

The War of Light and Dark and its Healing in True Love



Marduk defeating Tiamat (Contineau).

Combat Myth, Armageddon and Holy Matrimony

We here heal the long-standing combat myth of the ultimate battle between God and Satan and the notion of final war or Armageddon. This is a story in which our culture has become deeply embedded. It is a story which leads from our cosmological beginnings to our culminating future and thus even or particularly in our modern world of nuclear weapons and run-away genetic technology speaks with a voice of impending doom. This story is so pervasive on our consciousness that one could say it has led us to the brink of annihilation and still could do so. It is a story that cries for healing in making the world a living paradise instead of destroying it in a torched battleground of cosmic conflict. This is the reconciliation of Holy Matrimony.

In many cosmologies, from Sumerian (p 528) through Maori (p 783) to Judeo-Christian (p 731), there is an origin struggle involving a sexual conflict, in which an often female agent of Chaos, is vanquished by a male hero of order. In Eden the female is Eve and the male is the Lord-God Yaveh-Adonai, confirming Eve's divine status as "mother of all living" is really that of an ancient Goddess.

Babylonian cosmology elaborates the Sumerian origin myths to pit the civilization hero-God Marduk against the forces of chaos and darkness in female Tiamat the leviathan of the salt sea. Tiamat had a difficult birth being the mother of many Gods who was effectively slain by her own offspring.

In a not dissimilar way in Maori myth, Tane the Kauri tree and God of forests, pushes apart his parents Papa and Rangi Earth and Sky, leading to a similar struggle of the second-generation Gods against the older generation.

In these accounts we see the 'other', often other neighbouring civilizations portrayed

as the agents of chaos and the state as the divine instrument of order.

Chaos and Order in Combat: Tiamat and Marduk

The Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation epic tells how Marduk, the god of Babylon, was chosen king of the gods to defeat Tiamat, the personified sea representing chaotic evil although acknowledged to be the primal mother. After killing her, Marduk split her in two, created the world from her corpse, and stationed the various gods in their appropriate spheres. Then he created the human race from the blood of the rebel god Kingu to be the slaves of the gods. Many of the mythological motifs in the story appear to source from earlier Canaanite myths about Ba'al, who is likewise a conquering hero who defeats the older pantheon of El and Athirat and her offspring.

The birth of the gods begins from the commingling of Apsu, the fresh waters underground, and Tiamat, the salt water in the sea. From these waters Lahmu and Lahamu come forth. They engender Anshar and Kishar, who give birth to Anu, god of heaven. Anu makes Nudimmud, or Ea, god of earth, in his own image. Tiamat and Apsu remain in repose; the offspring move about and their activity creates a noise in heaven that disturbs Apsu. Tiamat takes the side of her offspring and attempts to allay the anger of Apsu. Apsu is inclined to forbear until his servant, Mummu, persuades him to insist on quieting the noisy offspring. Expecting an attack, Ea casts a magical spell over Apsu and, while he is sleeping, slays him. Ea then builds a dwelling over the place of Apsu's grave and lives with his wife, Damkina; their first son is Marduk.

Later in the story a group of the younger deities plot to avenge Apsu's death. They choose Kingu, the second husband of Tiamat, to lead them. The other younger deities meet and choose Marduk as their leader in battle against the forces of Tiamat and Kingu. Kingu becomes cowed at the sight of Marduk, but Tiamat is unafraid and the battle ensues with Marduk and Tiamat as combatants. Marduk slays Tiamat, cuts up her body into two pieces, making heaven out one part and earth out of the other. He then fashions the other parts of the cosmos and assigns the other deities to rule over the cosmos. In this myth a new basis for the cosmos is given; it emerges out of the activity of the younger deities who have destroyed the quiescence of the older deities. Inherent in the myth is also the notion of tragedy and vulnerability; the new world has emerged from the death of the senior members of the kinship system.

Marduk is very much the God of civic order of one particular civilization. The battleground is very much that of Babylon against other states and the ancient mother-chaos of the Seas is adapted to represent the other in cultural terms as a military threat rather than an actual cosmic force.

The Descent Cycle as Mortal Combat

The descent of Inanna and the pursuit of Dumuzi by the galla is a very different myth of lethal interaction between female and male, but in this cycle, it is the male who is ritually sacrificed (p 174). While Inanna rots on Ereshkigal's peg for three days in the waning moon of Taurus, she ascends pursued by seven galla which she allows lay claim to Dumuzi. He is then relentlessly pursued unto annihilation. While this is not directly a male combat myth, it forms a counterpoint to the Marduk-Tiamat saga, in which a supreme young male God vanquishes an ancient creation Goddess.

Although the sacrificial cycle of the descent does not represent a combat myth it does represent a lethal interaction between the underworld of darkness and the living and even heavenly worlds. Inanna in fact becomes the ruler of the underworld, Earth and

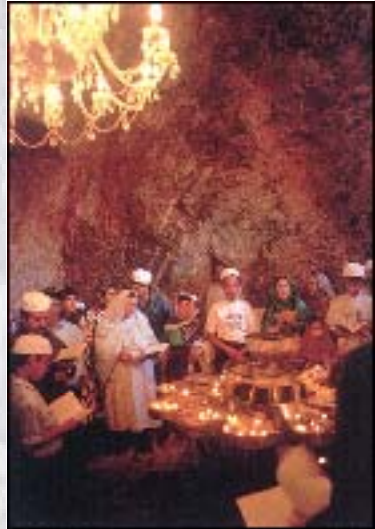
the Queen of Heaven by making this traverse between all the worlds. Moreover Dumuzi does not enter combat but simply runs harrowed by the galla of Ereshkigal. However this conflict has been woven into later male combat myth in a way which is reinterpreted as a conflict between dark and light forces and particularly violence against the male hero, beginning with Gilgamesh's rejection of Ishtar for her mistreatment of men (p 181). Although the descent involves grizzly aspects of male sacrifice, it attempts to reconcile the negative experience of death with the positive experience of new life in the spring season. It is also a journey uniting all the worlds, heaven, the underworld, and finally earth. However it is a repetitious cycle without a sense of history. It is this sense of history in the conflict of dark and light which emerges from the male combat myth.

