

Yx11 – Clerical Enslavement of Cultures

In the previous post, I tried to sketch some differences that arose among the cultures of the ancient Greeks, Hebrews, and Persians, differences that were recorded in their respective stories (whether fictional or not). Some of the cultural differences seem to have been derived from differences in locations and associated experiences.

Another obvious difference from the Greeks and Persians (and, for that matter, also from the ancient Egyptians and Sumerians) is that the Hebrews prior to Moses were depicted as without a priesthood. Thus, recall from the stories in the Old Testament's (OT's) *Genesis* that all the Jewish patriarchs (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc.) communicated directly with their god, without the need for intervening priests.

A major change dominates the next four books of the *Pentateuch* (i.e., in *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*): in the stories contained in these books, the Israelites are saddled with an Egyptian-style priesthood, which interrupts direct communications between the people and their god. The stories introduce “the prophet” Moses, who is depicted as knowing the wily ways of the Egyptian priesthood, who specifies a huge number of perks that the priests are to receive (at the people's expense!), and who claims to speak to – and for! – the Israelites' god, Yahweh.

Thus, associated with the priests' imposition of a communications barrier between the people and their god, the stories in the rest of the *Pentateuch* depict how the poor Jewish people were infected with a parasitic priesthood, which like all priesthoods before and since, controlled communications between the people and their god – for a price, which (of course) the people were to pay the priests.

Admittedly, it was no small trick for the authors of the stories to convince their readers (or, originally, their listeners) that their ancestors would have accepted the priests' interventions in and interpretations of communications with God – and therefore, so should they. As an important step toward their goal, the authors (whom I've been identifying in these posts as Ezra & Co-Conspirators, abbreviated to Ezra & C-C) describe how their (fictitious) Moses put “**the fear of the Lord**” in the people, claiming (*Exodus 19*, 12, as given in the New English Bible) that God stated:

Any man who touches the mountain [which Moses ascended to communicate with God] must be put to death [for just touching the mountain!]! No hand shall touch him [i.e., the person who just touches the mountain]; he shall be stoned or shot dead [or, in another translation, “hurled to his death”]; neither man nor beast may live.

Further, the authors claim that even Moses wasn't permitted to see Yahweh (*Exodus 33, 20*):

But he [God] added, “My face you [Moses] cannot see, for no mortal man may see me and live.”

That's quite a change! For contrast, recall from stories in *Genesis* that Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah, and Abraham (and even Sarah) had nice little face-to-face chats with God – and Jacob (aka Israel) damn near beat him in a wrestling match!

Even with that change in their stories, however, Ezra & C-C continued (using their fabricated stories about Moses) the same theme promoted in the stories in *Genesis* about the Jewish patriarchs, namely, that a despicable person could nonetheless be “righteous in the sight of the Lord.” For example, besides being a murderer of an Egyptian and one who was too cowardly and dishonorable to face justice (*Exodus 2, 11*), Moses is depicted as a mass murderer of Israelites (*Exodus 32, 27–29*) and as promoting a horrible policy of rape and genocide of people living peacefully on their own land (e.g., *Exodus 20*). Thus, with their stories about Moses, Ezra & C-C emphasized the same theme as in *Genesis*:

You people aren't to decide who's righteous and who isn't; we clerics will do the deciding; your job is to obey [us clerics].

Thereby, the clerical authors continued their assault on individualism, enslaving the thoughts of individual Hebrews.

As part of that enslavement, the clerical authors continued to stimulate cognitive dissonance in individuals who dared to think for themselves. For example, after God informed Moses (as given above, from *Exodus 33, 20*)

My face you [Moses] cannot see, for no mortal man may see me and live

God then states (at *Numbers 12, 6*):

Hear now my words: if there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not like this; he is faithful in all my house. *With him I will speak face to face*, [italics added] openly, and not in riddles...

Pity the poor people who were forced to believe such contradictory statements – or who still do.

But what's additionally new in the rest of the *Pentateuch* (besides the introduction of a priesthood) is emphasis on collectivism, which has enslaved most Jewish people for more than 2,000 years. Thus, as I mentioned in the previous post, a major feature of Ezra & C-C's method seems to have been to create a collective feeling in the Jewish culture of *oppressed superiority*. In this post, I'll try to provide more explanation for what I mean by that statement; I'll also try to illustrate other techniques Ezra & C-C used to enslave the Jewish culture.

EZRA & C-C's PSYCHOLOGICAL TYRANNY

To try to rule the Jewish people, Ezra & C-C could have chosen among many options. They could have chosen to try to rule by example, by persuasion, by force-of-argument, by force-of-arms, democratically, and so on. By examining the messages and morals of their Moses-myth, one can see that, from among their many choices, Ezra & C-C rejected the example set by Cyrus the Great (i.e., a benevolent dictatorship, promoting the people's welfare, including some freedoms, including freedom of religion).

Instead, Ezra & C-C selected the examples set, in part, by Persian emperors subsequent to Cyrus (in particular, Cyrus' son Cambyses and then Darius the Great) and in part by much earlier Egyptian and Sumerian priesthoods: **they chose to rule by force, fear, fraud, bribery, trickery, and hate**. In short, they chose to rule *via* psychologically tyranny. Below, I'll try to defend that claim – by showing another example from Persia, by describing some of the obvious messages and morals in the stories that Ezra & C-C concocted about Moses, and by suggesting the purposes of their Moses-myth.

Skeptical of my claims, the reader might think that Ezra & C-C wouldn't have been sufficiently cunning to concoct and execute the suggested subterfuge. The reader might think that religious and political leaders ~2400 years ago weren't so scheming as modern priests and politicians! If so, such

* Go to other chapters *via*

a reader – in fact, any reader – may find the following story to be informative. It's another story from Herodotus.¹

And I think it's important to repeat that, of course it's not known if the stories relayed by Herodotus are accurate, but for present purposes, it doesn't matter: what matters is that his stories probably fairly accurately record the stories that the people (including Ezra & C-C) heard.

In particular, the following is the story about how Darius became the Persian emperor. This Darius must be Darius I (i.e., "Darius the Great"), who ruled from 521–486 BCE, since Darius II lived later (ruling from 423–404 BCE) than when Herodotus published his book (in 440 BCE). And I'll add (as I mentioned in an earlier post) that I presume (but I'm not sure) that it's to Darius II that Ezra wrote his message (at *Ezra* 5, 6) that starts: "**To King Darius, all greetings...**"

The story (quoted below, copied from Herodotus' Book 3, starting at ¶80) illustrates not only that the Persians (and therefore Ezra & C-C) were well accustomed to conspiracies but also that the Persian leaders were well aware of different possible ways to rule the people, well aware of the pitfalls of monarchies, oligarchies, and democracies, well aware of the importance of the law, and well aware of basic human psychology. The story also illustrates that the leader who emerged (Darius the Great) was intelligent, resourceful – and cunning.

The setting for the story is the accidental death (described in a story quoted in the previous post) of Cyrus' son Cambyses, following his learning that Smerdis the Magian had proclaimed himself king, claiming to be Cyrus' son Smerdis (who had been ordered killed by Cambyses). Subsequently, seven Persians (including Darius, son of a companion of Cyrus) successfully conspired to eliminate the Magian imposter and regain the empire for the Persians.

