

Yx20 – The Law Lie 6 – Law & Order – 2

My goal for this post is to continue to try to show at least a little of the history of the Law Lie, itself a part of the God Lie. In prior posts, the parts of the Law Lie addressed (at least partially) include the lies:

- That morality is defined by the gods,
- That justice is the jurisdiction of the gods,
- That judges are judged by the gods,
- That customs were created by the gods,
- That oaths are binding when sworn to the gods,
- That covenants can be established with the gods,
- That leaders are chosen by the gods,
- That laws are dictated by the gods,
- That order is ordained by the gods...

As a continuation of the previous post, in this post I'll try to outline differences and similarities between civil laws of the Hebrews, as described in the Old Testament (OT), and laws adopted by earlier groups.

I can provide only an “outline” of similarities in the civil laws; books have been written on the subject. They show that, generally, the civil laws contained in the OT are similar to those in the earlier laws codes of the Assyrians, Hittites, Babylonians, Akkadians, and Sumerians – although in some cases (to be indicated) the Hebrew laws were even more barbaric than laws established earlier. For reasons mentioned in the previous post, I'll emphasize civil laws that contributed to what I described as the “hateful-mother/ despondent-daughter syndrome” and that illustrate my third claim (in the previous post), namely, that the OT laws contain no internal evidence that they were dictated by some god who was omnipotent and omniscient; instead, the laws suggest that they were dictated by someone who, today and by Western standards, would be judged as incompetent and obscene.

In this post, I'll avoid comparisons of religious laws, even though the majority of the laws in the OT deal with religious rites. That OT laws primarily deal with religious matters is consistent with the almost-certain fact that the OT laws were written by priests, whom I've been identifying in these posts as Ezra and Co-Conspirators (Ezra & C-C). I include among the co-conspirators Ezra's great grandfather, the high priest Hilkiyah, who claimed that he had found the “Laws of Moses” after they had been “mysteriously” misplaced for many centuries!

There are several reasons why I plan to avoid emphasizing the OT's religious laws. One reason is that I plan to address at least some aspects of such laws in a later post dealing with "religious rituals", emphasizing the rituals practiced in ancient Egypt (many of which the Hebrew priests probably copied). Another reason – a major reason – is simply that the OT's religious laws and rituals are so astoundingly stupid! As an example, consider the following law, which fills the whole of *Leviticus 1* (copied, here, from the digitized NET version of the Bible, as will be all biblical quotations in this post, unless noted otherwise).

Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Meeting Tent: "Speak to the Israelites and tell them, 'When someone among you presents an offering to the Lord, you must present your offering from the domesticated animals, either from the herd or from the flock. If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd he must present it as a flawless male; he must present it at the entrance of the Meeting Tent for its acceptance before the Lord. He must lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. Then the one presenting the offering must slaughter the bull before the Lord, and the sons of Aaron, the priests, must present the blood and splash the blood against the sides of the altar which is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Next, the one presenting the offering must skin the burnt offering and cut it into parts, and the sons of Aaron, the priest, must put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Then the sons of Aaron, the priests, must arrange the parts with the head and the suet on the wood that is in the fire on the altar. Finally, the one presenting the offering must wash its entrails and its legs in water and the priest must offer all of it up in smoke on the altar – it is a burnt offering, a gift of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

'If his offering is from the flock for a burnt offering – from the sheep or the goats – he must present a flawless male, and must slaughter it on the north side of the altar before the Lord, and the sons of Aaron, the priest, will splash its blood against the altar's sides. Next, the one presenting the offering must cut it into parts, with its head and its suet, and the priest must arrange them on the wood which is in the fire, on the altar. Then the one presenting the offering must wash the entrails and the legs in water, and the priest must present all of it and offer it up in smoke on the altar – it is a burnt offering, a gift of a soothing aroma to the Lord.

'If his offering to the Lord is a burnt offering from the birds, he must present his offering from the turtledoves or from the young pigeons. The priest must present it at the altar, pinch off its head and offer the head up in smoke on the altar, and its blood must be drained out against the side of the altar. Then the priest must remove its entrails by cutting off its tail feathers, and throw them to the east side of the altar into the place of fatty ashes, and tear it open by its wings without dividing it into two parts. Finally, the priest must offer it up in smoke on the altar on the wood which is in the fire – it is a burnt offering, a gift of a soothing aroma to the Lord'."

Did you really want to read all that crap? Can you imagine the density of flies around that altar, splattered with blood?!

The above is only the first of such stupid laws in *Leviticus*. In sum, it would be far too onerous to provide details about the OT's religious laws: there are literally hundreds of such picayunish laws, specifying everything from the priests' dietary desires to their clothing, let alone the construction of altars, tabernacles, and whatever. Meanwhile, all such laws distract from the real horror perpetrated by the priests, which though specified in multiple ways, amounts to: **we are to be the only priests; representatives of all other religions and apostates from ours are to be killed – as are all who challenge our authority.** The same continues in Islam today.

Still another reason for my not comparing religious laws of different groups is because comparable information doesn't seem to be available. To begin to see what I mean, consider the following religious laws contained in the Hittite law code.¹ In total there are five such laws – not five hundred; five! I've copied these laws from the online, 1937 book² by George Barton entitled *Archaeology and the Bible*. The Hittite laws were probably written sometime in the period between about 1650 and 1500 BCE (more than a thousand years before Ezra & C-C put the finishing touches on how to splatter Yahweh's altar with blood!) and continued to be enforced (with few modifications) during most of the ~500-year Hittite (or Nesilim) Empire, which was centered in modern-day Turkey (the Anatolian peninsula).

If anyone goes to visit a divinity and has made him angry, he should offer as a sacrifice flour and wine.

Then he shall give 1 sheep, 10 loaves, and 1 jug of beer. Then afterward he shall offer a sacrifice for his house that the year may come around fortunately...

If anyone sows seed upon seed, they shall put him by the side of the plough and harness a pair of oxen, and place this one over against those and them over against them, and the man shall die and the oxen shall die, and he who had first sown the field shall take it. Formerly they did thus. Now 1 sheep shall be substituted for the man, 2 sheep shall be substituted for the oxen; he shall give 30 loaves, 3 jugs of beer; this is a purificatory sacrifice, and he who first sowed the field shall cultivate it.

¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hittite_laws.

² At http://dqhall59.com/Archaeology_and_the_Bible/index.htm.

[Note that the above Hittite law is similar to the OT's law at *Leviticus 19, 19* (and at *Deuteronomy 22, 9*): “You must not allow two different kinds of your animals to breed, you must not sow your field with two different kinds of seed, and you must not wear a garment made of two different kinds of fabric.”]

If anyone will establish the boundary of a field, he shall bring an offering: the owner of the field shall mark off 1 gipeshar and take it. He who would establish the boundary shall give 1 sheep, 10 loaves, 1 jug of beer; then afterward the field is sacrosanct.

If anyone acquires a field and he establishes the boundary, he shall take flour and throw it toward the sun-goddess and say: “Thou has planted my plants in the ground!” Then he shall say: “Sun-goddess and Teshub, be not angry!”

To be blunt, the sole insight that I gained from reading the religious laws in the OT is to get a clearer look at the underbelly of the religious beast. Thereby, in a way, the ancient Jewish priests deserve some credit, because (as far as I know) in no earlier law codes are the religious laws spelled out in such atrocious detail, e.g., specifications of the “sin offerings” to pay the parasitic priests.

A little of the clerical leeching that occurred in the ancient Sumerian city of Lagash in about 2350 BCE can be seen in Urukagina's “praise poem”, quoted in an earlier post³ in this series. Here, I'll just re-post selected lines, showing how “the world's first [political] revolution”, led by Urukagina, also constrained the clerics:

The incantation-priest measured out the barley rent (to his own advantage)...

In the garden of a humble person a priest could cut a tree or carry away its fruit. When a dead man was placed in the tomb, it was necessary to deliver in his name seven jars of beer and 420 loaves of bread... uh-mush priest received one-half gur {about fourteen gallons} of barley, one garment, one turban, and one bed... priest's assistant received one-fourth gur of barley...

Everywhere from border to border there were the priest-judges {mash-kim}... Such were the practices of former days.

When the god Ningirsu, the warrior of the god Enlil, granted the lugal-ship [leadership or kingship] of Lagash to Urukagina, picking him out of the entire population, he [Ningirsu] enjoined upon him (the restoration of) the divinely decreed way of life of former days...

³ At <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/09/basic-ideas-borrowed-for-bible.html>.

Everywhere from border to border no one spoke further of priest-judges (mashkim).

When a dead man was placed in the tomb, (only) three jars of beer and eighty loaves of bread were delivered in his name. The uh-mush priest received one bed and one turban. The priest's assistant received one-eighth gur of barley...

The priest no longer invaded the garden of a humble person.

No doubt priests in other societies similarly leech off those they duped, but unfortunately, complete records of religious laws in other, early cultures (e.g., in ancient Egypt) apparently haven't been found. Based on what's known about the rituals of the Egyptian priests, however (a little of which I'll review in a later post), there seems little doubt that the Egyptian priests were just as parasitic as were the Hebrew and earlier Mesopotamian priests – and as are Islamic “clerics” in most Muslim countries today, especially the Shiite clerics in Iran and the Sunni clerics in Saudi Arabia.

Thereby, the OT seems to be the first book in history that clearly documents the depths of depravity of the disciples of any deity. It reminds me of great quote in an op-ed article by Nicholas Kristof entitled “Overdosing on Islam”, which appeared in the 12 May 2004 issue of *The New York Times*:

Another Shiite leader outside the club of power [in Iran], Ayatollah Jaleedin Taheri, has denounced the [Iranian] regime as “society's dregs and fascists who consist of a concoction of ignorance and madness... [and] those who are convinced that yogurt is black.”

In my view, that's a good description of clerics of all religions: a collection of “society's dregs and fascists who consist of a concoction of ignorance and madness... [and] those who are convinced that yogurt is black.”

So, setting aside the OT's religious laws, I'll now turn to ancient civil laws, but because of time and space constraints, I'll illustrate only a few such laws, emphasizing those dealing with (or led to subsequent) subjugation of women. Except when noted otherwise, all quotations of the ancient laws will be from Barton's 1937 book (already referenced). Incidentally, for readers who consult Barton's book, you might want to notice that some of the dates Barton gives for the laws have been revised as a result of subsequent archaeological studies. In what follows, I've arranged the chosen laws in four categories, starting with:

1. Assault & Battery – Blood Revenge

Probably one of the oldest tribal laws is the law of “blood revenge” (= the law of retaliation = the *lex talionis*). It was practiced by many if not most aboriginal tribes throughout the world, it’s commonly described in American literature with a metaphorical reference to the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys, and it’s one of the ugliest customs still prevalent in most Muslim countries. It’s “legalized” in the OT with the familiar “eye for an eye”, e.g., at *Deuteronomy 19*, 21:

You must not show pity; the principle will be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.

Yet, if the creator of the universe dictated the “Laws of Moses” (as is claimed in the OT), then many of us would have hoped that he would have been at least as perceptive as Mahatma (“great soul”) Gandhi, who said:

An eye for an eye leaves everyone blind.

If God wasn’t so perceptive as Gandhi, then couldn’t God have just copied laws from what for us is the oldest known law code, namely, that of Ur-Nammu? It was written in about 2100 BCE, ~800 years prior to when Moses allegedly wrote his laws, and ~1600 years before Ezra. The Ur-Nammu code includes (in its most complete version, which was found in 1965) the following laws, detailing not revenge but restitution:⁴

If a man knocks out the eye of another man, he shall weigh out ½ a mina of silver.

If a man has cut off another man’s foot, he is to pay ten shekels.

If a man, in the course of a scuffle, smashed the limb of another man with a club, he shall pay one mina of silver.

If someone severed the nose of another man with a copper knife, he must pay two-thirds of a mina of silver.

If a man knocks out a tooth of another man, he shall pay two shekels of silver.

Instead of copying Ur-Nammu’s laws, God (aka Moses aka Ezra & C-C) apparently copied the idea of blood revenge from the laws of the Babylonian empire, written in about 1750 BCE (~300 years after Ur-Nammu, ~500 years before Moses allegedly lived, and ~1300 years before Ezra).

