ritual is very important and must be done properly or dire consequences ensue. Asceticism is not practiced and is not considered a way to free the soul.

plague in the 19th cent. killed virtually all the priests so , tho a new heirarchy was formed, no new replacements seem to be coming.

Influence of Iranian religion

the influence on Islam has been such as to help it develop from an Arabian into an international religion; the growth of the mystical movement, the Sufis, and the saviour concept may owe something to Iranian influence.

Iran's greatest influence has been on the development of Judaeo-Christian belief. It is widely accepted by biblical scholars that the later Jewish concepts of the devil, hell, an afterlife, the resurrection, and the end of the world and the saviour imagery were all coloured by Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. These beliefs have affected the very foundations of Judaism and particularly Christianity.

end / lecture 1

Judaism, Christianity, Islam

	What is The Ultimate Concern?	How do They view The Highest reality?	What is The human predicament?	What is The solution?
<u>Hebrew Bible</u>	"Shalom" - prosperity correct relationship with people, at death being w/ the fathers	YHWH - totally transcendent and unlike us - yet personal and with steadfast love (Hosea)	rebellion - wants to be God, #1 in universe. men can be good but have evil side	Faith - in person of God, not saved by action but commitment to YHWH.
<u>New Testament Christianity</u>	salvation! redemption - people saved from alienation now and in death - have eternal life - meaning in life	God as revealed in Christ	rebellion - same as for Hebrew Bible.	Faith - in person of Jesus, not saved by action but by commitment to Jesus and thus God in Him
<u>Abraham and Islam</u>	Worship of God! - obedience in this age and hope in next when Hebrew scriptures would be fulfilled. - age to come when law goes from Zion	God - (see above) who gives law and reveals not just law but himself to people	Rebellion - same as Hebrew bible but 3 great sins - were: adultery, idolatry, bloodshed	study of Torah, worship of God and personal spiritual cleanliness
<u>Austin 4 (30)</u>	personal experience of God (salvation) This is emphasized	God - simple, absolute being - basis and source of all that is. - Trinity - 3 masks (persons) of God.	Sin - pride is essence of sin. - original sin with Adam. Human can't do anything to get out of it.	accept what God has done in Christ (no works, just faith) salvation wholly unearned.
<u>Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274</u>	Knowledge of God vision comes thru knowledge - revelation, fulfills reason.	God - first cause, pure act, perfect being, absolute substance	Original sin - man basically evil but not as evil as Augustines man, can still seek worldly virtues.	Grace - unearned can one have vision of God - comes thru sacraments - death of God - redone in mass.
<u>Iosias Simonides 1135-1209</u>	To know God and obey His commandments not just fasting and prayer - but know Him	God - non-corporeal holy - no resemblance to anything else - totally other. can only talk of Him in negatives.	Sin - basically pride - thinking "I am divine" - result is eternal damnation	proper philosophy human responsible to God and community must be as human as possible
<u>Martin Luther 1483-1546</u>	"Justification by Faith" God declares "not guilty" even though we are.	God - (Augustine's view of God) see above.	Total depravity - man in rebellion sin is a state (as hell & heaven) we can do nothing to be acceptable to God	Faith - commitment of whole being to God. Grace is answer respond to God's work in Christ. it is all that saves us.
<u>Council of Trent 1545-1563</u>	"Re-establish vision" re-establish the authority of Catholic Church (Rome)	God - (Aquinas view)	Original sin - sin is acts committed against God's law not a state	justification - by cooperating w/ God thru sacraments we obtain grace
<u>Leibniz, deism naturalism - 1704</u>	love, joy in life become more orthodox.	God - who is concerned w/ Israel because what happens to it affects God himself	Rebellion - same as Hebrew bible, trying to be #1 in universe.	embody one virtue to attain all, study Torah, commune w/ God thru and in the community