And now when five days were gone and the hubbub had settled down [this "hubbub" followed the public announcement in Persia by Cambyses' companion, Prexaspes, that he had (following Cambyses' orders) killed Cambyses' brother, Smerdis, and that the Smerdis on the throne was an imposter – and then Prexaspes' suicide], *the conspirators* [who sought to regain the throne for the Persians] *met together to consult about the situation of affairs.*

¹ Available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.html>.

At this meeting speeches were made, to which many of the Greeks give no credence, but they were made nevertheless. Otanes recommended that the management of public affairs should be entrusted to the whole nation. “To me,” he said, “it seems advisable, that we should no longer have a single man to rule over us – the rule of one is neither good nor pleasant. Ye cannot have forgotten to what lengths Cambyses went in his haughty tyranny, and the haughtiness of the Magi ye have yourselves experienced. How indeed is it possible that monarchy should be a well-adjusted thing, when it allows a man to do as he likes without being answerable? Such license is enough to stir strange and unwonted thoughts in the heart of the worthiest of men. Give a person this power, and straightway his manifold good things puff him up with pride, while envy is so natural to human kind that it cannot but arise in him. But pride and envy together include all wickedness – both of them leading on to deeds of savage violence. True it is that kings, possessing as they do all that heart can desire, ought to be void of envy; but the contrary is seen in their conduct towards the citizens. They are jealous of the most virtuous among their subjects, and wish their death, while they take delight in the meanest and basest, being ever ready to listen to the tales of slanderers. A king, besides, is beyond all other men inconsistent with himself. Pay him court in moderation, and he is angry because you do not show him more profound respect – show him profound respect, and he is offended again, because (as he says) you fawn on him. But the worst of all is, that he sets aside the laws of the land, puts men to death without trial, and subjects women to violence. The rule of the many, on the other hand, has, in the first place, the fairest of names, to wit, isonomy [equality under the law]; and further it is free from all those outrages which a king is wont to commit. There, places are given by lot, the magistrate is answerable for what he does, and measures rest with the commonalty. I vote, therefore, that we do away with monarchy, and raise the people to power. For the people are all in all.”

Such were the sentiments of Otanes. Megabyzus spoke next, and advised the setting up of an oligarchy: “In all that Otanes has said to persuade you to put down monarchy,” he observed, “I fully concur; but his recommendation that we should call the people to power seems to me not the best advice. For there is nothing so void of understanding, nothing so full of wantonness, as the unwieldy rabble. It were folly not to be borne, for men, while seeking to escape the wantonness of a tyrant, to give themselves up to the wantonness of a rude unbridled mob. The tyrant, in all his doings, at least knows what is he about, but a mob is altogether devoid of knowledge; for how should there be any knowledge in a rabble, untaught, and with no natural sense of what is right and fit? It rushes wildly into state affairs with all the fury of a stream swollen in the winter, and confuses everything. [Writing approximately 80 years after Herodotus, Plato said similar: “Democracy... is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder; and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.”] Let the enemies of the Persians be ruled by democracies [e.g., the Greeks]; but let us choose out from the citizens a certain number of the worthiest, and put the government into their hands. For thus both we ourselves shall be among

the governors, and power being entrusted to the best men, it is likely that the best counsels will prevail in the state.”

This was the advice which Megabyzus gave, and after him Darius came forward, and spoke as follows: “All that Megabyzus said against democracy was well said, I think; but about oligarchy he did not speak advisedly; for take these three forms of government – democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy – and let them each be at their best, I maintain that monarchy far surpasses the other two. What government can possibly be better than that of the very best man in the whole state? The counsels of such a man are like himself, and so he governs the mass of the people to their heart’s content, while at the same time, his measures against evil-doers are kept more secret than in other states. Contrariwise, in oligarchies, where men vie with each other in the service of the commonwealth, fierce enmities are apt to arise between man and man, each wishing to be leader, and to carry his own measures; whence violent quarrels come, which lead to open strife, often ending in bloodshed. Then monarchy is sure to follow; and this too shows how far that rule surpasses all others. Again, in a democracy, it is impossible but that there will be malpractices: these malpractices, however, do not lead to enmities, but to close friendships, which are formed among those engaged in them, who must hold well together to carry on their villainies. And so things go on until a man stands forth as champion of the commonalty, and puts down the evil-doers. Straightway the author of so great a service is admired by all, and from being admired soon comes to be appointed king, so that here too it is plain that monarchy is the best government. [As Plato later summarized: “Dictatorship naturally arises out of democracy...”] Lastly, to sum up all in a word, whence, I ask, was it that we got the freedom which we enjoy? – did democracy give it to us, or oligarchy, or a monarch? As a single man [Cyrus the Great] recovered our freedom for us, my sentence is that we keep to the rule of one. Even apart from this, we ought not to change the laws of our forefathers when they work fairly; for to do so is not well.”

Such were the three opinions brought forward at this meeting; the four other Persians voted in favor of the last [i.e., a monarchy]. Otanes, who wished to give his countrymen a democracy, when he found the decision against him, arose a second time, and spoke thus before the assembly: “Brother conspirators, it is plain that the king who is to be chosen will be one of ourselves, whether we make the choice by casting lots for the prize, or by letting the people decide which of us they will have to rule over them, in or any other way. Now, as I have neither a mind to rule nor to be ruled, I shall not enter the lists with you in this matter. I withdraw, however, on one condition – none of you shall claim to exercise rule over me or my seed forever.” The six agreed to these terms, and Otanes withdrew and stood aloof from the contest. And still to this day [~440 BCE] the family of Otanes continues to be the only free family in Persia; those who belong to it submit to the rule of the king only so far as they themselves choose; they are bound, however, to observe the laws of the land like the other Persians.

After this the six took counsel together, as to the fairest way of setting up a king: First, with respect to Otanes, they resolved, that if any of their own number got the kingdom, Otanes and his seed after him should receive year by year, as a mark of special honor, a Median robe, and all such other gifts as are accounted the most honorable in Persia. And these they resolved to give him, because he was the man who first planned the outbreak, and who brought the seven together. These privileges, therefore, were assigned specially to Otanes. The following were made common to them all: It was to be free to each, whenever he pleased, to enter the palace unannounced, unless the king were in the company of one of his wives; and the king was to be bound to marry into no family excepting those of the conspirators. Concerning the appointment of a king, the resolve to which they came was the following: They would ride out together next morning into the skirts of the city, and he whose steed first neighed after the sun was up should have the kingdom.

Now Darius had a groom, a sharp-witted knave, called Oebares. After the meeting had broken up, Darius sent for him, and said, “Oebares, this is the way in which the king is to be chosen – we are to mount our horses, and the man whose horse first neighs after the sun is up is to have the kingdom. If then you have any cleverness, contrive a plan whereby the prize may fall to us, and not go to another.” “Truly, master,” Oebares answered, “if it depends on this whether thou shalt be king or no, set thine heart at ease, and fear nothing: I have a charm which is sure not to fail.” “If thou hast really aught of the kind,” said Darius, “hasten to get it ready. The matter does not brook delay, for the trial is to be to-morrow.”

So Oebares when he heard that, did as follows: When night came, he took one of the mares, the chief favorite of the horse which Darius rode, and tethering it in the suburb, brought his master’s horse to the place; then, after leading him round and round the mare several times, nearer and nearer at each circuit, he ended by letting them come together.