⁴ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_of_Ur-Nammu.

In particular, King Hammurabi's laws #196, 197, & 200 (of a total of 282 laws) state:

If a man destroys the eye of the son of a patrician, they shall destroy his eye.

If he breaks a man's bone, they shall break his bone.

If a man knocks out the tooth of a man of his own rank, they shall knock his tooth out.

And if God were to try to defend his choice by saying that Ur-Nammu's laws of restitution were superseded by Hammurabi's laws of revenge, then perhaps he (or any of his defenders) would like to explain why he didn't copy the Hittite laws, written c.1650–1500 BCE: they superseded Hammurabi's laws, and the Hittite Laws #7 through 17 (given below) are similarly void of tribalist, barbaric, laws of revenge:

If anyone blinds a free man, or knocks out some of his teeth, formerly he paid 1 mana of silver! Now he shall pay 20 shekels of silver and discharge the penalty...

If anyone strikes a person on the head, formerly they paid 6 shekels of silver; for the blow he gave 3 shekels; to the palace he gave 3 shekels. Now the king gives up (the fine) to his palace, and he shall give 3 shekels to the one struck.

If anyone strikes a person and makes him ill, and that one he makes unfit for work: he shall give a man instead of him. This one shall work in his house while he is convalescing; after he has recovered, then he shall give him 6 shekels of silver, and the doctor's bill he shall pay.

If anyone breaks the hand or foot of a free man, then he shall pay 20 shekels and discharge the penalty...

If anyone breaks the nose of a free man, he shall give one mana of silver and discharge the penalty...

If anyone cuts off the ear of a free man, he shall pay 12 shekels of silver and discharge the penalty.

If anyone causes a pregnant free woman to miscarry, if it is nine months, if it is ten months, he shall give 10 shekels of silver and discharge the penalty.

Of course, if you're a god similar to Yahweh (who apparently likes to spy on people and enjoys lots of blood and gore), retribution is a lot more entertaining than restitution.

2. Laws Prohibiting Witchcraft or Sorcery

To this day, it has always been critically important for clerics to be the sole agents, spokesmen, and controllers of the supernatural: if they let others engage in magic, then the rug would be pulled out from under their con games. And thus the following rules from the indicated law codes (arranged progressively farther back in time) demonstrate that Yahweh wasn't such an ass as otherwise one might think – or more realistically, the Jewish priests learned from earlier people how to keep their con game going.

The “Laws of Moses” (c.650–450 BCE)

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live (King James Version); You shall not allow a witch to live (New English Bible); You must not allow a sorceress to live (NET).
(*Exodus 22, 18*)

A man or woman who has in them a spirit of the dead or a familiar spirit must be put to death. They must pelt them with stones; their bloodguilt is on themselves.
(*Leviticus 20, 27*)

There must never be found among you... anyone who practices divination, an omen reader, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, one who casts spells, one who conjures up spirits, a practitioner of the occult, or a necromancer. (*Deuteronomy 18, 10–11*)

The Assyrian Law Code (c.1050 BCE)

The Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia similarly prohibited sorcery. The ~1050 BCE law code of the Assyrians (a word derived from the name of their god Ashur) includes:

If either a man or a woman practices magic and is caught in the act, they shall arrest and try them; they shall kill one who practices magic.

The Hittite Law Code (c.1650–1500 BCE)

From earlier, the Hittite Code includes:

If with fire anyone casts a spell upon a man and he dies, he shall afterward give his son for him. If anyone purifies a man by deceit, casting upon him a spell, if he casts it on the field or barn or anyone – witchcraft is a case for the king.

If a free man kills a serpent and speaks the name of another, he shall pay 1 mana of silver; if a slave, he shall die.

The Hammurabi Code (c.1750 BCE)

Still earlier, somewhat similar appears in Hammurabi's Code:

1. If a man brings an accusation against a man, that he has laid a death-spell upon him, and has not proved it, the accuser shall be put to death.
2. If a man accuses another of practicing sorcery upon him, but has not proved it, he against whom the charge of sorcery is made shall go to the sacred river; into the sacred river he shall plunge, and if the sacred river overpowers him, his accuser shall take possession of his house. If the sacred river shows that man to be innocent, and he is unharmed, he who charged him with sorcery shall be killed. He who plunged into the sacred river shall take the house of his accuser.

Barton adds (referring first to the Hittite law):

Probably killing the snake as one pronounced the name of another was believed to direct the wrath of the snake toward that other so that the snake should not be satisfied until he killed the bearer of the name. It would be equivalent to casting a death-spell upon the man so named. This law, then, should be compared with [laws #] 1,2 of the Code of Hammurabi and with *Exodus 22:18* and *Deuteronomy 18:10, ff.*

The Ur-Nammu Code (c.2050 BCE)

Still earlier, the Ur-Nammu Code states:

If a man is accused of sorcery he must undergo ordeal by water; if he is proven innocent, his accuser must pay 3 shekels.

The “ordeal by water” referenced in both the Hammurabi and Ur-Nammu codes was another ancient custom that apparently intrigued Yahweh; I'll emphasize such laws separately, immediately below, under the title

3. Trial by Ordeal (*judicium Dei* = judgment of God)

Poor old Yahweh: being jealous of other gods (as he admits in “his” Second Commandment), he apparently was piqued that other gods could test people's guilt or innocence by using trials by ordeal. It's understandable. If you were God (and assuming you could read), then what would you think if you read the following laws, this time arranged going forward in time.

Another trial-by-ordeal law in the Ur-Nammu law code (from ~2050 BCE):

If a man accused the wife of a man of adultery, and the river ordeal proved her innocent, then the man who had accused her must pay one-third of a mina of silver.

And imagine God’s jealousy when he read (assuming he could read) or heard about another trial-by-ordeal in the ~1750 BCE Hammurabi Code:

If the finger has been pointed at the wife of a man because of another man [i.e., if she is accused of adultery] and she has not been caught lying with the other man, for her husband’s sake she shall plunge into the sacred river.

Notice that, in the immediately preceding (typically brutal and misogynist) Hammurabi law (which Ezra & C-C apparently followed rather closely), if a wife was simply accused of being an adulteress (“she has not been caught lying with the other man”), then she had to “prove” her innocence by surviving being thrown into the river.

