

Yx14 – The Law Lie – 1 – Morality

In Mesopotamia approximately 5,000 years ago, the following penetrating wisdom was conveyed to Zi-ud-sura (or Ziusudra) by his Sumerian father Curuppag (or Shuruppak), the son of Ubara-Tutu (or UbarTutu):

To get lost is bad for a dog, but terrible for a man... On the unfamiliar way at the edge of the mountains, the gods of the mountains are man-eaters.

As to why I call it “penetrating wisdom”, from painful experiences trying to create this post I can attest that it’s terrible to get lost, there are many unfamiliar ways at the edge of the mountains, and the gods of the mountains truly are man-eaters!

Less figuratively, what I’ve been trying to do in this series of posts is to describe features of what I call:

The Mountainous God Lie – Lingering social evils from initial misunderstandings and then subsequent deliberate falsifications of records, plus manipulations of ignorant people by power mongering clerics and politicians:

- That gods exist,
- That people have immortal souls imbued by the gods,
- That birth of children is controlled the gods,
- That the dead are ruled by the gods,
- That people have souls, which are judged by the gods,
- That stars and their constellations are signs from the gods,
- That movements of stars tell stories of gods,
- That dreams contain messages from the gods,
- That magic displays the mystery of the gods,
- That mysteries conceal the secrets of the gods,
- That sacrifices are needed to placate the gods,
- That rituals reveal knowledge of the gods,
- That mistakes are “sins” against the gods,
- That sins offend and are punished by the gods,
- That clerics can forgive sins on behalf of the gods,
- That clerics are in contact with the gods,
- That clerics exercise authority on behalf of the gods,
- That clerics are spokesmen for the gods,
- That clerics preach the wills of the gods,
- That clerical “knowledge” is direct from the gods,
- That clerical hierarchies are established by the gods,
- That rather than serving themselves, the clerics serve the gods,
- That paying the clerics placates the gods,

- That prayers have power to persuade the gods,
- That tithes are collected on behalf of the gods,
- That “oracles” and “prophets” speak for the gods,
- That “truth” is told about prophets and gods,
- That a “race” of people was chosen by the gods,
- That oaths are binding when sworn to the gods,
- That covenants can be established with the gods,
- That morality is defined by the gods,
- That customs are created by the gods
- That laws are dictated by the gods,
- That leaders are chosen by the gods,
- That rulers know right by the grace of the gods,
- That justice is the jurisdiction of the gods,
- That order is ordained by the gods,
- That punishment is performed by the gods,
- That judges are judged by gods,
- That leaders rule by the grace of the gods,
- That kingdoms are established by the gods,
- That fates of societies are controlled by the gods,
- That human rights are endowed by the gods,
- That people should put their trust in the gods,
- That believers gain grace as a gift of the gods,
- That wars are waged on behalf of the gods...

It's all a mountainous lie, because in reality (in the vernacular):

There ain't no gods – and there never were any!

Actually (but metaphorically), the “Mountainous God Lie” is more like a mountain range – or even like a series of mountain ranges – and in previous posts of this series, I've been trying to climb just one of the mountain peaks, namely, the lies contained in the first five books of the Old Testament (OT), i.e., the *Pentateuch*. So far, I've explored (superficially) mostly just the lies about the existence of any god and how the authors of the *Pentateuch* [for convenience identified as Ezra and co-conspirators (Ezra & C-C)] mostly just plagiarized myths from other cultures, albeit modifying the myths to promote their own agenda (to rule the Israelites on behalf of their Persian masters). In future posts, I plan to continue exploring the biblical mountain range (especially the mountain range of lies known as the New Testament) and then to explore some of the lies contained in the mountain ranges of lies known as the Koran and the Book of Mormon.

But starting with this post, I want to undertake some preliminary explorations of other peaks in the Mountainous God Lie, those that I call “the Law Lie”. The features of this Law Lie are contained in the above list of features of the entire God Lie, specifically:

- That oaths are binding when sworn to the gods,
- That covenants can be established with the gods,
- That morality is defined by the gods,
- That customs are created by the gods
- That laws are dictated by the gods,
- That leaders are chosen by the gods,
- That rulers know right by the grace of the gods,
- That justice is the jurisdiction of the gods,
- That order is ordained by the gods,
- That punishment is performed by the gods,
- That judges are judged by gods,
- That leaders rule by the grace of the gods,
- That kingdoms are established by the gods,
- That fates of societies are controlled by the gods,
- That human rights are endowed by the gods,
- That people should put their trust in the gods,
- That believers gain grace as a gift of the gods,
- That wars are waged on behalf of the gods...