And now, when the morning broke, the six Persians, according to agreement, met together on horseback, and rode out to the suburb. As they went along they neared the spot where the mare was tethered the night before, whereupon the horse of Darius sprang forward and neighed. Just at the same time, though the sky was clear and bright, there was a flash of lightning, followed by a thunderclap. It seemed as if the heavens conspired with Darius [or – as if the story were embellished!], and hereby inaugurated him king: so the five other nobles leaped with one accord from their steeds, and bowed down before him and owned him for their king...

Thus was Darius, son of Hystaspes, appointed king; and, except the Arabians, all they of Asia were subject to him; for Cyrus, and after him Cambyses, had brought them all under. The Arabians were never subject as slaves to the Persians, but had a league of friendship with them from the time when they brought Cambyses on his way as he went into Egypt; for had they been unfriendly the Persians could never have made their invasion.

[Which, by the way, might explain why the Arabs didn't adopt (until Muhammad) the Persians' (Zarathustra's) speculations about God and Satan, Heaven and Hell, and a cosmic battle between Good and Evil: it's clear from the Koran, that the Arabs continued to be polytheists until Muhammad forced on them the crazy ideas that he learned from stories in the Persian-inspired Bible! Similarly, the Greeks didn't become Persian "slaves" and maintained their polytheism until the Romans under "Saint" Constantine (the "butcher emperor") forced the Bible on them (and on the rest of Europe). The Hebrews, on the other hand, were one of the first groups to be "subject as slaves to the Persians" and incorporated Zarathustra's wild ideas into their Old Testament. And currently, after another bizarre turn of events (after the Arabs conquered Persia and forced the Islamic version of the Persian religion as found in the Bible onto the conquered Persians!), Iranian leaders are threatening to destroy the Israelites, who for ~2,400 years have most conscientiously and completely (save for the few remaining Zoroastrians) preserved the original Persian religion! Upon considering such craziness (and contemplating some of the horrors of the associated wars and terrorism) surely no one would suggest that religious people are sane!]

And now Darius contracted marriages of the first rank, according to the notions of the Persians: to wit, with two daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Artystone; of whom, Atossa had been twice married before, once to Cambyses, her brother, and once to the Magus, while the other, Artystone, was a virgin. He married also Parmys, daughter of Smerdis, son of Cyrus; and he likewise took to wife the daughter of Otanes, who had made the discovery about the Magus. And now when his power was established firmly throughout all the kingdoms, the first thing that he did was to set up a carving in stone, which showed a man mounted upon a horse, with an inscription in these words following: *Darius, son of Hystaspes, by aid of his good horse [here followed the horse's name] and of his good groom Oebares, got himself the kingdom of the Persians.*

This he set up in Persia; and afterwards he proceeded to establish twenty governments of the kind which the Persians call satrapies, assigning to each its governor, and fixing the tribute which was to be paid him by the several nations. And generally he joined together in one satrapy the nations that were neighbors, but sometimes he passed over the nearer tribes, and put in their stead those which were more remote. The following is an account of these governments, and of the yearly tribute which they paid to the king...

During all the reign of Cyrus, and afterwards when Cambyses ruled, there were no fixed tributes, but the nations severally brought gifts to the king. On account of this and other like doings, the Persians say that *Darius was a huckster* [italics added], Cambyses a master, and Cyrus a father; for *Darius looked to making a gain in everything* [italics added]; Cambyses was harsh and reckless; while Cyrus was gentle, and procured them all manner of goods.

The Ionians, the Magnesians of Asia, the Aeolians, the Carians, the Lycians, the Milyans, and the Pamphylians, paid their tribute in a single sum, which was fixed at four hundred talents of silver. These formed together the first satrapy.

The Mysians, Lydians, Lasonians, Cabalians, and Hygennians paid the sum of five hundred talents. This was the second satrapy.

The Hellespontians, of the right coast as one enters the straits, the Phrygians, the Asiatic Thracians, the Paphlagonians, the Mariandynians' and the Syrians paid a tribute of three hundred and sixty talents. This was the third satrapy.

The Cilicians gave three hundred and sixty white horses, one for each day in the year [before the calendar was revised to have 365.25 days per year!] and five hundred talents of silver. Of this sum one hundred and forty talents went to pay the cavalry which guarded the country, while the remaining three hundred and sixty were received by Darius. This was the fourth satrapy.

The country reaching from the city of Posideium (built by Amphilochus, son of Amphiarus, on the confines of Syria and Cilicia) to the borders of Egypt [therefore, I assume, including the land of the Canaanites], excluding therefrom a district which belonged to Arabia and was free from tax, paid a tribute of three hundred and fifty talents. All Phoenicia, Palestine Syria, and Cyprus, were herein contained. This was the fifth satrapy...

I continued the above quotation further than the reader might have expected (if my goal were solely to show the political astuteness of the Persian leaders) to include Herodotus' reports both that “Darius was a huckster” and that the Hebrews were required to pay “tribute” to Persia. I wanted to include those assessments to suggest that Darius' prime goal in having the Hebrews return from Babylon to Canaan was probably to increase his “revenue stream” – and it was Ezra & C-C's job to insure that the tribute was paid! To do so, the Hebrew conspirators (Ezra & C-C) chose to establish not a monarchy, an oligarchy, or a democracy, but a theocracy.

EZRA & C-C's CONFIDENCE SCHEME

To establish their theocracy, the first important trick that Ezra & C-C had to accomplish was to convince the Israelites that fabricated stories about Moses were “true”: that the imagined, fictitious creator of the universe was “personally” interested in their fate. To that end, Ezra & C-C used a ruse undoubtedly concocted by the first successful con artist, thousands of years earlier: offer “the mark” something he wants whose value far exceeds what the mark is willing to pay.

They accomplished that con (as in “confidence scheme”) by selling the Hebrews the idea that they were “**the chosen people**”, chosen by no less than the creator of the universe, who (if they’d only accept him as their god – and Ezra & C-C as their rulers!) would give them “**a land flowing with milk and honey.**” Those two themes appear repeatedly. The “**milk and honey**” enticement appears (for example) at *Exodus* 3:8, 3:17, 13:5, 33:3 (using the usual scheme for referencing the Bible) and (for example) at *Deuteronomy* 6:3, 11:9, 26:9, 26:15, 27:3, and 31:20. Meanwhile, the “**chosen people**” theme appears (for example) at *Exodus* 5:1, 7:4, 7:16, 8:1, 8:8, 8:21, 8:22, 8:23, 9:1, 9:13, 9:17, 9:27, 10:3, 10:4, 12:31, 19:5, 22:25... In fact, at *Exodus* 19, 5 Ezra & C-C even “butter-up” the “chosen people” theme with:

If only you [Israelites] will now listen to me [God] and keep my covenant, then out of all peoples you shall become my special possession... You shall be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation...

Happiness is being God’s “**special possession**”, a member of a “**holy nation**”, living in a land “**flowing with milk and honey**”!

But as any competent con artist knows, selling only greed can be risky: if you don’t “produce the goods” (or, at least, appear to produce the goods), then not only will the greedy people soon become suspicious (that they’ve been conned) but also, quite commonly, they’ll hypocritically accuse the con artists of being greedy – and seek revenge for having been conned. Long before Ezra & C-C, therefore, Sumerian and Egyptian con-artist clerics had learned (by experience) that to entrap people, it was advisable to stimulate in their minds not only greed but also fear.