Indra and Vritra and the Heritage of the Gita

In the battle of Indra and Vritra we see the classic male combat myth emerging from the Aryan warrior culture which brought him the borders of India. Indra is born of the sky and the Earth he is the youngest of the Gods and strongly represents in warrior from the culture of dominion which brought him forth. He then drinks three great draughts of the sacred Soma and swelled to the size of the universe. Terrified his parents flew apart and once separated could never be reunited again. Indra agrees to do battle for the Gods held in check by the enemy Vritra (p 354).

Zoroastrian pilgrims at the shrine of Pir-i-Sabz near Yasd reciting the Avesta (Wood).

Mortal combat ensues. Vritra is beaten decapitated and destroyed, despite breaking Indra's jaw. Indra then enters combat with the demonic allies, female and male of Vritra and sets up a regime of worldly dominion in the manner of a feudal king. Norman Cohn in "Cosmos Chaos" (1993 65) notes that this myth is widespread as far as Scandinavia in the form of Thor (105) and Russia and thus may represent a central cultural motif of the patriarchal Aryan invaders across the sweep of their incursions into Europe and the Near East. The role of Soma as divine source of supernatural power and vision - the drink which is also a God - remains potent and intriguing in this context (p 89). This heritage is brought to a climax in the Bhagavad Gita in Krishna's incitement of Arjuna to fight the final battle against the enemies of God (p 352).



Zoroastrian Combat of Dark and Light

In the Zoroastrian myth of cosmic eschatology we find two agents which are now both male entering into competition and combat in classic male warrior competition. However these have now become warring abstract principles of darkness and light, not mere agents of civil order and the supremacy of the urban state.

Moreover, these principles are now part of a culminating sense of history of heaven and earth in which the future life of everyone, instead of merely being a bleak and shadowy existence under the earth, became a moral testing in the afterlife in which

the righteous went to heaven and the wicked, or more particularly the ignorant or confused agents of the dark were subject to trial by fire as disembodied spirits.

Finally in this picture at the end of time, God would perform cosmic renovation, effectively a de-novo re-creation in which the disembodied dead would finally be purged of all evil by trial by fire and restored to their divine state. This ordeal, involving rivers of molten metal in the fire and the spirit of healing would appear only as warm milk to the virtuous but as molten metal to the wicked.

Cohn (1993 97) notes the formative role this purification has played in the vision of the Day of Judgement: "That requital which Thou wilt assign to the two parties, O Mazda, by the bright blazing fire of molten metal, is a sign to be given by all living beings, to destroy the wicked man, to save the just". Cohn further notes that the more beneficent idea that the wicked are simply to have their sins burned away, so that they become fit to join the righteous comes in the literature some 2000 years after Zoroaster's actual time of the sixth century BC in later Zoroastrian writings.

The message of the prophet, however, was that Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, was the sole creator and lord of the world and that the worship of the daevas was the worship of evil. In Zoroaster's theology the Amesha Spentas, or Bountiful Immortals, were divine beings, agents of the power of Ahura Mazda; they were traditionally seven in number: Bounteous Spirit, Good Mind, Truth, Right-mindedness, Dominion, Health, and Life. The first of these, Spenta Mainyu, is of special importance in that he is paired with a "twin," Angra Mainyu, or Hostile Spirit. When given a choice between good and evil, or truth and the lie, Bounteous Spirit chose truth and Hostile Spirit the lie. Creation becomes a battleground, with the demoted ahuras invoked for the doing of good and the daevas enlisted by Angra Mainyu in the doing of evil. Nevertheless, Ahura Mazda has decreed that truth will triumph, and the old world will be destroyed by fire and a new creation instituted.

Zoroaster, like Jesus, became the subject of creation myth in which fire and light accompanied his grandparents and his parents in conceiving him mixed sacred haoma (soma) and cows milk. The heavens rejoiced at his coming, but the dark demons strove to harm him, just as the Bethlehem star and Herod's slaughter of the innocents .

The future period is also heralded by the even more illustrious Saoshyant, or 'future benefactor'. He is preceded by a time when the forces of darkness are ascendant "all men will become deceivers and the covenants will be altered ... the sun's rays will be low-slanted a... the people will be born stunted and have little skill or energy". Hot and cold winds will cause famine and the seasons and weather will be out of course (Cohn 1993 100). This is again echoed in the Jewish apocalypses (p 747).

Now Zoroaster's seed which lies protected by good spirits will return when a virgin bathes in the lake and becomes pregnant. Saoshyant will for 57 years before the 'making wonderful' resurrect the Dead and give them back their bodies. Cohn notes this prophecy is very ancient (pre-Achaemenian). This description is different from the classic combat myth of Indra in that there is no direct combat between the Gods. Nevertheless as Cohn (1993 105) notes "At the heart of Zoroaster's teaching is a sense of cosmic war: a conviction that a mighty spiritual power intent on maintaining and furthering life in an ordered world is locked in struggle with a spiritual power, scarcely less mighty, intent on destroying life and reducing the ordered world to chaos."

"What Ahura Mazda does goes far beyond anything known in traditional myth. The war that he fights is a spiritual war, and its aim is not simply to ensure the fertility of

the land and the military victory of his people, it is not even the mere maintenance of the ordered world. It is to remove every form of disorder from the world, wholly and for ever to bring about a state in which the cosmos will no longer be threatened by chaos" (Cohn 1993 114).