This Law Lie is perpetrated in every one of the “holy books” mentioned above. For example, in the OT, there’s the lie that “the Laws of Moses” (whatever they might have been, whoever he might have been, if he existed at all!) were given to him by God. In the series of posts starting with this one, I plan to illustrate this Law Lie, suggest how it started, and why it has been perpetrated. In this post I’ll focus on the part of the Law Lie that deals with morality, i.e., **the lie that morality is defined by the gods.**

SUMMARY COMMENTS ABOUT ‘MORALITY’

In these posts, my emphasis will be on the history of the Law Lie, but I plan to illustrate only a little of this history, simply because the subject is so huge, my knowledge of history is severely limited (having spent my career doing research in the physical sciences not in historical studies), my remaining time is relatively short, and there are practical restrictions on the extent of these posts (since, as I described at the outset of this series, they sum to only one of the appendices in my on-line book). All of which I mention to prepare the reader for my taking a number of shortcuts in this post, shortcuts summarized as follows:

* Go to other chapters *via*

1. I'll omit detailing the meanings for and differences among the concepts of 'morality', 'ethics', 'customs', and 'laws'. Recently, to relieve space pressures on this post, I summarized in my other blog¹ what I describe in substantial detail in Part 3 of my on-line book. Here, to summarize that summary (!), I'll just state:
 - That all four concepts (i.e., morality, ethics, customs, and 'laws') deal with trying to (as given in the Oxford American Dictionary's definition of morality) "[evaluate the extent to which an action is right or wrong](#)", and
 - That it's usually convenient to distinguish who does the evaluation. As a result, I'll mean by 'morality' that individuals decide the extent to which an action is right or wrong, by 'ethics' that a group decides (e.g., a professional group defining the group's ethics), by 'custom' that the community decides, and by 'laws' that the community's (or society's) government decides. Also, I'll repeat from my other blog: of these four concepts (morals, ethics, customs, and laws), I consider morality to be fundamental, because once a "sufficient number" of individuals agree on "[the extent to which an action is right or wrong](#)", then ethics, customs, and laws usually follow – albeit, sometimes slowly.
2. It may be useful to repeat, also, the fundamental point that any value (including those involved in defining morals, ethics, customs, and laws) can be defined only relative to some objective. Therefore, to evaluate the extent to which an action is right or wrong, it's necessary, first, to evaluate whether the goal that would be pursued by the proposed action is right or wrong. Therein resides the source of the sometimes-large differences in morals, ethics, customs, and laws, because different people choose different goals. For example, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Mormons, etc. consider Abraham's proposed act of murdering his son to be highly moral, since they hold the opinion that the prime goal of humans is to obey their god, whereas humans not suffering from the god delusion, not infected by the viral god meme, consider Abraham's proposed act to be highly immoral, since we're convinced that one of the prime goals of humans is to help our genes to, not only survive, but thrive.
3. I'll also omit detailing the natural origins of morality (and therefore of ethics, customs, and laws); already, I've written probably too much on the subject (e.g., in Chapter **K** dealing with "Kindness with Keeness" and in Chapter **V** dealing with "Values and Objectives"). Instead and again as a summary of a summary (!), all life has adopted as its prime goal simply to continue living. Thereby, nature has provided (and continues to provide) all animals with the fundamental basis of all morality, namely, the survival of the animal's genes. As a result, as an example, a lone wolf "knows" that it's highly immoral to attack a bear, but in a pack, the act may not be so immoral. Similarly, the human animal's prime goals (pursued either alone or in "a pack") are the survival (or, better, "thrival") of the individual and the individual's "family", however the individual chooses to define "family".

¹ At <http://meansnends.blogspot.com/2009/01/on-making-morality-mundane.html>.