Illustrative of how Ezra & C-C added fear to their con game (beyond the people’s fear in seeing God – or even, just touching his mountain!) is the following fabricated story, from *Exodus* 32. The (long) quotation follows; I’ve copied it from the (digitized) NET version of the Bible.²

² And I should admit that, to illustrate the method by which Moses allegedly instilled additional fear in the people, I could have quoted just the final paragraph of what’s given below. My reason for including more is, that I wanted to encourage readers to consider, also, the quality of the writing in this part of the *Pentateuch* (possibly written by Ezra himself). My assessment is this: in contrast to the writings of Homer (a little of which I quoted in the previous post) or even of Herodotus (e.g., quoted above), writings that I think can challenge the intellectual capabilities of many adults, I think that many of the writings in the Bible (e.g., those quoted below) frequently insult the intelligence of children – and commonly challenge adult readers to try to avoid adding snide comments (a challenge to which, I admit, I succumbed!)]

When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron [Moses' brother] and said to him, "Get up, make us gods that will go before us. [The people seem to have no trouble giving Aaron orders!] As for this fellow Moses [Did the people really use the word 'fellow'? Maybe the transcriber on the scene (☹) misheard the word 'brother' as 'fellow'], the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt [Someone's gotta be kidding! Would the people really have added "the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt"? Was there some other Moses? Did Aaron not know that his brother (allegedly) brought the people out of Egypt? Was the author of this nonsense concerned that his readers wouldn't remember who Moses was – and so added some "stage directions"?!], we do not know what has become of him!" ["We hear all this talk about a land flowing with milk and honey, but that's all it's been: just talk."]

So Aaron said to them, "Break off the gold earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." [How the fleeing slaves managed to have so much gold is another story; why the sons were wearing golden earrings is a story that I'm not a liberty to divulge.] So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears [they didn't remove the earrings that were on the noses – I guess] and brought them to Aaron, he accepted the gold from them [has any cleric, anywhere, ever refused to accept gold?!] fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. [Hello? Has anyone tried to make a golden calf that way? "Fashioned {the gold} with an engraving tool"? How about first carving out a mold and then pouring molten gold into the mold? Collecting and using the gold from the earrings of the wives, sons, and daughters of (a reported) 600,000 men, the task should take only about six months!] Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." [Isn't it neat that, approximately 1,000 years after the incident allegedly happened, we have an EXACT recording of what was said?!]

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow will be a feast to the Lord." So they got up early on the next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. [What clumsy writing! How about something of the form: So, Aaron built an altar before their new god and proclaimed: "Tomorrow will be a feast to your god." On the next day, the people brought peace offering and burnt offering, they ate and drank, and then rose up to play – volleyball!]

The Lord spoke to Moses: "Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt [did Moses have some other people?] have acted corruptly. [And Moses responded: "Oh, don't be such a worry wart, Yahweh: they're just playin' volleyball."] They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them – they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt'." [If they made only one idol, why would they say "these are your gods" {plural}?)]

Then the Lord said to Moses: “I have seen this people. Look what a stiff-necked people they are! [They aren’t stiff necked; they’re looking out for the volleyball: that Aaron has a wicked spike.] So now, leave me alone so that my anger can burn against them and I can destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation.” [Well, if that was God’s desire, then why in the previous paragraph did he tell Moses: “Go quickly, descend”? And is there some new, untold reason why the creator of the universe couldn’t “burn” his anger in the presence of Moses? I mean, rumor has it that God was omnipotent, able to do pretty much whatever he damn well pleased.]

But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God and said, “O Lord, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? [Wouldn’t it have been sufficient to say “with great power”?] Why should the Egyptians say, ‘For evil he led them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? [And you wouldn’t want the Egyptians to think badly of you, would you – I mean, beyond their anger at your killing all their firstborn?] Turn from your burning anger, and relent of this evil against your people. [God, being a little slow-witted (maybe from the mountain’s altitude) apparently missing the opportunity to say: “Evil? What do you mean evil, you little worm? I’m talking here about punishment! If you want to see evil, I’ll show you what I do to little worms who describe what I do as ‘evil’.”] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by yourself and told them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken about I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever’.”

Then the Lord relented over the evil [?!] that he had said he would do to his people. [And so, by the way, in case the reader should ever happen to meet up with the creator of the universe (i.e., the original symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in the total void), then the reader might profit from noticing that Moses (and similarly, Abraham) had little difficulty in getting God to see the errors in his plans. I mean, there’s theoretical omniscience, and then, there’s God’s omniscience. Besides, notice that God apparently has a very poor memory – except, of course, he does remember not to flood the Earth again – we hope – because he tied rainbows around his finger to remind him of, er, does he remember?! In any event, if the reader should ever find a poor little child reading the Bible, it would be good to assure her: “No, Dear, you needn’t worry that God will punish you in Hell for eternity for taking that cookie. On the one hand, God’s got a crummy memory, and on the other hand, even in the unlikely event that he does remember that you took the cookie (when he can’t even remember not to flood the world unless he sees a rainbow!), then you’ll easily be able to show him his errors. Tell him that, in your family, children were always allowed to take at least one cookie per day without asking – and if he doesn’t believe you, tell him to come and talk to me about it, and I’ll straighten him out.”]

Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. The tablets were written on both sides – they were written on the front and on the back. [In case the reader didn’t know what “both sides” meant. Of course,

one should consider the possibility, I suppose, that the testimony could have been written also on the edges (in smaller letters) – but then, it wouldn't have been appropriate to say “both sides”, as in “two sides”, would it?] **Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.** [A remark added, no doubt, in case someone might have thought that Moses spent all that time on the mountain chiseling the messages into the stone by himself. As for what Moses might have been doing all that time on the mountain or why an omnipotent god couldn't whip the tablets out in a fraction of a picosecond, well...]

When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “It is the sound of war in the camp!” [By the way, in case the reader doesn't know, Joshua was a military man, and to him, everything sounded like war – making him drool.] **Moses said, “It is not the sound of those who shout for victory, nor is it the sound of those who cry because they are overcome, but the sound of singing I hear.”** [Goodness gracious! We can't have singing! That's terrible!]

When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became extremely angry. He threw the tablets from his hands and broke them to pieces at the bottom of the mountain. [They must have been very fragile stone-tablets! Were they sandstone? If so, why did it take Moses (or God) so long to write on sandstone?] **He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, poured it out on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.** [Although later, at *Deuteronomy 9*, 21, Moses says: “I [Moses] took the calf, that sinful thing that you had made and burnt it and pounded it, grinding it until it was as fine as dust; then I flung its dust into the torrent that flowed down the mountain.” So, does that mean Moses just had them drink some of the water from the torrent? There's quite a difference between those two possibilities!]

Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you, that you have brought on them so great a sin?” Aaron said, “Do not let your anger burn hot, my lord [so, earlier, when the Lord's anger “burned hot”, just exactly who was the Lord? Is there a suggestion, here, that Moses is the Lord?]; you know these people, that they tend to evil. [Like by dancing and singing, doncha know.] They said to me, ‘Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.’ So I said to them [‘I know what Moses you're talking about; don't treat me like an idiot!'], ‘Whoever has gold, break it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out.” [All by itself, did it? Even though, a few paragraphs earlier, we read: **“So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron, he accepted the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf.”** Gosh, does that mean that Aaron, the founder of the Jewish priesthood, lied? Gosh. Who would have thought? And God assigned a liar to be the founder of the Jewish priesthood? Gosh. Was that really the smartest thing an omniscient god could do?]

Moses saw that the people were running wild [dancing and singing (not to dwell on playin' volleyball) is kinda wild, doncha know], for Aaron had let them get completely out of control [and for God's (and the clerics') sake, the people aren't get out of control!], causing derision from their enemies. [What "enemies" knew about it? The pursuing Egyptians were long since killed. Is the author referring to the people's archenemies, i.e., the priests? Or does the author mean (as seems apparent from the next paragraph) that the "enemies" are the enemies of the priesthood, i.e., the Israelites who decided that Moses and his henchmen were running a con game?]

So Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me." All the Levites [i.e., the subsequent assistants to the Aaronite priesthood] gathered around him, and he said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel [and although there's no record of God actually saying this, it's to be understood, doncha know, that when Moses says something, he's speaking for God – or if you want, just assume he's God!]: 'Each man fasten his sword on his side [I'm sorry, but once again, I'm not at liberty to divulge how the fleeing 'slaves' acquired swords], and go back and forth from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and each one kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.'" [And this, Moses allegedly said, almost immediately after he relayed the commandment from God (so he claims), "Thou shalt not kill" (or "Thou shalt not murder"), and not long before he relayed that God said (*Leviticus 19, 17*): "You shall reprove your fellow-countryman frankly... you shall love your neighbor as a man like yourself." Here, Moses is just being more explicit (doncha know) about what he means by "reproving... frankly" not only "neighbors" and "fellow-countryman" but also "friends" and "brothers", namely: kill them if they don't do as the clerics say!] The Levites did what Moses ordered, and that day about three thousand men of the people died [i.e., were murdered by the priests' henchmen]. Moses said [to the henchmen, his fellow Levites], "You have been consecrated today for the Lord, for each of you was against his son or against his brother [i.e., you murdered them], so he has given a blessing to you today [or, in another translation, "so you have brought a blessing upon yourselves"]."

And thus Ezra & C-C demonstrated competence in their skullduggery: with their story about Moses offering the people "a land flowing with milk and honey", they stimulated greed in "the chosen people", and with the above story, Ezra & C-C stimulated their fear – not just fear of God but, more significantly (for the clerics) fear of the clerics: death to those who disobey!

More generally, there's a rule in the above that all clerics have learned (and history has show that, when given the chance, they eagerly apply): fear of God isn't sufficient to control the people; what's needed is fear of some "Special Security" (SS) troops loyal to the clerics. Thus, Ezra & C-C have their mythical Moses form an SS force, a squad of killers, who would murder anyone for their leader.

* Go to other chapters *via*

That example was followed by “Saint” Constantine (the “butcher emperor” of Rome) who used troops to force Christianity on the Roman Empire, by subsequent popes (and other Christian leaders) who tortured and murdered “heretics”, by Muhammad and subsequent caliphs (“deputies of God”) who used *jihadis* to ruthlessly rule a Muslim empire, by Joseph Smith whose *Danites* murdered Mormon apostates, and still today, the rule is mimicked by Taliban enforcers in Afghanistan and Pakistan, by the Secret Police in Iran, by the Religious Police in Saudi Arabia, and by bin Laden’s Al Qaeda. The leaders “justify” their actions by claiming that they serve some “higher good” – with the highest “good” being that the leaders remain in power.

Readers might hope that the above quotation from *Exodus* illustrating religious intolerance (killing apostates) would represent the limit of Ezra & C-C’s depravity, promoted using the twin prongs on the devil’s fork of fear and greed. Unfortunately, though, there’s much more. For example, in the quotation below (from *Exodus 20*), Ezra & C-C proposed that their mythical Moses instigated an absolutely horrible campaign of brutality, murder, rape, genocide... against the people who were peacefully living on their own land (imagined to be invaded by the mythical Jews) but who, horrors of horrors, were so depraved that they worshipped other gods. Thereby, Ezra & C-C stimulated and focused the people’s common tendency to hate – in this case, hate of “foreigners” and “unbelievers” (in the clerics’ balderdash).

When you go to war against your enemies [Moses allegedly said] and see chariotry and troops who outnumber you, do not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, is with you. As you move forward for battle, the priest will approach and say to the soldiers [giving them a “pep talk” – while staying out of harm’s way, of course, as clerics invariably do], “Listen, Israel! Today you are moving forward to do battle with your enemies. Do not be fainthearted. Do not fear and tremble or be terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you to fight on your behalf against your enemies to give you victory [which is similar to the stupidity that Islamic leaders now use to stimulate Muslim terrorists]...”

When you approach a city to wage war against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms and submits to you, all the people found in it will become your slaves. [It’s not that God is opposed to slavery – just slavery of his “chosen people”!] If it does not accept terms of peace but makes war with you, then you are to lay siege to it. The Lord your God will deliver it over to you and you must kill every single male by the sword. However, the women, little children, cattle, and anything else in the city – all its plunder – you may take for yourselves as spoil. [Happiness is having women as “spoil” and children to “plunder”.] You may take from your enemies the plunder that the Lord your God has given you.

* Go to other chapters *via*

This is how you are to deal with all those cities located far from you, those that do not belong to these nearby nations. As for the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is going to give you as an inheritance, you must not allow a single living thing to survive. [Not even bunny rabbits?] Instead you must utterly annihilate them – the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites...

Thus, the authors claim, the superiority of the “true-believers” justified their slaughtering the unbelieving men, raping their virgin women, etc., who were peacefully living on their own land but who worshipped different gods – and more significantly, paid a different parasitic priesthood.

Upon reading such hideousness as the above, readers whose humanity hasn't been completely subverted by one of the Abrahamic religions surely have a host of questions, such as: How could parents permit their children to hear such filth? Why isn't this horrible stuff restricted so that only those who have demonstrated critical-thinking skills are permitted to read it? How could it possibly be that approximately half the people in the world consider this crap to be directly communicated from the creator of the universe?!

Elsewhere,³ I've addressed such questions. Here, I want to address more restricted questions, such as: Why did Ezra & C-C concoct this junk? What was the message that they were attempting to communicate? What is the main moral of their Moses myth?

EZRA & C-C's DUPLICITY

In response to such questions, many biblical scholars have concluded that Ezra & C-C (i.e., the authors), themselves, provide answers – albeit indirectly. Such answers can be seen in what the authors have Moses say at, e.g., *Deuteronomy 4*, 32–38 and 30, 1–10, quoted below. To appreciate the answer, the reader is encouraged to imagine how the Israelites would have likely interpreted these statements upon first hearing the stories (as read to them by Ezra & C-C), while they were either living in Babylon or having just returned from Babylon.