Jewish Apocalypses of Dark and Light

The history of Judaism is the relationship of Yahweh as Lord Adonai, a tribal protector deity to his people through covenant and the threat of retribution if these covenants were not adhered to. Yahweh, in addition to his own features of jealousy and retribution (p 474), absorbed many of the features of gods such as Canaanite Ba'al (p 478), a warrior and storm god who can both calm the waters and raise tempest on his opponents. Yahweh was the Lord of Hosts - a clearly military title of the Lord of war. Conflict in the form of jealousy and deviation is thus central to the Old Testament, sourcing from the earliest jealousies of the Lord God in the Fall.



Megiddo (Jones). The ruins date to 6000BC. When Megiddo fell in 722BC, ten of the twelve tribes of Israel disappeared from history exiled by the Assyrians to the other side of the Harbur.

Yahweh is a god acting in history and the affinity between Jewish and Zoroastrian visions became politically manifest in the relationship of Cyrus to Jewish culture and the refounding of the temple in Jerusalem, for which Cyrus attained the messianic title of 'anointed'. The Zoroastrian vision of the end of days thus became woven into the Jewish prophetic tradition of apocalypse over the ensuing centuries.

The Jewish apocalyptic vision became engrossed by the dark-light renovation concepts already expressed in Zoroastrian religion. These combined with the Jewish idea of the God acting in history to lead to the full-blown concept of the Apocalyptic End of Days. In Armageddon, one can see the expression of what is Mazda's trial by fire as a cosmic Ritual Passion. Apocalypse as 'unveiling' became the revelation of secrets hitherto known only in heaven in which the future of the living world stands on the brink of a final and total transformation decreed in heaven (Cohn 1993 163). "Behind the pronouncements of the prophets ... lay a hidden meaning, which was understood only imperfectly by the prophets themselves . Only to a few sages had

God revealed that meaning truly - and only now with the unsealing of the writing of these sages would the true import of Biblical prophecy become plain.

We thus enter the themes of the apocalypses of Daniel, and the later apocalyptic pseudonymous authors. The Daniel dream apocalypses were written long after the first six chapters of exilic times, in the space between 169 and 165 BC (Cohn 1993 168). In these we see the statue with the gold head which will fall with feet of clay commenting in obvious terms about political events of the time and particularly Antiochus, and the white haired El-like Ancient of Days and 'one like the son of man' coming on the clouds. Cohn (1993 172) notes that although this figure is often construed to be a human figure of history, such as Moses or Maccabeus, the messianic stature of this human figure of the 'one in likeness' carries him into the territory of the angels and saints or the prophesied messiah, noting that "sovereignty and glory and kingly power are given to him so that all peoples and nations of every language should serve him". Daniel notably also includes the chaos monsters and many of the previous features of the war of order against chaos.

Important in this perspective is that this will all happen on this Earth. "The future empire, which will also be the kingdom of God, will be as purely terrestrial as the pagan empires of the past ... yet the future empire will be utterly different ... with the realization of the kingdom of God rightness will obtain on Earth also the divinely appointed order will have become all-embracing. The righteous, having endured inner refinement and purgation will become 'shining white' the elite who know the eschatological (Gk. *eschatos* last - logos of the end of days) interpretation of the Torah. Finally we have the specific overturning of the ancient Jewish concept of sheol (the pit or underworld) in the resurrection Zoroastrian manner "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence" (Cohn 1993 173).

These themes are carried through even further in Essenes writings and in the Book of Jubilees and 1 Enoch. Cohn (1993 179) notes "more clearly than any passage in the Hebrew Bible Jubilees and 1 Enoch tell of a Last Judgement which is to come at the consummation of time. In the early chapters of Enoch (3rd century BC) the sage sees in a vision how at that time God will come down from heaven, accompanied by ten thousand angels, take his stand on Mt. Sinai and pronounce judgement." Woven into this judgement is also the arboreal themes of the Tree of Life and parables of 'how the trees are covered in green leaves and bear fruit'.

In older Jewish writings, there is no role for an evil force. In Exodus it is God who contemplates killing Moses. In Numbers it is an angel of God who 'opposes' Balaam thus being the 'satan': "And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him" (22:22). Elaine Pagels (1995 40) quotes Neil Forsyth "If the path is bad an obstruction is good". In Job, God and Satan are in confidants and when Satan challenges God, God sends him forth to test Job sorely: "Again 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 before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, 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 the Lord said unto Satan, Behold,

he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown” (2:1).

Pagels (43) notes a change in theme of the satan to become a force of opposition either against Israel “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel” (1 Chron 21:1) or as a division between factions within Judaism, as when Zechariah sides with the returning exiles against the rural inhabitants in the choice of High Priest “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?” (3:1).

Isaiah elaborates on the concept by introducing the fallen star as Lucifer: “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, ... Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit” (14:12). The morning and evening stars were Canaanite gods Shaher and Shalem.

Pagels (1995 49) notes “this greatest and most dangerous enemy did not originate, as one might expect, as an outside, an alien or a stranger. Satan is not the distant enemy but the intimate enemy - one's trusted colleague ‘mine own familiar friend’ (p 242), close associate, brother ... who turns unexpectedly jealous and hostile.”

Jubilees completely rewrites the Exodus story of God thinking of killing Moses to attribute the event to Mastema, a force of darkness. Cohn (1993 182) notes “The few scattered phrases in Jubilees stand at the head of a mighty tradition that was to subsist for some two thousand years and still subsists today”. Mastema ‘hostility’, or Belial, brings in a host of demons which are typified in the fall of the angels in seducing the daughters of men (Cohn 1993 184, Pagels 1995 48), clearly harking back to reproductive purity and its relationship to pagan ways. “The author of Jubilees is persuaded [like the Zoroastrian end of Days] that ever since the flood, peoples health and vitality have been deteriorating, generation by generation.” (Cohn 1993 184) Thus reducing the almost thousand years of Adam to a miserable fraught three score and ten.