In the case of Hittites, I couldn’t find any laws dealing with cases that were judged by their god (or gods). Similarly, there seems to have been no trial by ordeal in Egypt. Thus, according to information at the amazingly thorough website of André Dollinger on law and order in ancient Egypt:⁵

Unlike other nations in the Near East, Egypt appears not to have known trials by ordeal, in which the accused in a criminal trial or the contestants in a civil litigation underwent an ordeal (often held in a river), the winner of which was supposed to be favored by the gods and therefore in the right.

In the Hittite code, however, there are several laws in which the king acted as if he were a god, such as the following:

If a man lie with a cow, the punishment is death. They shall bring him to the gates of the king. The king may put him to death, or the king may let him live, but he shall not come near to the king.

If a man lies with a hog or a dog, he shall die. They shall bring him to the gate of the palace, and the king may put him to death, or the king may let him live; but he shall not come near to the king.

I guess that the Hittites didn’t have such a dangerous river as the Tigris and Euphrates into which to throw the accused (sometimes bound, sometimes not).

In the Assyrian code (~1050 BCE), in contrast, it’s back to the river:

⁵ See http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/law_and_order/index.html.

If a man speaks to a man as follows, “they have violated thy wife”, and there were not witnesses, they shall throw that man into fetters and bring him to the river.

So, imagine the jealousy of Yahweh if he couldn’t have the fun of passing judgments on the accused (drowning those he didn’t like and permitting the others to swim to shore). Obviously, though, he had only himself to blame for his privations, since

- 1) The land he “promised” to “his people” might have been “**flowing with milk and honey**”, but he neglected to endow it with a sufficiently raging river, and
- 2) He had foolishly taught some of “his prophets” (Moses, Joshua, Samuel, et al.) how to part waters!

So, what to do? Ah hah! Apparently he had heard about “ordeal beans” used in what’s now called Sierra Leone (but was then called Calabar):⁶

...the *E-ser-e* or ordeal beans of the people of Old Calabar [were] administered to persons accused of witchcraft or other crimes. In cases where the poisonous material did its deadly work, it was held at once to indicate and rightly to punish guilt; but when it was rejected by the stomach of the accused, innocence was held to be satisfactorily established.

The result? Immediately below, in all its glory, is the “trial by ordeal” concocted by Yahweh (aka Moses aka Ezra & C-C), given at *Numbers 5*, 11–28:

The Lord spoke to Moses: “[Whereas I’ve heard tell about Calabar beans,] **Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘If any man’s wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, and a man has sexual relations with her without her husband knowing it, and it is hidden that she has defiled herself, since there was no witness against her, nor was she caught – and if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is defiled; or if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is not defiled [or, for that matter, any time he feels like accusing his wife of anything] – then the man must bring his wife to the priest, and he must bring the offering required for her, one tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he must not pour olive oil on it or put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance [and for any other mumbo-jumbo that the priests want to add].**

‘Then the priest will bring her near and have her stand before the Lord. [Or, if he’s not present, just consider the priest as your lord and master.] The priest will then take holy water in a pottery jar, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the

⁶ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_bean.

tabernacle [and, unbeknown to the accused woman, add in some crushed Calabar beans], and put it into the water. Then the priest will have the woman stand before the Lord, uncover the woman's head, and put the grain offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of suspicion. The priest will hold in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. Then the priest will put the woman under oath and say to the her, "If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband's authority [your husband being your lord and master, in the absence of the priest and in the absence of the Lord, doncha know], may you be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. But if you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has had sexual relations with you...." Then the priest will put the woman under the oath of the curse and will say to her, "The Lord make you an attested curse among your people, if the Lord makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen swell; and this water that causes the curse will go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh rot." Then the woman must say, "Amen, amen." [Or, failing that, say "All men, all men, are women's masters."]

'Then the priest will write these curses on a scroll and then scrape them off into the bitter water. [Just in case he didn't sneak in enough Calabar beans with the dust from the floor.] He will make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness. The priest will take the grain offering of suspicion from the woman's hand, wave the grain offering before the Lord, and bring it to the altar. Then the priest will take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness – her abdomen will swell, her thigh will fall away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she will be free of ill effects and will be able to bear children. [For, after all, women are only good for bearing children.]

'This is the law for cases of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, or when jealous feelings come over a man and he becomes suspicious of his wife; then he must have the woman stand before the Lord, and the priest will carry out all this law upon her. Then the man will be free from iniquity, but that woman will bear the consequences of her iniquity'."

Ain't that lovely? If a man wants, not just to dump his wife (which he could easily do, according to *Deuteronomy 24*, 1–4), but in addition to make her suffer, plenty, then what to do? Well, with no worry about repercussions from false accusations, he simply accuses her of adultery, passes the priest a few shekels under the table, the priest mixes in some crushed "ordeal beans" (or whatever) in a potion, and presto: the husband is not only rid of his nagging wife but she'd die a horrible death. It's one of many examples of:

4. Laws Discriminating Against Women

Although the above two topics (dealing with sorcery and trial by ordeal) contained cases of discrimination against women, they're almost incidental when incorporated into the full range of such cases. I won't describe all of them, not only because of space limitations (there are literally hundreds of such laws) but also because, in truth, it's too painful to be reminded of the horrors tribal men have perpetrated against women for thousands of years – and similar continues in most Muslim countries today. Also, I'll dwell neither on the reasons for such brutality (I mentioned some in the previous post and in an earlier⁷ post) nor on possible ways to help liberate women from such male chauvinism (for suggestions, see some of the “X-chapters”⁸ of my on-line book). Here, instead, I'll provide just a few illustrations of such laws and add a few comments on them, starting with the oldest known laws and including brief mention of repercussions that persist to this day.

The full text of the ~2350 BCE law code of “the world's first social reformer”, Urukagina,⁹ hasn't been found. Clay tablets referencing the code, however, lead to the conclusions¹⁰ that “[thieves and adulteresses](#) [not adulterers!] [were to be stoned to death](#) [as in most Muslim countries, today] [with stones inscribed with the name of their crime.](#)”

The laws in Ur-Nammu's code (~2100 BCE) dealing with women and marriage include the following:

If the wife of a man followed after another man and he slept with her, they shall slay that woman, but that male shall be set free.