	<u>What is The Ultimate Concern</u>	<u>What is The Highest reality?</u>	<u>What is The human Pericament?</u>	<u>What is The Solution?</u>
<u>Formalism</u> <u>Platonism</u> (937)	<u>Man</u> - in divine image has immortal spirit. is responsible to overcome evil.	<u>God</u> - least of ideas doctrine of one living God who rules world thru love.	<u>Rebellion</u> - but man can do something about his life. (Humanism)	worship God any try to straighten out the world.
<u>Christianity</u> (Th Cent. <u>zealotism</u>)	improvement of society and the human condition here and now (social gospel)	<u>God</u> -	human has spark of goodness but must cultivate it. Follow Jesus by acting like him	Follow Jesus Christ was good man met God - act like him
<u>Christianity</u> <u>fundamentalism</u> <u>angelicals</u>	<u>Salvation</u> - going to heaven - personal	<u>God</u> -	<u>Sin</u> - personal individual must be changed.	believe in and @ Jesus as Lord of the universe - saviour
<u>Christianity</u> (neo-orthodox) (Th) 1886-1968	<u>Salvation</u> - correct relationship to God - have better life here, too.	<u>God</u> - wholly other only God reaching to us can bring relationship to Him.	<u>Sin</u> - perversion of will - unbelief and egocentricity - pride	God breaks in to us thru preaching of word. - existential break into crises of person's life
<u>Islam</u> (Muhammad) (571-632)	① pleasing Allah in this life - social justice follow Sharia - ② live in heaven with Allah	<u>Allah</u> - personal God - no one was like Him - Shirk was greatest sin - that of associating anything with God.	<u>Sin</u> - against God and against human beings - worshipping something as God that is not	Follow <u>Sharia</u> - obey rules, save yourself
<u>The Quran</u>	following Sharia or law of Allah - plus social justice.	<u>Allah</u> - (see above)	<u>Sin</u> - (see above)	<u>Pillars of Islam</u> ① Confession - Unity of Allah ② prayer - 5 times a day ③ Alms - 1/40th of income ④ Fasting - 1 month ⑤ pilgrimage to Mecca
<u>Unitarians</u> (1-750)	<u>unity</u> (of God) and <u>Justice</u> - (God always does the right thing)	<u>Allah</u> - simple unity can't speak of divine attributes -	<u>evil</u> - man has free will - he chooses good or evil	Follow <u>Quran</u> - because God is just he had to give a revelation for salvation
<u>1-Ash'ari</u> (d. 873)	pleasing Allah in this life - social justice - follow Quran	<u>Allah</u> - all in all - when experience divine attributes (of them) it is Allah. - Allah causes people to act.	<u>Sin</u> - (as in Islam) man is totally pre-destined in his action & thought, but may acquire right way to act. Even evil action is Allah	Follow <u>Quran</u> to the letter
<u>Sufism</u>	experience of God inner reality is what's important	<u>Allah</u> - as in Quran	<u>Sin</u> - same as for Islam for most.	<u>Mujahad</u> - personal holy war - effort to purify soul of evil and go thru stages to transmute in God.

	<u>What is The Ultimate Concern?</u>	<u>How do they view The highest reality?</u>	<u>What is The human predicament?</u>	<u>What is The Solution?</u>
<u>al-Ghazali</u> (1058-1111)	<u>apologetics</u> in defense of Islam	<u>Allah</u>	<u>Sin</u> - as in tradition of Islam	repent of one's purify heart of all but God, thru Sufi method - to a virtuous character 5 pillars done from H.
<u>Shia and</u> <u>Sunni</u>	who is to be muhammed's successor - blood line vs. designated ruler	<u>Allah</u>	<u>Sin</u>	<u>Sharia</u>
<u>Muhammed</u> <u>Iqbal</u> (872-1933)	evolve consciousness to get closer to intuitive knowledge (Muhammed is ideal man)	<u>Allah</u> - rational, directive, creative will behind the universe	<u>Sin</u> - The human has greatness which he must cultivate. Failure to develop full potential	individual effort to evolve to work intuitive conscious work out own salvation

~~pantheism as in India with an impersonal absolute.~~

Early Mother-Goddesses

Don't know for sure if the mother-goddess is the first expression of the concept of deity, but her symbolism was the most prominent feature in prehistoric religion in the Upper Palaeolithic age with sculptured 'Venuses' and other emblems in decorated caves.