Those “dual survival goals”, dictated by nature, can then provide a broad base for morality. As a result, as reviewed by Michael Shermer in his 2004 book *The Science of Good and Evil*:

The following characteristics appear to be shared by humans and other mammals, including and especially the apes, monkeys, dolphins, and whales: attachment and bonding, cooperation and mutual aid, sympathy and empathy, direct and indirect reciprocity, altruism and reciprocal altruism, conflict resolution and peace making, deception and deception detection, community concern and caring about what others think about you, and awareness of and response to the social rules of the group...

Unfortunately, however, the amazing imaginative power of the human brain can be manipulated (and has been manipulated, especially by clerics), e.g., to fixate on the imagined concept of “life after death”, and pursuing resulting “imaginative” (fictitious) goals can (and does) lead many people to adopt bizarre bases for their morality, e.g., to claim that the highest morality is to serve their fictitious god (in ways dictated by clerical con artists). As an example, a Muslim can be convinced that blowing himself (or, now, even herself) up for some clerically defined *jihad* is the act of highest moral value – instead of the madness that it is.

I should add that I’m aware of inadequacies in the above summaries; yet, I want to turn, now, to some illustrations of how Ezra & C-C incorporated the Law Lie into the *Pentateuch* approximately 2400 years ago.

SOME SOURCES OF THE LIE ABOUT THE “LAWS OF MOSES”

Of course, the actual source (or sources) of the “Laws of Moses” isn’t known with certainty.² Yet, below I’ll illustrate some likely sources.

The earliest written records about morality are approximately twice as old as the OT, i.e., not ~2400 years but ~4800 years (!), and as the examples summarized below illustrate, nature and nurture had already taught humans perfectly clear meanings for the concepts of ‘morality’. That is, thousands of years before Moses allegedly received the Ten Commandments from God, people had already received ample instructions – hundreds of “commandments” – informing them the extent to which actions are right or wrong (e.g., to survive and to live productively in cooperative groups).

² We can, however, be certain (even more certain than the idea that we exist) that the source wasn’t any god! See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/liIndoctrinationinIgnorance.pdf>.

1. Ancient Sumerian Moral Codes

As perhaps the best case in point, consider more of *The Instructions to Zi-ud-sura* (or Ziusudra) from his father Curuppag (or Shuruppak), son of Ubara-Tutu (or UbarTutu), a portion of which I included in a post at one of my blogs.³ When these *Instructions* were first recorded isn't known. The following was translated from clay tablets dated to be from about 2600 BCE, but it's probably one of thousands of similar tablets, since these *Instructions* seem to have been used to teach Sumerian scribes their trade.

Let me add, incidentally, that I hope readers will take additional pleasure in reading these *Instructions* from realizing that they seem to be the world's oldest "manuscript" (ms.) that recorded "ordinary thoughts" by ordinary people about ordinary events. In particular, notice that these *Instructions* are approximately 2,000 years older than the similar advice to his son, Perseus, written by Hesiod,⁴ a contemporary of Homer.

In the following quotation (copied from the tremendous website:⁵ *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*, hosted by The Oriental Institute, University of Oxford), I've kept the line numbers (of the lines on the clay tablet), the ellipsis (...) represent missing text (lacuna), and the question marks (?) represent translation uncertainties. In a few places I've added notes in brackets [...]; I've put some statements of this quotation in *italics* for emphasis (namely, those that I found especially interesting) and put some in ***bold italics*** for even more emphasis (for reasons to be explained).

1-13. In those days, in those far remote days, in those nights, in those faraway nights, in those years, in those far remote years, at that time the wise one who knew how to speak in elaborate words lived in the Land; Curuppag, the wise one, who knew how to speak with elaborate words lived in the Land. Curuppag gave instructions to his son. Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu gave instructions to his son Zi-ud-sura:

My son, let me give you instructions: you should pay attention! Zi-ud-sura, let me speak a word to you: you should pay attention! Do not neglect my instructions! Do not transgress the words I speak! The instructions of an old man are precious; you should comply with them!

³ At <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2008/06/obamas-judeo-christian-morality-junk.html>.

⁴ Available at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Aabo%3Aatl.0020.002&query=init>.

⁵ At <http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>.