If a man proceeded by force, and deflowered the virgin slavewoman of another man, that man must pay five shekels of silver.

If a man divorces his first-time wife, he shall pay her one mina of silver.

If it is a (former) widow whom he divorces, he shall pay her half a mina of silver.

If the man had slept with the widow without there having been any marriage contract, he need not pay any silver.

⁷ At <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/06/some-new-old-wives-ales.html>.

⁸ At http://zenofzero.net/Part_4.html.

⁹ See, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urukagina>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.duhaime.org/LegalResources/LawMuseum/LawArticle-44/Duhaimers-Timetable-of-World-Legal-History.aspx>.

If a prospective son-in-law enters the house of his prospective father-in-law, but his father-in-law later gives his daughter to another man, the father-in-law shall return to the rejected son-in-law twofold the amount of bridal presents he had brought.

Although some of the above laws probably offend modern sensitivities, notice that divorced women did receive some alimony and that women could, perhaps, talk their fathers out of an arranged marriage. Subsequently, conditions for women deteriorated, as can be seen beginning with Hammurabi's laws.

In the following laws from the Hammurabi code (~ 1750 BCE), I've included their numbers (as given by Barton) for reference to text that follows.

128. If a man takes a wife and does not execute contracts for her, that woman is no wife.
129. If the wife of a man is caught lying with another man, they shall bind them and throw them into the water. If the husband of the woman would let her live, or the king would let his subject live, he may do so.
130. If a man forces the betrothed wife of another who is living in her father's house and has not known a man, and lied in her loins and they catch him, that man shall be put to death and that woman shall go free.
131. If the wife of a man is accused by her husband, and she has not been caught lying with another man, she shall swear her innocence and return to her house.
132. If the finger has been pointed at the wife of a man because of another man and she has not been caught lying with the other man, for her husband's sake she shall plunge into the sacred river.
137. If a man set his face against a concubine who has borne him children or a wife that has presented him with children, to put her away, he shall return to that woman her marriage portion, and shall give her the income of field, garden, and house, and she shall bring up her children. From the time that her children are grown, from whatever is given to her children, a portion like that of a son shall be given to her, and the husband of her choice she may marry.
138. If a man would put away his spouse who has not borne him children, he shall give her silver equal to her marriage gift, and the dowry which she brought from her father's house he shall restore to her and may put her away.
139. If she had no dowry, he shall give her one mana of silver for a divorce.

140. If he belongs to the laboring class, he shall give her one-third of a mana of silver.
141. If the wife of a man who is living in the house of her husband sets her face to go out and act the fool, her house neglects and her husband belittles, they shall prosecute that woman. If her husband says: “I divorce her,” he may divorce her. On her departure nothing shall be given her for her divorce. If her husband does not say: “I divorce her,” her husband may take another wife; that woman shall dwell as a slave in the house of her husband.
142. If a woman hates her husband and says: “Thou shalt not hold me,” they shall make investigation concerning her into her defects. If she has been discreet and there is no fault, and her husband has gone out and greatly belittled her, that woman has no blame; she may take her marriage-portion and go to her father’s house.
143. If she has not been discreet, and has gone out and neglected her house and belittle her husband, they shall throw that woman into the water.
144. If a man takes a priestess and that priestess gives a female slave to her husband, and she has children; if that man sets his face to take a concubine, they shall not favor that man. He may not take a concubine.
145. If a man takes a priestess and she does not present him with children and he sets his face to take a concubine, that man may take a concubine and bring her into his house. That concubine shall not rank with the wife.
146. If a man takes a priestess and she gives to her husband a maidservant and she bears children, and afterward that maidservant would take rank with her mistress; because she has borne children her mistress may not sell her for money, but she may reduce her to bondage and count her among female slaves.
147. If she has not borne children, her mistress may sell her for money.
148. If a man takes a wife and she is attacked by disease, and he sets his face to take another, he may do it. His wife who was attacked by disease he may not divorce. She shall support her as long as she lives.
149. If that woman does not choose to live in the house of her husband, he shall make good to her the dowry which she brought from her father’s house and she may go away.
150. If a man presents his wife field, garden, house, or goods, and gives to her sealed deeds, after her husband’s death her children shall not press a claim against her. The mother after her death may leave it to her child whom she loves, but to a brother she may not leave it.

151. If a wife who is living in the house of a husband has persuaded her husband and he has bound himself that she shall not be taken by a creditor of her husband, her creditor may not hold her husband.
152. If they become indebted after the woman enters the man's house, both of them are liable to the merchant.
156. If a man has betrothed a bride to his son and his son has not known her and he lies in her loins, he shall pay her half a mana of silver and restore to her whatever she brought from the house of her father, and the man of her choice may marry her.
157. If a man after his father's death lies in the loins of his mother, they shall burn both of them.
158. If a man after his father's death is admitted to the loins of his chief wife who has borne children, that man shall be expelled from the house of his father.
159. If a man who has brought a present unto the house of his father-in-law and has given a bride-price looks with longing upon another woman, and says to his father-in-law: "Thy daughter I will not take," the father of the daughter shall keep whatever was brought to him.
160. If a man brings a present to the house of a father-in-law and gives a bride-price, and the father of the daughter says: "I will not give thee my daughter," whatever was brought him he shall double and restore it.
161. If a man brings a present to the house of his father-in-law and gives a bride-price, and his neighbor slanders him, and the father says to the groom: "Thou shalt not take my daughter," whatever was brought he shall double and restore to him.

Barton (who seems to have been religious) adds the following:

These Babylonian laws present numerous points of contact and of divergence, when compared with the Biblical laws on this same subject... The law (129) which imposes the death penalty upon a man who commits adultery with another man's wife and upon the woman, finds an exact parallel in *Leviticus 20:10* and *Deuteronomy 22:22*, though the Biblical law, unlike the Babylonian, provide no way in which clemency could be extended to the offenders.