This theme is continued in the Qumran scrolls of the Dead Sea, typified by the community rule (Cohn 1993 190): “Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born from falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.” The ‘sons of light’ were of course the members of the sect, the eschatological elect and the sons of darkness often ordinary Jews lying outside the particular sect. Pagels(1993 58) notes: “The Essenes called themselves the ‘sons of light’ and indicted the majority as the ‘sons of darkness’, the ‘congregation of traitors’, as people who ‘depart from the way, having transgressed the law and violated the precept’. The Essenes retell the whole story of Israel in terms of this cosmic war.”

“The Teacher of Righteousness and the sages who followed him looked forward to a final struggle in which a central role would be reserved for the sect. Under the command of the Prince of the Congregation, the 'sons of light' would achieve victory in Jerusalem, then to the east and finally over Rome, while a cosmic battle occurred simultaneously in heaven, the whole lasting some 40 years. This would be followed by the messianic age. ... In some scrolls, ‘Prince of the Congregation’ is identified as the Davidic Messiah, who rules Israel as king under the guidance of a priest-Messiah,

'interpreter of the Law' 'who shall teach righteousness at the end of days'. There are hints of a more fundamental transformation, sometimes called 'the Renewal' having the characteristics of the day of judgement, accompanied by bodily resurrection as in Daniel. Sinners will be plunged into eternal torment but the righteous will be rewarded with 'healing, great peace, long life and fruitfulness ... eternal life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light'" (Cohn 1993 193).

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:36)

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:4)

These words of John indicate a deep continuity between the Essene and Christian traditions. Although such writings of John were often thought to be Hellenistic extravagances, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the war of the sons of light and darkness, the whole vision of John came to be recognized as part of a continuity of vision from Jewish apocalypse to the Christian. John's passage is also making a transition from a purely human figure into a transcendent supernatural being. This picture is elaborated also in the similitudes of Enoch although it may post-date Jesus and is absent from the Aramaic fragments found at Qumran. In this the 'son of man' or 'elect one' is 'designated, chosen for his unique destiny before the sun or stars or Earth were created'. In the similitudes, this messiah pronounces judgement on the living and the dead from a throne of glory as in Revelation's vision. "On the transformed earth, under a transformed heaven the righteous including the resurrected righteous will enjoy unchanging bliss. The Earth will rejoice and the righteous will dwell upon it and the chosen will go an walk upon it".

The son of man in some sayings attributed to Jesus is no less extraordinary. He too will be sent down from heaven to judge mankind, accompanied by angels, and those who have denied him will be condemned as surely as surely as those who have denied God himself. ... Applied to Jesus, the notion of transcendent, supernatural Messiah was indeed well adapted to explain and justify the paradox of his wretched death (Cohn 1993 206). This paradox remains deep in the Christian psyche, for Jesus said "Some of those standing here ... will not taste death until they have seen the kingdom of God already come in power". This is echoed in 1 Thessalonians, the earliest Christian text "For this we shall tell you as the Lord's word: we who are left alive until the Lord comes shall not forestall those who have died; because at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet call, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven; first the Christian dead will rise, then we who are left alive shall join them, caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - the proverbial Rapture incarnate in born-again Paul.

Although Paul admittedly expected a purely spiritual kingdom 'in the air', Jesus himself seems rather, to have looked forward to a transformed Earth. This tradition continues all the way to Augustine "this heaven and this Earth shall cease and a new world shall begin. But the old one shall not be utterly consumed, it shall only pass through a universal change" (Cohn 1993 200). This is practical bio-apocalypse.

In Luke, the theme of light and dark is woven into the birth:

*"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79).*

And again in Jesus' parables:

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Luke 12:2).

“The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light;

but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness” (Luke 11:34).

The references to Satan and the Devil in the four gospels are remarkably compact, given regard to the prominent role Satan has played since in the human psyche. Elaine Pagels (1995 12) has the reasons abundantly clear: “Satan, although he seldom appears onstage in these gospel accounts, nevertheless plays a central role in the divine drama, for the gospel writers realize that the story they would have to tell would make little sense without Satan. How, after all, could anyone claim that a man betrayed by one of his own followers, and brutally executed on charges of treason against Rome, not only was but still is God's appointed Messiah, unless his capture and death were, as the gospels suggest, not a final defeat but only a preliminary skirmish in a vast cosmic conflict now enveloping the universe?”

John's gospel has Jesus saying these things himself: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (3:19).

In Mark the references are scant, merely a brief reference to temptation in the desert and to the passage common to the synoptics in which Jesus is accused of being devil-inspired: “Out of Ba'al Zebul he casteth out devils.”, to which Jesus replies “How can Satan cast out Satan?”, a reference to Satan distracting the followers “And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts” and finally the classic retort to Peter “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

Luke and Matthew describe the temptations in the desert in more imaginative terms. Jesus hungers and Satan suggests he commands stones to be bread. Jesus answers that man shall live by the word alone. The Devil takes him on a mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of history in a moment and offers him the power and the glory if he will worship him and Jesus says he will worship only God. He then invites Jesus as Son of God to cast himself from the Temple pinnacles for the angels will save him and Jesus says not to tempt him. Satan duly departs.

There are a few additional comments in which Jesus says he saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven when the seventy can cure the ‘devils’ of malady and he gives them the power over serpents, which is sometimes celebrated in modern Christian sects.