This symbol became the central feature in the cult of the Great Mother in the ancient near east, the Aegean, Crete and Western Asia.

As the necessity of both male and female in procreation was recognized she became associated with the young god as consort/son. She remained the crucial partner, but both played their respective rolls in the seasonal drama of creative energy, the female passive and receptive the male active.

from neolithic times on phallic symbols were increasingly prevalent, tho maternal imagery was predominant in Western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, where the male god was subordinate to the goddess.

She was always supreme because she was the source of life and her male partner was only secondarily her spouse.

The creative powers were secondary and dependent upon forces over which man had but a limited control. All life was born for death. Even the Great Mother became a tragic figure as many myths portray her pursuing her search for her

lover-son amid lamentation and woe.

The goddess is called by many names but the similarities in myth and ritual far outweigh the differences. The symbols (tree, snake, etc.) associated speak of a unified religious understanding centering in the Middle East.

the hypothesis to explain this pervasiveness links to archaic peoples' belief that reproduction is solely the "creation" of the female. the female role in reproduction was obvious but the male's not so much.

hypothesis that the Great Goddess represented an archaic conclusion, arrived at from the human experience, that early peoples found most mysterious, awesome, and crucial--the creation of new life.

female deities are credited with creation and also with cultural arts such as the alphabet and writing, medicine, and agriculture.

Women's role in archaic religion--She is valued as one whose sacred fertility affects the tribes survival, and whose economic role is vital.--as shamens and diviners, many have high status.

Military Power--Amazon myths came from Libya, anatolia, Bulgaria, Greece, Armenia and Russia. Don't know if they really fought alongside men or if their sexual power and female societies' authority raised a certain militancy in the early consciousness of women's potential.

Many groups had goddesses of intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom. Demeter (Gr.) and Isis (Egt) were lawgivers.

There is evidence that archaic cultures did indeed treat women more equitably than most later societies. Ex: the birth of a female was a blessing, women had prestigious religious ceremonies, could be scribes, healers or counselors.

Many scholars opine that the Great Goddess cultures were more pacifist than warlike, more democratic than autocratic.

The change to patriarchy

of The pastoral tribes were able to
Conquer The religions and people who worshipped a

When the patriarchal religions ~~won the battle against~~ the mother goddess about 3500-3000 years ago, their scriptural and cultural authorities became "orthodoxy" and the female-oriented fertility religion became "foul deviance"

as a result women were subordinate and women's sexuality was circumscribed and devalued.

Example: attitude of patriarchal religion towards temple prostitution.

- a. considered sacred to goddess
- b. critics called it prostitution
- c. Children in matrilineal society were never illegitimate but in a patriarchal society children had to have bloodline proven.

Menstruation for example in archaic societies was considered a powerful thing. Could be both constructive and destructive. Thus a widely practiced taboo attaches to menstruating women because they emanate a dangerous "woman power."

Originally it represented respect for or reverence for woman's power of fertility.

In most native American understanding woman's fertility is opposite man's killing power (hunting or warrior). Thus a man dare not see a woman at that time for it clashes and causes loss of both fertility and man's ability to hunt or kill.

This view has been distorted by the so called "higher religions" (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity as well as the Indian (aryean originated) religions) to make women "unclean" at this time. (see Leviticus 15:19ff)

Thus, to the measure that humanity lost vivid contact with such fertility, that it distanced itself from the fertile cosmos, women tended to lose religiously based status.

-Go back to
p. 3 - Mesopotamia
& Egypt.