For reasons that I mentioned in the previous post (dealing with archeological and historical investigations) and for additional reasons that I intend to address in the next post (dealing with who Moses might have been – if he existed at all!), it seems likely that the Israelites who listened to the stories

³ At <http://zenofzero.net/>.

about Moses previously knew essentially nothing about either Moses or about a Jewish exodus from Egypt (which allegedly occurred approximately a thousand years earlier). In contrast, though, the listeners were certainly keenly aware of their own exodus from Babylon. Therefore (many scholars have suggested), it was the Israelites' Babylonian experience that gave meaning to the following (from *Deuteronomy 4*, 32–38):

Indeed, ask about the distant past, starting from the day God created humankind on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether there has ever been such a great thing as this, or even a rumor of it. Have a people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the middle of the fire [fire being the principal symbol of Zoroastrianism], as you yourselves have, and lived to tell about it? Or has God ever before tried to deliver a nation [the Israelites] from the middle of another nation [such as the Persian nation!], accompanied by judgments, signs, wonders, war, strength, power, and other very terrifying things... You have been taught that the Lord alone is God – there is no other besides him. From heaven he spoke to you in order to teach you, and on earth he showed you his great fire from which you also heard his words. Moreover, because he loved your ancestors, he chose their descendants who followed them and personally brought you out of Egypt with his great power to dispossess nations greater and stronger than you and brought you here this day to give you their land as your property...

The reader is thus asked to consider the possibility that, to the Babylonian exiles, the above seemed less like a “pep talk” given by Moses to the Israelites leaving Egypt and more like a “pep talk” given by Ezra to the Israelites leaving Babylon! Viewed that way, the above quotations allegedly from Moses appear in an entirely different light, especially for readers who appreciate (e.g., from historical and archeological research) that (with about 99% certainty) the events depicted about Moses leading an exodus from Egypt probably never occurred – and in the ~1% chance that something similar to the events depicted did occur, then there's about a 99.99% certainty that they aren't reported accurately!

This alternative illumination of the above quotations (and of quotations to follow) can help the reader to see Ezra & C-C's duplicity more clearly. Thus, the reader is asked to consider the obvious: the purpose of these stories about Moses was NOT to describe Hebrew history to the Israelites; instead, their purpose was to motivate the descendants of the Jews who declined Cyrus' invitation for them to leave Babylon [**The Paris of the Ancient world! Who wants to return to the Israeli farms?!**] to finally get off their butts, discard their luxuries, and return to their homeland – so the “**huckster**” Darius would be paid his “tribute” from his “**Fifth Satrapy**”.

It's therefore suggested that the story about the Exodus from Egypt isn't about Moses shepherding the Israeli sheep out of Egypt. Instead, it's a literary construct, concocted by Ezra & C-C, to herd the Jews out of Babylon, with the shepherd being Ezra – disguised as Moses!

When Moses is viewed as a literary device, then not only do the Moses stories in the *Pentateuch* start to make sense but also, surely the reader becomes more impressed with the skill at which Ezra & C-C perpetrated their deception: it was on par with the skullduggery achieved by Cyrus the Great (getting the Persians to follow him to overthrow the Medes), by Cambyses (murdering his brother Smerdis, so he wouldn't ascend to the throne), by the magus Patizeithes (putting his own brother Smerdis on the throne, claiming that it was Cyrus' son Smerdis), and by Darius the Great (joining the conspiracy to overthrow the magus Smerdis, gaining the crown by arranging for his horse to be the first to whinny, and organizing his empire so that the loot would flow back to him).

To see it more clearly, consider another example of Ezra & C-C's stimulating greed and fear in the Israelites (this one from *Deuteronomy 28*). This time, however, the reader is asked to consider that it's, not Moses talking to Israelites who were Egyptian exiles, but Ezra talking to Israelites who were Babylonian exiles:

If you indeed obey the Lord your God and are careful to observe all his commandments I [Moses/Ezra!] am giving you today, the Lord your God will elevate you above all the nations of the earth. [Greed is good!] All these blessings will come to you in abundance if you obey the Lord your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field. Your children will be blessed, as well as the produce of your soil, the offspring of your livestock, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies who attack you to be struck down before you; they will attack you from one direction but flee from you in seven different directions. The Lord will decree blessing for you with respect to your barns and in everything you do – yes, he will bless you in the land he is giving you.

The Lord will designate you as his holy people just as he promised you, if you keep his commandments and obey him. Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you belong to the Lord, and they will respect you [a superior people]. The Lord will greatly multiply your children, the offspring of your livestock, and the produce of your soil in the land which he promised your ancestors he would give you. The Lord will open for you his good treasure house, the heavens, to give you rain for the land in

its season and to bless all you do; you will lend to many nations but you will not borrow from any. The Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always end up at the top and not at the bottom, if you obey his commandments which I am urging you today to be careful to do. But you must not turn away from all the commandments I [Moses/Ezra] am giving you today, to either the right or left, nor pursue other gods and worship them. [All of which is similar to (but, fittingly for Ezra the priest, more verbose than!) the “blessings” that both Cyrus and Cambyses offered to their followers.]

But if you ignore the Lord your God and are not careful to keep all his commandments and statutes I [Moses/Ezra] am giving you today, then all these curses will come upon you in full force [so, fear the Lord!]: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the field. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be cursed. Your children will be cursed, as well as the produce of your soil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. The Lord will send on you a curse, confusing you and opposing you in everything you undertake until you are destroyed and quickly perish because of the evil of your deeds, in that you have forsaken me. The Lord will plague you with deadly diseases until he has completely removed you from the land you are about to possess. He will afflict you with weakness, fever, inflammation, infection, sword, blight, and mildew; these will attack you until you perish. The sky above your heads will be bronze and the earth beneath you iron. The Lord will make the rain of your land powder and dust; it will come down on you from the sky until you are destroyed. [Again, similar to the curses of both Cyrus and Cambyses, made to instill fear.]

And as if that weren't enough, at *Deuteronomy 30*, 1–10, Ezra & C-C have their literary Moses “prophecy” that, in fact, the Israelites won't do as they're told, that they'll be overrun by enemies (e.g., led by Nebuchadnezzar!), that they'll be banished (to Babylon!), but then, that they'll be redeemed – exactly as just happened to have already occurred (☹):

When you have experienced all these things, both the blessings and the curses I [Moses/Ezra] have set before you, you will reflect upon them in all the nations where the Lord your God has banished you [in Babylon!]. Then [i.e., now!], if you and your descendants turn to the Lord your God and obey him with your whole mind and being just as I [Ezra!] am commanding you today, the Lord your God will reverse your captivity and have pity on you. He will turn and gather you from all the peoples among whom he has scattered you. Even if your exiles are in the most distant land [e.g., Babylon] from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Then he will bring you to the land your ancestors possessed [But notice: Moses couldn't have said that, because the Israelites leaving Egypt had never possessed the land of the Canaanites – but the Israelites leaving Babylon had!] and you also will possess it; he will do better for you and multiply you more than he did your ancestors. The Lord your God will also cleanse your heart and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love him with all your mind and being and so that you may live. [Yet,

if one makes an obvious extension to Aristotle's, "**No one loves the man whom he fears**", then Moses' (/Ezra's) demand is seen to be asinine: No man loves a god whom he fears.] Then the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hate you and persecute you [an oppressed, superior people]. You will return and obey the Lord, keeping all his commandments I [Moses/Ezra] am giving you today. The Lord your God will make the labor of your hands abundantly successful and multiply your children, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the Lord your God will once more rejoice over you to make you prosperous just as he rejoiced over your ancestors, if you obey the Lord your God and keep his commandments and statutes that are written in this scroll of the law. But you must turn to him with your whole mind and being.