In John the Jews who are offended by Jesus claiming “Before Abraham was I am” are accused of being the agents of the ‘lie’ in very Zoroastrian terms: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not” (8:44).

As we come towards the crucifixion we see in Luke, Satan entering into Judas, and in John the same as the sop is passed to him. This is the crux of the reentry of Satan into the mission at its climax in the intended cosmic struggle of light and dark. Judas is

portrayed as an agent of evil and betrayal, but his role is central and essential to bringing the forces of light and dark into opposition in the ceremonial atonement of the “righteous man” in the tradition of the wounded messiah (p 240). It is an act clearly chosen by Jesus when he says “one of you will betray me”. John places a dark emphasis on Judas in the midst of conflict over his claim to be the flesh and the blood: “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”. This suggests Jesus goaded Judas into the dark role by condemning him in advance as the traitor. We thus see in the confrontation of light and darkness Jesus as the light and Judas Iscariot the dark. In the Gospel of Thomas (p 565) the narrator is by contrast Didymos Judas Thomas, the gnostic twin of Jesus who reveals gnosis through the transmission.

The interplay of Satan as the power of darkness emerges in Luke: “Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (22:52). “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour” (23:44).

Just before Jesus says to his disciples that in two days he shall be betrayed at the Passover, he pronounces the eschatological second coming of the son of man with power: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ... Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt 25:31).

This eschatological superman role for the returning Christ is not manifest in the same way in the oldest gnostic sources such as the Gospel of Thomas. When Jesus asks Peter in the synoptic who he is, Peter says “You are the Christ”, but in Thomas Jesus says “I am not your master for you have drunk from the bubbling stream I have measured out .. whoever drinks from my mouth will become as I am.” When asked when the new world will come he says “It stands before you but men do not see it.”

An important aspect of Jesus’ eschatological dialogue is that it depends not on membership in Israel but on justice combined with generosity and compassion Pagels (1993 86): “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (25:35).

Despite the paucity of detail about Satan in the gospels, Pagels (1995) exposes the many themes of conflict and opposition, from the family difficulties with his mother and brothers to the challenges to the establishment over his pretensions to being the son of God while abrogating the sabbath, hand-washing and the very process of healing by casting out ‘devils’, which itself came close enough to the black arts to cause his charge of blasphemy, culminating in the raising of Lazarus in John. These themes of opposition rise to a crescendo as the mission unfolds, involving the Herodians, the Pharisees, the chief priests and Sadducees and of course the Romans. All of these lead to an interpretation of the history of the mission as a gathering collision course under the storm clouds of intrigue and opposition.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on Earth, no rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.” (Luke 12:51) cf. Matt 10:34 (p 625).

These themes are of course carried on into fine apocalyptic grandeur in the combat myth of Revelation, in which Rome has assumed the role of arch-enemy, probably because of its coincidence with the persecution of Christians by Domitian (Cohn 215). It is a work in frank Jewish apocalypse for Jewish imagination dotted with over 300 references to Daniel, Isaiah, Second Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. It is however a Christian work, which in identifying the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles as both inscribed on the heavenly city which descends to Earth on the twelve gates and the twelve foundation stones of the city wall, is saying that Christianity as the destined Jewish sect is the elect. By the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, heaven and Earth are finally made one. The ‘hieros gamos’ of cosmic renovation.

Jesus’ mission, both because of its sacrificial heaviness and the End of Days scenario of the mission, became not simply an healing of the existential condition, but a polarization of reality as much oriented to Satan as to God. His entire mission of light is pitted against the unraveling work of the devil, who invites him to the riches of the world and invites him to dash himself from the temple pinnacles, finally seizing his moment in the evil hour of crucifixion in bringing to a white-heat the male combat between God and the devil in his own immolation and the birth of the Kingdom.

In this sense Christ’s God is tragically cut down the middle by dark and light in final ultimate conflict. This diabolical streak is the dark side of Christianity itself and has literally led to the darkening of the light in which the Christian Church has become itself the purveyor of the concept of the Devil and of ‘just and final war’ - ‘justifiable homicide’ leading to genocide and the potential destruction of the Earth.

Elaine Pagels (1995) in discussing the themes of conflict and opposition in the gospels is writing the first episodes of the way this theme of conflict of dark and light has been elaborated into a continuing philosophy of repression of the ‘other’ in social terms which has led to escalating violence and conflict in society since. Her analysis begins with the early Jewish Christians as a group not participating fully in the Jewish revolt and perceiving in their own social struggle the dark forces in the ‘other’ just as the Essenes had done before them. These escalate as the gospels proceed from Mark through Matthew spilling the blood of the prophets and Luke to John.

Jesus was right when he said to Peter “Get thee behind me Satan”. The rot of Christianity had begun right before his eyes. “Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?’ ... And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. ... Then Peter said unto his wife [Sapphira], ‘How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out’. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband” (Acts 5:1). It was not Ananias and Sapphira, but Peter who blasphemed the Spirit. A noy dissimilar fate befel Magdalen to the demise of the gnostic mysterium (p 439).