The laws in 130, 156, concerning the violation of betrothed virgins, are in a general way paralleled by *Leviticus 19:20–22* and *Deuteronomy 22:23–26*, though there are such differences that, while the underlying principles are the same, it is clear that there was entire independence of development. A religious element enters into *Leviticus* that's entirely absent for the Babylonian code.

The Bible contains two laws on this subject that are without parallel in the Babylonian code. These are found in *Exodus 22:16, 17* and *Deuteronomy 22:28, 29*, and impose penalties for the violation of virgins who were not betrothed. In both codes the principle is manifest that the loss of a girl's honor was to be compensated by money, though *Deuteronomy 22:28, 29* recognizes that it has a value that money cannot buy.

The laws relating to a wife whose fidelity is suspected (131, 132) find a general parallel in *Numbers 5:11–28*. The provision at the end of 132 that the wife should plunge into the sacred river is in the nature of trial by ordeal. The law in *Numbers* imposes on such a woman trial by ordeal, though it is of a different sort. She must drink water in which dust from the floor of the sanctuary is mingled – dust surcharged with divine potency – and if she does not swell up and die, she is counted innocent.

The laws which provide that a wife may present her husband with a slave-girl as a concubine (137, 144–147) are without parallel in the Biblical codes, but are strikingly illustrated by the patriarchal narratives. Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham (*Gen 16*); Rachel and Leah gave Bilhah and Zilpah to Jacob (*Gen 30:1–13*). The law (146) which deals with such a slave-girl who would rank with her mistress is closely parallel to the story of the treatment of Hagar in *Genesis 16: 5–7* and *21: 9,10*.

The laws on divorce (138–141) are really in advance of the one Biblical law on the subject (*Deut. 24:1–4*). The law in *Deuteronomy* permits a husband to put away a wife, who in any way does not please him, without alimony, while to the wife no privilege of initiating divorce proceeding is granted at all. The Babylonian laws secure to the divorced woman a maintenance, and, while by no means according her equal rights with the man, provide (142) that she may herself initiate the proceedings for divorce. The ordeal must have been an unpleasant one, but in Israel's law a woman had no such rights.

The Hittite code (c.1650–1500 BCE) contains the following laws:

27. If a man takes a wife and brings her (to his house) and gives her dower rights therein; if the woman dies that man consuming the property, the goods, takes her estate, but if she dies in the house of her father, the property is for the children; that man shall not inherit that estate.
28. If a maiden is betrothed to a man and elopes with another, the bride price he escapes. Then the first man (may swear to it) in any manner whatever. The father and mother need not swear. If the father and the mother gave her to the other man; then the father and mother swear. If the father and mother say, "she is his" (i.e., the first man's) they shall separate her from him (i.e., the second man).
29. If a woman is bound to a man and he has paid the bride price, and the father and mother afterward think ill of it and take her away from that man, then they shall return to him double the bride price.

30. If a man does not take a woman and refuses, then the bride price, which he had paid, he shall lose.
31. If a man likes a slave girl and afterward they get on badly and quarrel, they shall divide the house between them: the man shall take the children, and the woman shall take 1 child.
32. If a slave takes a (free) woman, their law is the same.
33. If a slave takes a slave girl, their law is the same.
34. If a slave pays the bride price for a woman, and takes her for his wife, and gives her (up), no one shall remit (it).
35. If an administrator (?) or a shepherd takes a free woman and does not pay the bride price, then he shall serve as a slave for three years.
36. If a slave pays the bride price for a free girl and as a husband lives with her, no one shall afterward take her away.
197. If a man seizes a woman in the mountain and commits the human crime, he shall die. If he seizes her in a house, the woman is at fault, she shall die. If the husband finds them and they are killed, there is no penalty.
198. If he brings them to the gate of the palace and says: "Let not my wife die," he may let his wife live; he may also let the ravisher live, but in that case he shall scar his head. If he shall say: "Let the two die," then they shall receive their punishment. The king may kill them; the king may let them live.

Barton adds:

The last two of these laws should be compared with *Deuteronomy* 22:22–27. The principles underlying the two codes are here the same, though the application is different. The Hittite code makes provision for sparing the life of the guilty man and woman, while the Hebrew law does not.

Similar misogynistic laws were included in the Assyrian code and were probably enforced during the ~400 years after ~1000 BCE:

11. If a man's wife is going along the highway and a man seizes her without saying to her, "Let us embrace," she does not consent, she defends herself, he is strong, he rapes her, whether he is caught on the wife of a man or witnesses see him; they shall kill the man; the woman was not to blame.

12. If the wife of a man goes from her house unto a man and goes to a place where a man lives and he has intercourse with her, and knows she is the wife of a man they shall kill both the man and the woman.
13. If a man's wife and a man, either in a house of prostitution or on the highway, he knowing that she is a man's wife, has intercourse with her, as if he were the man whose wife she is (and) they agree in the deed, the man has committed adultery. If not knowing that she was a man's wife he had intercourse with her, the man is innocent of adultery. The husband shall take his wife and do with her what he pleases.
15. If a man's wife deceives a man, there is no blame attaching to the man; the husband of the woman shall visit punishment upon his wife as he wishes...
37. If a man divorces his wife, he may give her whatever he pleases. If he does not wish, he may give her nothing and she shall go forth empty-handed.
38. If a woman is detained in the house of her father and her husband divorces her, anything which he has voluntarily settled upon her he may take. He may not touch her marriage portion which she brought; it is secured to the woman.

Barton adds:

Neither in the Code of Hammurabi nor in the *Pentateuch* nor the Hittite code have we as many laws relating to women as are found in this Assyrian code... Without going into great detail, we may note that the principles on which adultery and rape are punished are the same as those which underlie the Babylonian laws on chastity, marriage, and divorce. The same is true of the laws controlling the dowry rights of women (see Code of Hammurabi, 128–161). These principles are some of them also found in the laws of *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*... The death-penalty for adultery, for example, imposed in so many sections of the Assyrian code, is paralleled in *Leviticus* 20:10 and *Deuteronomy* 22:22. The Assyrian law, however, commits the wife to the mercy of her husband in a way without parallel in the Bible. It also provides for mutilation of the face and hands in a way without parallel in Babylonia and Israel. Some slight parallel both to the power of the husband and to mutilation is found in the Hittite code, for example, 198, but of all these people the Assyrians were the most primitive in their attitudes toward such matters.