Since that "prophecy" had been fulfilled (☹), then wasn't it obvious (the poor Jewish people were undoubtedly expected to conclude) that Ezra was telling "the truth"?!

And in their deceit, Ezra & C-C even concocted a response to the expected question: "**What did our ancestors do so wrong that we ended up being captives in Babylon?**" In fact, answering that question seems to be the linchpin that Ezra & C-C used to lock the poor Jewish people in their chains. Thus, to "explain" to the Israelites why they'd experienced so many troubles [e.g., being captured by Nebuchadnezzar and hauled off to Babylon – in spite of their being "**God's chosen people**" and having been promised (by no less than the creator of the universe) that they'd possess someone else's land that was "**flowing with milk and honey**"], Ezra & C-C have Moses allegedly [and, again, prophetically (☹)] explain that he knows that the Israelites will fail to obey and will be punished for it!

Moses' (i.e., Ezra's) threat to the Jewish people (that their god would punish them for violations of "the law") appears multiple times in the OT. At *Deuteronomy 4, 25*, for example, it appears as follows.

When you have children and grandchildren and grow old in the land, if you then fall into the degrading practice of making any kind of carved figure, *doing what is wrong in the eyes of the Lord your God* [italics added] and provoking him to anger, I [Moses/Ezra] summon heaven and earth to witness against you this day [happiness is being able to summon heaven and earth to do your bidding!]: you will soon vanish from the land which you are to occupy after crossing the Jordan. You will not live long in it; you will be swept away [e.g., to Babylon]. The Lord will disperse you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations [e.g., the Assyrian and Persian nations] to which the Lord will lead you.

One might think that the above threat would have been clear enough, certainly clear enough for such reportedly intelligent fellows as David, Saul, Solomon, and so on. Yet, according to the OT, they (and many, many, other Israelites) ignored this warning – which of course the clerical authors used (in hindsight, in their prophetic “vision”, ☹) to “explain” why the Israelites were punished, exactly as they claimed Moses had warned.

The easiest way to see how many times the Israelites “**did wrong in the eyes of the Lord**” [or, in other translations, “**did evil in the sight of the Lord**”], that is, “sinned” (at least, according to the clerics!) is to search for “**wrong in the eyes of the Lord**” (or equivalent) in a “Bible search engine” on the internet. The result will probably “blow you away”. Some examples are the following (referenced using the standard format): *Judges 2:11, Judges 3:7, Judges 3:12, Judges 4:1, Judges 6:1, Judges 10:6, Judges 13:1, 1 Samuel 12:17, 1 Samuel 15:19, 2 Samuel 12:9, 1 Kings 11:6, 1 Kings 14:22, 1 Kings 15:5, 1 Kings 15:26, 1 Kings 16:7, 1 Kings 16:25, 1 Kings 16:30, 1 Kings 21:25, 1 Kings 22:52, 2 Kings 3:2, 2 Kings 8:18, 2 Kings 13:2, 2 Kings 13:11, 2 Kings 14:3, 2 Kings 15:9, 2 Kings 15:18, 2 Kings 15:24, 2 Kings 16:2, 2 Kings 17:2, 2 Kings 17:17, 2 Kings 21:2, 2 Kings 23:32, 2 Kings 24:9, 2 Chronicles 22:4, 2 Chronicles 28:1, 2 Chronicles 29:6, 2 Chronicles 33:2, 2 Chronicles 33:6, 2 Chronicles 33:22, and 2 Chronicles 36:5.*

No wonder that the Jewish people listening to Ezra & C-C read the *Torah* (who almost certainly were hearing the stories for the first time!) were “**weeping**”, as described at *Nehemiah 8, 2–10*:

On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly... He read from it... from early morning till noon... all the people listened attentively to the book of the law. Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform made for the purpose, and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiyah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah [possible co-authors (or better, co-conspirators)] on his right hand; and on his left [other possible co-authors (or better, co-conspirators) – all needed to show the people that the priests were united in their conspiracy, were] Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchiah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam... And day-by-day, from the first day to the last, the book of the law of God was read... Then Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who instructed the people, said to them all, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” *For all the people had been weeping while they listened to the words of the law* [italics added] ...

One can almost hear the poor Jewish people sob:

How could our forefathers have done such evil (in the eyes of the Lord), when they had been warned to obey the Commandments and when they had been told about the blessings they'd receive if they obeyed.

Thereby – and I admit that with substantial skill – Ezra & C-C added to the Israelites' feelings: not only of oppressed superiority, greed, fear, and hate but also the feeling of collective guilt.

And I admit, also, that there's some finite (but small!) probability that the OT is right: that the Jewish people were “stupid” and “wicked” and “sinful” and “did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord”. But, given the likelihood that the Israelites were pretty much the same as any other group of people, it seems likely that they had only recently heard about Moses' commandments. As Frank Smitha describes in Chapter 4 of his online book *The Ancient World*:⁴

David, like many other Hebrews, appears to have been influenced by the religion of the Canaanites. He gave one of his sons, Beeliada, a Canaanite name. David kept in his house images of gods other than Yahweh. His “leaping and capering before the Lord” with music accompaniment, as described in Chapter 6 of the *Second Book of Samuel*, was a Canaanite practice. These were times of religious tolerance among the Hebrews. No evidence exists that David, Saul, or others influenced by Canaanite religion knew of the commandment said to have been given to Moses that “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Apparently the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments were not yet a part – at least an influential part – of Hebrew culture.

As a minimum, questions seem appropriate. If a group of people with a normal range of intelligence had experienced the incredible (meaning “not credible”!) miracles as the Israelites reportedly had experienced leaving Egypt (Moses turning the water of the Nile to blood, parting the Reed Sea, having manna drop down from the heavens, etc.), and then had been given some rather simple rules, then would they have done “evil in the eyes of the Lord”? Or is it a more likely that the people had never heard of such rules, and that centuries later, the priests (culminating in Ezra & C-C) concocted the Moses' story as a propaganda-sham to promote their own interests? The skeptic in me can almost hear Ezra & C-C's gloat:

Gotcha, you stupid, gullible people!

⁴ Copied from <http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/ch04.htm>.

It therefore appears that, with their Moses myth, Ezra & C-C sought to convey (to the Babylonian Israelites) messages along the following lines:

In the distant past, a thousand-or-so years ago, a great leader of our people, the prophet Moses (who was in direct communication with God) tried to show your ancestors the right path. He warned your forefathers that, if they didn't follow the straight and narrow path, then their descendants would suffer. Unfortunately, your ancestors didn't listen to Moses, and you have suffered the consequences. But now, if you'll be better than your ancestors, if finally you'll do what Moses said, if you'll obey us priests, then you'll be blessed; if you don't, you won't.

And then, with the following, Ezra & C-C banged into place the linchpin of the chains with which they enslaved the Jewish people. To show that they meant that the people were to do EXACTLY as they were told, Ezra & C-C have their mythical Moses fail to do EXACTLY as he was allegedly told, and for his minor slip, he was punished severely. The crazy little story is at *Numbers 20*:

Then the entire community of Israel entered the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there. And there was no water for the community, and so they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. The people contended with Moses, saying, "If only we had died when our brothers died before the Lord! Why have you brought up the Lord's community into this wilderness? So that we and our cattle should die here? Why have you brought us up from Egypt only to bring us to this dreadful place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink!"