Martyrdom, Repression and Inquisition

The Christian polarization of the world order into cosmic battle rapidly became a liv-

ing reality. The corruption and violence of pagan Rome and the moral 'rectitude' and the violent example of the Crucifixion as unflinching commitment to God caused Christians to enter into a collision course with the Rome of the divine emperors such as Domitian and Nero. Christians had by Jesus' own purported statements dividing two against three in a family preached social division and social insurrection as well. In the face of Roman repression, these divisions became literal as family members faced capital trial and violent demise (p 626). The battle of dark and light thus became a continuing saga of the slaughter of the innocents, exemplified by Perpetua and Blandina. In this struggle, the Christians and their Roman persecutors become two sides of one violent picture, and while the Christians prayed for their persecutors, they also firmly believed in the power of evil in them and that all the social customs previously devoted to Dionysus, Persephone and Asclepius alike, despite the later philosophers interated view as all the gods representing one cosmic order (Pagels 1995 126) were motivated by 'daimons' (ibid 120). It was this polarized view of reality that many Romans found most offensive and intolerant in the Christian view. On the other hand the Christians preached a doctrine of love and equality within a confined moral setting, which cast the Roman corruption, moral expediency, casual indifference to the sanctity of human life and raw violence bestial in Christian eyes. In a real sense the two energies fed one another, the Christian End of Days expectation leading to an equally casual disregard for the martyrs' own individual lives in sacrificing themselves to the heavenly Kingdom. Pagels notes well the concern of Romans such as Marcus Aurelius, Tacitus and Celsus at this dualistic Christian heresy:

"What makes the Christians' message dangerous, is not that they believe in one God, but that they deviate from monotheism by their 'blasphemous' belief in the devil. For all the 'impious errors' the Christians commit they show their greatest ignorance in 'making up a being opposed to God, and calling him 'devil,' or, in the Hebrew, 'Satan.' All such ideas, are nothing but human inventions, sacrilegious even to repeat: it is blasphemy ... to say that the greatest God ... has an adversary who constrains his capacity to do good'." - Celsus (Pagels 1993 143)

Later as the Christian church became an established order of bishops as opposed to a loose-knit protest movement, the pendulum swung the other way and the orthodox church then began the process of persecution in the name of God that has harrowed the field of Christianity since and continues to threaten our living future. The gnostics, who themselves were sincere Christians became heretics, imbued themselves with the devil, despite having among their diverse imaginings keys of reconciliation of dark and light (p 760). This situation worsened as the Christian church itself became tarnished with greed in assuming the crown of Rome, the very beast of Revelation's prophecies (p 641). Although the Catholic church has seen itself as the *ecclesia* fulfilling the prophesied Kingdom in place of Christ's second coming, the realities have been closer to the evil empire. In sequence we have the phenomena of Crusade (p 633), Inquisition (p 638) and Witch-burning (p 643), which is itself part of the 550 year rule of tyranny of the Inquisitorial Beast. Although the Witch hunts were by no means exclusive to the Catholic church, it was a pope, Urban II who ordered the first Crusade, plunging Christianity into a religion of jihad, when Jesus pivotal statement is to love your enemies, and it was a pope, Gregory IX in 1231 who instituted the Inquisition to repress the Cathars, leading from crusade against devout Christian gnostics to a permanent state of holy civil war against the European population.

Iblis the Shaitan

The role of Iblis the Shaitan in Islam (p 627) is a quaint mixture of old Jewish folklore and the harbinger of jihad and violence in the Islamic tradition, yet Iblis' role is not

entirely distanced from the older Jewish traditions of the Satan as tester. Iblis represents the chief angel who is reluctant to give obeisance to Adam because he is a mere mortal made of dust: "And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: Make obeisance to Adam. So they did obeisance except Iblis; he was not of those who did obeisance. He said: What hindered you so that you did not make obeisance when I commanded you? He said: I am better than he: Thou hast created me of fire, while him Thou didst create of dust. He said: Then get forth from this (state), for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely you are of the abject ones. He said: Respite me until the day when they are raised up. He said: Surely you are of the respited ones. He said: As Thou hast caused me to remain disappointed I will certainly lie in wait for them in Thy straight path. Then I will certainly come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side; and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful. He said: Get out of this (state), despised, driven away; whoever of them will follow you, I will certainly fill Hell with you all (Sura 7.11).

Two points emerge from this dialogue. Firstly al-Llah is a God of both Hell (p 634) and of the Day of Judgement (p 623) as in the Zoroastrian tradition, and secondly Iblis is redeemed by God because his sin was not against the heavenly host itself but merely pride when asked to do obeisance to frail and mortal man of dust. There is a deep lesson here for the violence within Islam, for while Iblis, the very devil, is counted among the redeemed in the Day of Requital the mortals who are lured by him are cast into Hell fire. Islam retains the death curse fatwah (p 638), jihad and practices atrocious sentences, such as stoning women to death (p 631), and dismemberment (p 659).

The Other as the Beast: Infidel as Agent of the Devil

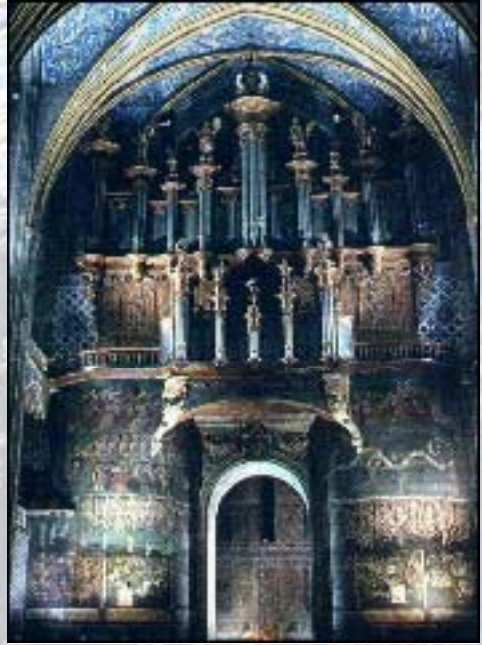
Three 'peoples of the book' Judaism, Christianity and Islam, despite all worshipping ostensibly the same abstract father creator God, each treat the others as false heresies. We have here the ultimate paradox of monotheism - the eternal war against the 'other' - despite all claiming to worship the one true God. In this none has escaped. It was a Jewish Prince of Curly who set the tradition for genocide (p 618) in burning the Christians at Naryan which Muhammad followed in the souk of Medina (p 628) in which 700 Jewish men were needlessly beheaded. Violence in the name of God became a central part of Islam, from the gruesome battles and genocide of the period at Medina and expressed in conversion by the sword and jihad. However one should recognize that the origin of this culture of violence to non-believers lies directly in the Old Testament tradition in episodes of divine slaughter such as the rape of Jericho (p 662). As pagan or heathen agents of the devil, or those who killed Jesus (despite his Roman crucifixion), Christianity was particularly undisciplined in its violence towards both Jews and Moslem peoples. The Crusades indulged undisciplined slaughter and genocide (p 635) at a time when Islam was a cultured society. Jerusalem was sacked and Saladin outraged at the bestial behaviour of the Christian armies.