As I already suggested, however, Barton seems to have been religious. In contrast, I see little difference between the above “primitive” Assyrian laws and what's given at *Deuteronomy* 22, 13–21:

Suppose a man marries a woman, has sexual relations with her, and then rejects her, accusing her of impropriety and defaming her reputation by saying, “I married this woman but when I had sexual relations with her I discovered she was not a virgin!” Then the father and mother of the young woman must produce the evidence of

virginity for the elders of the city at the gate. The young woman's father must say to the elders, "I gave my daughter to this man and he has rejected her. Moreover, he has raised accusations of impropriety by saying, 'I discovered your daughter was not a virgin,' but this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity!" The cloth must then be spread out before the city's elders. The elders of that city must then seize the man and punish him. They will fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the young woman's father, for the man who made the accusation ruined the reputation of an Israelite virgin. She will then become his wife and he may never divorce her as long as he lives. But if the accusation is true and the young woman was not a virgin, the men of her city must bring the young woman to the door of her father's house and stone her to death, for she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by behaving like a prostitute while living in her father's house.

Think of those poor Hebrew girls with hymen ruptured by a fall, or maybe in play or during hard work in the fields, or whatever. What astounding evils have been caused by ignorance – and no one is so ignorant as the damnable clerics of the world!

Separately, one of the most interesting Assyrian laws (if for no other reason than its apparent uniqueness – but it seems to have had huge repercussions throughout the Muslim world) is the following (which has some portions missing):

40. Whether wives of men [...] or women [...] on the street (shall veil) their heads. Men's daughters [...] whether out-door (?) garments [...] or [...] garments, or [...] shall be veiled [...] their heads [...] whether [...] whether [...] veiled, if she walk on the street by day she shall be veiled; the hierodule who has taken a husband shall be veiled [...]; the foreign captive woman is veiled, the prostitute is unveiled, her head is uncovered; whoever sees a prostitute veiled shall seize her, he shall summon witnesses and take her to the portal of the palace. Her ornaments they shall not take away, but the garment in which she was seized they shall take. They shall give her 50 lashes and pour asphalt on her head. But if a man shall see a prostitute veiled and shall let her go and not bring her to the portal of the palace, they shall inflict on the man 50 stripes, his batikan and his garment they shall take, they shall pierce his ears, shall insert a cord in it, and bind it behind him and for one full month he shall perform work for the king. Female slaves are not veiled. Whoever sees a slave-woman veiled shall seize her and bring her to the portal of the palace; they shall cut off her ear. He who seized her shall take her garments. If a man sees a slave-woman veiled and lets her go and does not seize her, and does not take her to the portal of the palace, they shall arrest and try him; they shall give him 50 lashes, pierce his ear, insert a thread and bind it behind him, his batikan and garment they shall take, and for one full month he shall perform labor for the king.

As Jessica Bieda describes in “Women in Mesopotamia” (the references for which are given in the original article):¹¹

[The above] Middle Assyrian Law #40 [MAL 40] institutionalized a ranking order for women: at the top, the married lady or her unmarried daughter; beneath her, but still counted among the respectable, the married concubine, whether freeborn or slave or temple prostitute; at the bottom, clearly marked off as not respectable, the unmarried temple prostitute, the harlot, and the slave woman (Lerner 250). Before the creation of the law sacred prostitutes, who, as priestesses representing various goddesses, had been fairly autonomous, independent, and even respected (Passman 45). Under MAL 40 the sacral nature of sexual temple service was no longer the decisive factor in determining a woman’s “respectability”, for the temple prostitute was regarded in the same way as the commercial prostitute (Lerner 250). In ancient Mesopotamian society, there was a clear distinction between religious and commercial prostitution, however MAL 40 blurred this distinction. Such a law served to lower the social standing of certain groups of women, therefore dividing them, and was an early sign of the open intervention of the state into the realm of private sexual conduct (Passman 45).

The final civilization in Mesopotamian history that this essay will examine is Judea. June Stephenson summarizes the status of women during this time in her book, *Women’s Roots*:

“The social and legal position of an Israelite wife was inferior to the position of wife occupied in the great countries round about... all the texts show that Israelites wanted mainly sons, to perpetuate the family line and fortune, and to preserve the ancestral inheritance... A husband could divorce his wife... women on the other hand could not ask for divorce... the wife called her husband Ba’al or master; she also called him adon or lord; she addressed him in fact as a slave addresses his master, or a subject, his king. The *Decalogue* includes a man’s wife among his possessions... all her life she remains a minor. The wife does not inherit from her husband, nor daughters from their fathers, except when there is no male heir. A vow made by a girl or married woman needs (to be valid) the consent of the father or husband, and if this consent is withheld, the vow is null and void. A man had the right to sell his daughter. Women were excluded from the succession.” (Stephenson 70)

In Judea, religion instead of government was the law, and Jewish family life reflected the patriarchal structure of the religion (Stephenson 71). Because it was important for the population to increase, there was no room in society for unmarried men or women. When a woman got married, she had to prove her virginity in order to ensure that a man’s child was indeed his. Because the woman had been bought by her husband, adultery was a violation of the law of property and usually resulted in death to both parties (Stephenson 72). A woman’s first priority, and her greatest value as

¹¹ At <http://www.assyrianvoice.net/forum/index.php?topic=16767.5:wap2>.

judged by men, was her ability to reproduce. Therefore, if a woman could not provide children for any reason, she was seen as a disgrace. For women, marriage was monogamous, though polygamous for men (Stephenson 72). It can be seen that women enjoyed very little, if any at all, freedoms during this time. Their lives (both public and private) were strictly controlled by their religion.

Throughout Mesopotamian history, women experienced different liberties and their role changed with each successive civilization. A patriarchal revolution took place that greatly affected women's status; in general, women had a higher standing in the earlier Mesopotamian periods. The Code of Hammurabi was the beginning of the institutionalization of the patriarchal family as an aspect of state power (Lerner 253). It reflected a class society in which women's status depended on the male family head's social status and property. With the MAL 40, the state assumed control of female sexuality, which had previously been left to individual heads of families. From the middle of the second millennium BCE on, from the public veiling to the regulation by the state of birth control and abortion, the sexual control of women has been an essential feature of patriarchal power (Lerner 254). Unfortunately, the sexual control of women by outside forces is still a problem that is trying to be overcome today.