14. You should not buy a donkey which brays; it will split (?) your midriff (?).
- 15-18. *You should not locate a field on a road;...* You should not plough a field at {(1 ms. adds:) a road or} a path;... You should not make a well in your field: people will cause damage on it for you. You should not place your house next to a public square: there is always a crowd (?) there.
- 19-20. You should not vouch for someone: that man will have a hold on you; and you yourself, you should not let somebody vouch for you {(1 ms. adds:) that man will despise (?) you}.
- 22-27. You should not loiter about where there is a quarrel; you should not let the quarrel make you a witness. You should not let (?) yourself... in a quarrel. ***You should not cause a quarrel;***... the gate of the palace... Stand aside from a quarrel... you should not take (?) another road.
- 28-31. ***You should not steal anything;*** you should not... yourself. You should not break into a house; you should not wish for the money chest (?). A thief is a lion, but after he has been caught, he will be a slave. My son, ***you should not commit robbery;*** you should not cut yourself with an axe. [Notice the use of metaphors.]
- 32-34. You should not make a young man best man. You should not... yourself. ***You should not play around with a married young woman;*** the slander could be serious. My son, you should not sit alone in a chamber with a married woman.
- 35-38. ***You should not pick a quarrel;*** you should not disgrace yourself. ***You should not... [tell] lies;***... You should not boast; then your words will be trusted. You should not deliberate for too long (?); you cannot bear... glances.
- 39-41. You should not eat stolen food with {anyone} {(1 ms. has instead:) a thief}. You should not sink (?) your hand into blood. After you have apportioned the bones, you will be made to restore the ox, you will be made to restore the sheep.
- 42-43. ***You should not speak improperly;*** later it will lay a trap for you.
- 44-46. You should not scatter your sheep into unknown pastures. You should not hire someone's ox for an uncertain...
47. You should not travel during the night: it can hide both good and evil.
48. You should not buy an onager [“a wild ass found in northern Iran and bordering areas”] it lasts (?) only until the end of the day.
49. ***You should not have sex with your slave girl;*** she will chew you up (?).
50. ***You should not curse strongly;*** it rebounds on you.

51-52. You should not draw up water which you cannot {reach} {(1 ms. has instead:) grasp}: it will make you weak. {1 line unclear} [Another metaphor?]

53. You should not drive away a debtor: he will be hostile towards you.

54-57. *You should not establish a home with an arrogant man:* he will make your life like that of a slave girl. You will not be able to travel through any human dwelling without be being shouted at: “There you go! There you go!”

58-59. You should not undo the... of the garden’s reed fence; “Restore it! Restore it!” they will say to you.

61-62. *My son, you should not use violence (?)... You should not commit rape on someone’s daughter;* the courtyard will learn of it.

63-64. You should not drive away a {powerful} {(1 ms. has instead:) strong} man; you should not destroy the outer wall. [Another metaphor?] You should not drive away a young man; you should not make him turn against the city.

65-66. *The eyes of the slanderer always move around as shiftily as a spindle. You should never remain in his presence;* his intentions (?) should not be allowed to have an effect (?) on you.

67. *You should not boast in {beer halls} {(1 ms. has instead:) breweries} like a deceitful man: {(1 ms. adds:) then your words will be trusted.} [By the way, one of the oldest Sumerian writings (from about 3200 BCE) is a recipe for making beer!]*

73-75. Curuppag gave these instructions to his son. Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu, gave these instructions to his son Zi-ud-sura.

76-82. A second time, Curuppag gave instructions to his son. Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu gave instructions to his son Zi-ud-sura: My son, let me give you instructions: you should pay attention! Zi-ud-sura, let me speak a word to you: you should pay attention! Do not neglect my instructions! Do not transgress the words I speak! {(1 ms. adds the line:) The instructions of an old man are precious; you should comply with them!}

94-96. *The palace is like a mighty river: its middle is goring bulls; what flows in is never enough to fill it, and what flows out can never be stopped.* [Governments haven’t changed much in ~5,000 years!]

97-100. When it is about someone else’s bread, it is easy to say “I will give it to you”, but the time of actual giving can be as far away as the sky. If you go after the man who said “I will give it to you”, he will say “I cannot give it to you – the bread has just been finished up”. [People haven’t changed much either!]