From the outset, Christianity repressed each of its dissenting elements as evil heretical elements, firstly Jesus' own family, the desposyni for political reasons as they were familial Jews rather than born-again Romans, then with particular vehemence their own gnostic mystical face. Once the Christian church became an establishment power, the polarization of good and evil became an instrument of corruption and power of the institutional church, whose opponents were consigned to Inquisitorial torture and death, often for financial gain, because confiscated lands could be claimed by the church. This became a virtual gendercide of the European woman. The very term

‘witch hunt’ means unjust persecution as a term in the English language.

Albi Cathedral built to consummate the defeat of the Albigenses: The Inquisition was begun to broaden the scope of the crusade against the Albigenses and Cathars who had re-embraced the ideas of the repressed gnostics. Thus the repression of the gnostics did not begin and end in the second century CE but extended right up to the 18th. This constitutes two millennia of Christian civil war. The Christian Satan in the name of God

We also have the continuing problem of Christian anti-semitism (p 661). Although Jesus' death was foretold and apparently planned by himself in passing the sop (p 239), the Christian church has continued to hold the Jews to blame for Jesus' Roman crucifixion for insurgency. We thus have the deathly irony of the beast of Rome committing centuries of effective genocide and humiliation of Jews. Hitler's holocaust of this century (p 205) was by no means the first and was espoused in terms of the crucifixion by Hitler himself.



The Christian Church has effectively become the institution of both God the Father and Satan the Devil, for in Christianity is enshrined, above all current traditions, the idea of the dark force. It is also a force which has been wielded in diverse forms from Papal corruption through to Inquisition. The conflict between Catholicism and the Protestant movements exemplifies the final contradiction of the war of light and darkness, in which each became the devil of the other. The Protestants rightly called the Pope the anti-Christ (p 641), but themselves indulged in fundamentalist campaigns of exorcism and witch-hunt to the death.

This continuing saga raises deep questions. Is there such a thing as intrinsic evil? Is evil just a form of ignorance, or is there a dark force? Nature speaks to this question. As we have noted, life cannot exist except in an increasing entropy universe, in which death is implicit. Evolution requires mutation, to proceed and occurs at the edge of chaos. There are all types of niche, some devastating to the victim, but it is out of this seething process of diversity and consumption that humanity has evolved to witness the wonders of the universe. In its very diversity nature encompasses disease and parasite as well as accidental injury and degenerative change, of which age, the ultimate march of entropy, is Kali - time. Diversity begets animals as well as fungi and plants and carnivores as well as herbivores. Humans are one of the few species which can be either. The fact that animals sometimes eat one another is not a product of the devil but the diversity of ecosystemic niches permitted by life. Natural ‘evil’, despite being awesomely terrifying when faced by a tiger, is necessary too, because by filling these niches, a climax ecology results. We admire the extraordinary species diversity of key tropical forest hotspots with as many species per hectare as in whole temperate continents. These climax ecologies spell out the fallacy of evil as tooth and claw. The same

climax diversity that arises through the fractal penetration of many species into one habitat applies also to the animals. There are fewer carnivores than herbivores, and many herbivores suffer more from parasites than predators.

*Tiger, tiger burning bright in the forests of the night
what immortal hand or eye could frame thy fearful symmetry?*
William Blake (Hayward)

Evolutionary game theory also begets original virtue in the elaboration of kin and reciprocal altruism into scenarios such as ‘firm but fair’ and the capacity for emotional compassion seen in the mammalian limbic system. Humanity in particular has seen 100,000 years of evolution into cultural diversity as gatherer-hunters with only occasional predators because of human social cooperativity. Rather than tooth and claw, human evolution has been characterized by long periods of leisure and social intrigue. Nevertheless deceit and honesty, exploitation and compassion still coexist. Ethical vigilance against expedience is required to unfold the blessed realm.



Hieronymus Bosch The Last Ordeal Christ sits in judgement as the world is destroyed and everyone is run through with skewers. What difference is there between this image and the devil presiding over the torments of hell? What God of light espouses the same pain and torment as the perceived enemy of darkness?

The Evil Empire and Armageddon

The perils of cosmic combat myth are perilous and devastating. Rather than the interplay between light and dark in the passage from birth to death of the descent cycle of Inanna, the male form of the combat myth fails to resolve the complements until the final confrontation between the two male principles of dark and light divided just as the lethal tree of knowledge of good and evil attests. This is a very dangerous scenario because the believers of this scenario are prepared to envisage destroying the world or allowing it to be destroyed so that the new heavenly kingdom or Rapture can come into being in the final battle. It is an incitement to annihilate the Earth to achieve

the divine order. It is antithetic to our survival and the survival of the biosphere. It is even more dangerous than the nihilism of the mechanistic Newtonian world-view and has combined with it to form a relationship of exploitative domination.