So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting. They then threw themselves down with their faces to the ground, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Then the Lord spoke to Moses: "Take the staff and assemble the community, you and Aaron your brother, and then speak to the rock before their eyes. It will pour forth its water, and you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their beasts water to drink."

So Moses took the staff from before the Lord, just as he commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock, and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?" Then Moses raised his hand, and struck the rock twice with his staff. [Doing what God has told him to do on previous occasions – but this time, notice that God told him to "speak to the rock before their eyes", rather than touch the rock with his (magic) staff.] And water came out abundantly. So the community drank, and their beasts drank too. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to show me as holy before the Israelites [i.e., speak to the rock rather than touch it with his staff!], therefore you will not bring this community into the land I have given them."

And thus, said Ezra & C-C (in effect):

Don't think you'll get away with doing roughly what we tell you to do; we speak for God, and he punished even Moses for failing to do EXACTLY as he was told: while wandering in the desert Moses served God almost perfectly for 40 years, but because he made one little slip, he was prevented from crossing the Jordan. So, not only are you people to do what we say, you're to do EXACTLY what we say.

In summary, the critical links in the chain (with which Ezra & C-C enslaved the Jewish culture) were to show the people:

- 1) What they were supposed to do,
- 2) The blessings they'd receive if they did what they were told,
- 3) The troubles they'd have if they didn't do what they were told,
- 4) What their ancestors had done wrong (to "explain" why they were oppressed – ostensibly by the Egyptian, but in reality by the Assyrians and then the Persians),
- 5) What they now must do (including killing any apostates) to finally gain the superior position that was their due, and
- 6) The troubles that they'd encounter if they didn't do EXACTLY what they were told – not just in the 10 Commandments, but in all 613 of them!

Thereby, Ezra & C-C enslaved the Jewish people with feelings of oppressed superiority, with collective guilt, and with greed, fear, and hate (e.g., for the horrible unbelievers). Thus, Ezra & C-C ruled the people psychologically.

And the people (convinced by their clerics that they were a chosen people, chosen by no less than the creator of the universe) loved it! At *Nehemiah* 8, 12, for example, it's reported that, after the Israelites stopped sobbing (having learned what they were supposed to do and how their ancestors had "done evil in the eyes of the Lord"):

...all the people went away to eat and to drink, to send shares to others and to celebrate the day with great rejoicing, because they had understood what had been explained to them [by Ezra & C-C].

And thus the poor Jewish people were freed from Babylon, but their minds were entrapped by their clerics' fictitious stories about Moses. Their bodies

were freed, but their minds were enslaved, as was their culture: out of the Persian frying pan, into the priests' Zoroastrian fire.

And as incredible as thinking people find it to be, the enslavement of the Jewish culture has continued for more than 2,000 years – although a few brilliant Jews, such as Baruch Spinoza (1632–77), did manage to break free. But the majority of fellow Jews weren't about to discard their chains (and their claims of superiority), as evidenced by their acceptance of the 27 July 1656 decree against Spinoza written by the Jewish priests:

By decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza [Spinoza], with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of the entire holy congregation, and in front of these holy scrolls with the 613 precepts which are written therein; cursing him with the excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho and with the curse which Elisha cursed the boys and with all the castigations which are written in the Book of the Law.

Cursed be he [Spinoza] by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

[Not very bloody likely! For example, as illustrations of his continued influence on others, there's Santayana's, "My atheism, like that of Spinoza, is true piety towards the universe and denies only gods fashioned by men in their own image, to be servants of their human interests", as well as Einstein's, "I believe in Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings", and as an illustration of the priest's failure to "blot his name from under heaven", "the highest and most prestigious scientific award of the Netherlands is named the Spinoza *prijs* (Spinoza prize)."]

And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law... no one should communicate with him neither in writing nor accord him any favor nor stay with him under the same roof nor within four cubits in his vicinity; nor shall he read any treatise composed or written by him.

But Spinoza's principal offense (according to the Jewish priests) was not, I suggest, his claiming that God was everything – another name for which is 'Nature'. Similar claims had been made by Heraclitus (c.540 – c.480 BCE),

God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger

and by Pindar (c.518 – c.438 BCE),

What is God? Everything.

Instead, I suspect that, by inquiring into what's now called psychology, Spinoza (known as “[the father of psychology](#)”) began to reveal how clerics manipulate people psychologically – and as modern people know, priests don't like people peeking behind the clerics' magic curtains!

The seventeenth century Jewish people, however, didn't understand how their priests had manipulated them; so (out of fear and greed and guilt), they agreed with the above condemnation of Spinoza, unable to overcome their feelings of oppressed superiority (and greed and fear and hate) in which they were indoctrinated as children. And thus the clerical enslavement of the Jewish culture continued – enslavement from which, even now, approximately half of the Jewish people have been unable to break free.

And if that weren't bad enough, conniving, power mongering, scientifically clueless clerics of other religions (Christianity, Islam, Mormonism...), having learned from the Jewish clerics how to enslave their followers, have currently entrapped more than half of all people in the world – using the same stories about Moses, his fictitious miracles, and his nonexistent god!

Today, the most complete case of clerical enslavement of their cultures occurs for the poor Muslim people. For more than a thousand years, Islamic clerics have controlled the stories heard by Muslims. In their principal story book, the Koran (or Quran or Qur'an), according to the book by Sohaib Sultan *The Qur'an and Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* (available on Google Books), Moses is referenced more than any other character, specifically: “[136 times across thirty-six different chapters \[of the 114 chapters in the Koran\]](#).” Thereby, the stories about Moses [enslaving the Jewish people in his fanciful religion, his murdering “**unbelievers**” (of clerical balderdash), his brutal conquest, subjugation, and slaughter of people living peacefully on their own land, and his fanatical desire to have everyone believe in his fictitious god] undoubtedly provided Muhammad (or those who concocted the Koran) with a model for how the Islamic clerics could enslave their culture – as well as other people's cultures – permitting a new group of clerical parasites to leech off still more producers.

Expect, therefore, that all Islamic clerics will “scream bloody murder”, issuing *fatwas*, demanding the death of anyone who claims that Moses was a fictional character, concocted by Ezra & C-C. They’ll demand that such ideas be suppressed, because if Muslims learn that Moses was a literary construct, it would mean that their “holy book”, the Koran [claimed to be “perfect” and communicated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel from “the God” (Allah)], is as fictitious as the Bible (and as the Book of Mormon): it would mean that Muhammad didn’t get his stories from Allah (as claimed) but, instead, from the OT, which is a litany of priestly lies.

Meanwhile, the rest of us can hope that, when a sufficient number of people see that the stories about Moses are just myths, then the Koran as well as the Bible will come crashing down in a pile of rubble, like the Twin Towers in New York on 9/11. On 9/11, Muslim terrorists and their supporters rejoiced at the death of thousands of innocent people. When the Bible and the Koran come crashing down, liberating cultures from their Abrahamic clerics, we’ll be able to rejoice at the death of the God idea – and then (if we can also get the enslaved Hindu people to look behind their clerics’ curtains) the end of clerical enslavement of cultures.