The above Assyrian laws dealing with veils probably led to the Islamic custom – and subsequent Islamic laws – requiring women to be veiled. Additional Assyrian laws that, even today, seem to have influence in tribal groups common in Islamic countries include the following.

55. If a man takes a virgin from the house of her father and does not return her to her father, if she has not been deflowered, or takes as a wife or held for a claim on the house of her father, and man who seizes the virgin, whether within the city or the country or by night on the highway or at a house of feasting or a city feast, and violates her, the father of the virgin may take the wife of the seducer of the virgin and give her to be ravished. To her husband he may not return her; he takes her. The father of the ravished girl gives her to the seducer as a possession. If he has no wife, the seducer shall give to her father 3 times the price of the virgin. The seducer who seized her shall not divorce her. If the father does not wish to receive 3 times the price of the virgin, he may give his daughter to whomsoever he pleases.
56. If a virgin of her own accord gives herself to a man, the man must swear (it). His wife they shall not touch. Three times the price of the virgin the adulterer shall give and the father of the girl do with her whatsoever he pleases.
59. On the correction of offenses (which are committed) which are written on (this) tablet, a man may (flog) his wife, pluck out her hair, may bruise and destroy her ears. There is no liability.

Remnants of those laws can be seen in the current, barbaric Muslim practice of “honor killings” (almost invariably of women). And probably the “right-to-life” advocates both in Islam and Christianity would be pleased if the following Assyrian law were still enforced:

53. If a woman by herself causes a miscarriage, they shall arrest her and put her on trial, they shall impale her on stakes and shall not bury her. If she dies in consequence of the miscarriage, they shall impale her on stakes and shall not bury her.

Unsurprisingly, then (given their historical setting), the “laws of Moses” were misogynistic. As pointed out by Shamshad.M.Khan and Dr. Sherif Abdel Azeem, in an article¹² by Muslims criticizing Jews (what else is new?):

‘Despatches’ would do well to attend an orthodox synagogue to listen to the daily prayer made: “Praised be God that he has not created me a gentile. Praised be God that he has not created me a woman. Praised be God that he has not created me an ignoramus.” [Religious Jews apparently praise God even when he grants only two out of three!]

Women were not allowed to bear witness at all in early Jewish society. The Rabbis counted women’s not being able to bear witness among the nine curses inflicted upon all women because of the Fall... Women in today’s Israel are not allowed to give evidence in Rabbinical courts. The Rabbis justify why women cannot bear witness by citing *Genesis 18:9–16*, where it is stated that Sara, Abraham’s wife had lied. The Rabbis use this incident as evidence that women are unqualified to bear witness...

Of course, it wasn’t just Judaism that adopted and promoted patriarchal misogyny. Some examples in other religions include the following.

In Hinduism, Manu’s laws include:¹³

In her childhood, a girl should be under the will of her father; in her youth, of her husband; her husband being dead, of her sons. A woman should never enjoy her own will.

Though of bad conduct or debauched, or even devoid of good qualities, a husband must always be worshipped like a god by a good wife.

¹² At [http://www.calltoislam.com/pdf/Putting Women Are Deficient In Their Intellect In Its Proper Context - CTI Research.pdf](http://www.calltoislam.com/pdf/Putting_Women_Are_Deficient_In_Their_Intellect_In_Its_Proper_Context_-_CTI_Research.pdf).

¹³ See, e.g., <http://www.duhaime.org/LegalResources/LawMuseum/LawArticle-297/200-BC--Laws-of-Manu.aspx>.

Christianity (or better, Paul’s Insanity) includes:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. (*1 Corinthians 11, 3*)

For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, providing they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty. (*1 Timothy 2, 13–15*)

And Islam contains similar laws discriminating against women, including that women have rights that are similar to men, but men are “a degree above them” (*Koran 2:228*), that a woman is worth one-half a man (*2:282*), that women are feeble and are unable to devise a plan (*4:98*), and that

Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. (*4:34*)

But setting aside the “distractions” of subsequent religions until later posts, I’ll now rest my case. In summary, in this post I’ve tried to present evidence supporting Item #3 in the previous post, namely

3) With respect to the “Laws of Moses”, themselves, they contain no internal evidence that the author was an omnipotent and omniscient god; instead, the laws that deal with religious matters are similar to laws already proscribed by other parasitic priesthods (especially by the Egyptian priesthood) and the laws that deal with civil matters are similar to tribal and community laws that had already been established elsewhere in the Middle East.

Although much more evidence is available and although I’ve deferred most comments on religious laws until later posts, I trust that, under existing time and space constraints, my point has been adequately made.

The same point has also been made by many others. As a current example, see the article entitled “God is merciful, but only if you’re a man” by Ophelia Benson in the 31 May 2009 of *The Observer*, which includes the following:¹⁴

¹⁴ At <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/31/women-religion-equality?commentpage=1>.

The God we have in the Big Three monotheisms is a God who originated in a period when male superiority was absolutely taken for granted. That time has passed, but the superior male God remains and that God holds women in contempt. That God is the one who puts “His” imprimatur on all those tyrannical laws. That God is a product of history – but taken to be eternal – which is a bad combination...

Actually, though, the root problem is, not with the god of the Abrahamic religions, but with tribalism (with its subversion of individual honor by group honor), patriarchy (with its devaluation of females), and associated lack of basic human rights. The Abrahamic religions “merely” sanctified such behavior, claiming that it was ordained by their fictitious god.

During the past few centuries, Humanists have managed to mollify the misogyny of most Christians. To make progress toward peace and prosperity in the world, similar must be done to eliminate the terrible problems caused by tribalism and patriarchy in Islam, Hinduism, and in China. Stated differently, to reduce physical violence and achieve sustainable development in the world, one of our first goals should be to eliminate gender biases in births, nourishment, health care, education, employment, marriage, laws, etc., since I’m convinced that more progress towards peace and prosperity requires loving mothers and hopeful daughters.