We are the inheritors of a two-millennia tradition of cosmic war and violence in the name of male combat extended to final cosmic war. It is in the name of this fight of good against evil that the wilderness and diversity of nature has been conquered as a debased realm in the name of civilized order. It is in the name of this cosmic struggle for order that the mutually-assured destruction of nuclear weapons has been unleashed upon our culture, it is in the name of opposing the “evil empire” in the form

of communism that unveiled “star wars” as an anti-missile defence system to outmanoeuvre the ‘other’ and create an ‘invulnerable’ umbrella for nuclear theatre war. There is no end yet in sight to this end of days scenario invented by men in fulfillment of the final combat myth, pushing the stakes to ultimate annihilation.

It is in the name of this holy war that the situations in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Israel and more widely in the Middle East have continued to simmer and which fundamentalist terrorism of all types continues to foment. The myths of final combat and of male combat permeate the violence of the televised media. Violence is accepted as a sort of emotional aphrodisiac, a ‘cathartic’, based partly on adrenalin habituation and partly on the riveting attention death and the fear of impending death possesses. This purveying of the culture of violence and final war of the good against the malign is an integral part of patriarchal dominion.

This existential dilemma is a product of culture driven by profit rather than wisdom. To say that the media is violent and abets a patriarchal materialistic culture of exploitation of women is not a question of censorship, but of true love. It is not a question of forbidding, but of positive encouragement to dwell on the vision of survival and flowering rather than the culture of violence, the fear and pleasure of violence and sexual exploitation, simply because it makes a quick buck come quicker in the male stereotype of venture exploitation. We need to take a new ethical initiative in terms of Western society and the media, not to encourage a big brother moral majority, but to refertilize wisdom and the ongoing flowering of life rather than meaningless violence, sexual bravado, blood-splattered annihilation, conflict and exploitation in a meaningless world of selfish advantage.

Only by reconciling this war of dark and light and healing it once and for all in all patriarchal traditions can we have any hope of living in a sustainable living world. In this lies the restoration of the other forgotten tree, concealed since the foundation of the world in the Fall. It is through the unifying reconciliation of the Tree of Life that holiness returns and the myth of combat is healed in world peace and the flowering of the Earth in visionary evolution. This is the spirit of Sakina, the Shekhinah and of Sophia - matrimonial concord. Holy Matrimony is a condition in which the feminine strategy of long-term reproductive investment is manifest in a sustainable just society transforming patriarchal dominion and winner-take-all greed. Holy matrimony is the completion of the cosmic fabric of complementarity between Kingdom and Garden - embodied mind - unfolding the living heritage in divine reunion.

The Heritage of Satan

Elaine Pagels sums up the historical heritage of the divided universe: “So compelling is this vision of cosmic war that it has pervaded the imagination of millions of people for two thousand years. Christians from Roman times through the Crusades, from the Protestant Reformation through the present, have invoked it to interpret opposition and persecution in myriad contexts. To this day, many Christians-Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, and Orthodox-invoke the figure of Satan against “pagans” (among whom they may include those involved with non-Christian religions throughout the world) and against “heretics” (that is, against other Christians with whom they disagree), as well as against atheists and unbelievers. Millions of Muslims invoke similar apocalyptic visions and switch the sides, so that those who Christians believe are God’s people become, for many Muslims, allies of “the great Satan.” Many religious people who no longer believe in Satan, along with countless others who do not identify with any religious tradition, nevertheless are influenced by this cultural leg-

acy whenever they perceive social and political conflict in terms of the forces of good contending against the forces of evil in the world. Although Karl Marx's extreme and resolutely materialist version of this apocalyptic vision is now nearly defunct, a secularized version of it underlies many social and political movements in Western culture, both religious and anti-religious" (Pagels 1995 192).

"Although Matthew's Jesus attacks the Pharisees and bitterly condemns them, and John at one point characterizes Jesus' opponents as Satan's progeny, the Q source that Matthew 5:23-4 uses also suggests different ways of perceiving others, in sayings attributed to Jesus that urge reconciliation with one's opponents":

"If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift".

Or Matthew 5:43-44:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your father in heaven."

"Many Christians, then, from the first century through Francis of Assisi in the fifteenth century and Martin Luther King, Jr., in the twentieth, have believed that they stood on God's side without demonizing their opponents. Their religious vision inspired them to oppose policies and powers they regarded as evil, often risking their well-being and their lives, while praying for the reconciliation-not the damnation-of those who opposed them. For the most part, however, Christians have taught-and acted upon-the belief that their enemies are evil and beyond redemption".

Pagels concludes: "I hope that this research may illuminate for others, as it has for me, the struggle within Christian tradition between the profoundly human view that "otherness" is evil and the words of Jesus that reconciliation is divine".

Aztec Mythology and the Cosmic Struggle

The Aztecs have their own combat myth in the overthrow of Quetzalcoatl by Tezcatlipoca (p 120) in an ascending history of militarization and sacrificial violence. Our abhorrence of their bloodthirsty sacrifices has to be seen as a parallel complementation to the even greater violence of cosmic war and the flesh and blood sacrifice in our own religious tradition. Just as Zoroastrianism centered on the sun as light principle, so the sacrifices of the Aztecs of twelve thousand living beating hearts was designed to keep the sun continuing in its course. We thus need to see in the horrors of Aztec blood sacrifice a true reflection of our own vision of cosmic war in learning to reconcile in love and peace in consummating human history in the living natural world.

Healing Dark and Light in Holy Matrimony

The lesson of nature and this entire work is that the healing of opposites lies in discovering they are complements. In the reconciliation of dark and light celebrated by Holy Matrimony, the Shulamite repressed feminine is liberated and chaos and order can again complement in the abundance of natural fertility, complexity and wisdom. Nature teaches that such complementation is the very key to immortal life. Without an increasing entropy universe life would be impossible. Reconciliation is indeed divine as Elaine said. In reunion of respect between woman and man lies reconciliation between humanity and nature and the renewal and flowering of life on Earth.