103-105. *The artistic mouth recites words; the harsh mouth brings litigation documents; the sweet mouth gathers sweet herbs.*

126. *You should not pass judgment when you drink beer.*

127. *You should not worry unduly about what leaves the house.*

128-130. Heaven is far, earth is most precious, but it is with heaven that you multiply your goods, and all foreign lands breathe under it.

131-133. At harvest time, at the most priceless time, collect like a slave girl, eat like a queen; my son, to collect like a slave girl, to eat like a queen, this is how it should be.

134-142. *To speak arrogantly is like an abscess: a herb that makes the stomach sick.* [A powerful metaphor!]

143-145. Curuppag gave these instructions to his son. Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu, gave these instructions to his son Zi-ud-sura.

146-152. A third time, Curuppag gave instructions to his son. Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu gave instructions to his son Zi-ud-sura: My son, let me give you instructions: you should pay attention! Zi-ud-sura, let me speak a word to you: you should pay attention! Do not neglect my instructions! Do not transgress the words I speak! {(Some mss. add the line:) The instructions of an old man are precious; you should comply with them!}

154-164. ***You should not buy a prostitute:*** she is a mouth that bites. You should not buy a house-born slave: he is a herb that makes the stomach sick. You should not buy a free man: he will always lean against the wall. You should not buy a palace slave girl: she will always be the bottom of the barrel (?). You should rather bring down a foreign slave from the mountains, or you should bring somebody from a place where he is an alien; my son, then he will pour water for you where the sun rises and he will walk before you. He does not belong to any family, so he does not want to go to his family; he does not belong to any city, so he does not want to go to his city. {(1 ms. adds 2 lines:) He cannot knock at the door of... he cannot enter...} He will not... with you, he will not be presumptuous with you.

170-171. *Fate is a wet bank; it can make one slip.* [!]

172-174. The elder brother is indeed like a father; the elder sister is indeed like a mother. Listen therefore to your elder brother, and you should be obedient to your elder sister as if she were your mother.

175-176. You should not work using only your eyes; you will not multiply your possessions using only your mouth. [I guess that, in those days, there weren't many clerics!]

177. *The negligent one ruins (?) his family.*

178-180. The need for food makes some people ascend the mountains; it also brings traitors and foreigners, since the need for food brings down other people from the mountains. [That reminds me of a line in Book XVII of Homer's *Odyssey* (written about 2,000 years later!), where Ulysses states: "(A) man cannot hide away the cravings of a hungry belly; this is an enemy which gives much trouble to all men; it is because of this that ships are fitted out to sail the seas, and to make war upon other people."]

189-192. By grasping the neck of a huge ox, you can cross the river. By moving along (?) at the side of the mighty men of your city, my son, you will certainly ascend (?). [Still another apt metaphor.]

193-201. When you bring a slave girl from the hills, she brings both good and evil with her. The good is in the hands; the evil is in the heart.

202-203. *A loving heart maintains a family; a hateful heart destroys a family.*

204-207. To have authority, to have possessions and to be steadfast are princely divine powers. You should submit to the respected; you should be humble before the powerful. My son, you will then survive (?) against the wicked.

208-212. *You should not choose a wife during a festival.* Her inside is illusory (?); her outside is illusory (?). {The silver on her is borrowed; the lapis lazuli on her is borrowed} {(1 ms. has instead the line:)...; the jewelry on her is borrowed...}. The dress on her is borrowed; the linen garment on her is borrowed. With... nothing (?) is comparable.

216-217. You should not buy a donkey at the time of harvest...

220. A woman with her own property ruins the house.

221. *A drunkard will drown the harvest.*

242-244. *Nothing at all is to be valued, but life should be sweet. **You should not serve things; things should serve you...***

246-247. You should not abuse an ewe; otherwise you will give birth to a daughter. You should not throw a lump of earth into the money chest (?); otherwise you will give birth to a son. [Is there some other option?!]

254. The wet-nurses in the women's quarters determine the fate of their lord.
 [Compare that line with the line written by William Ross Wallace (1819–1881):
 “The hand that rocks the cradle... rules the world.”]

255-260. *You should not speak arrogantly to your mother*; that causes hatred for you. ***You should not question the words of your mother*** and your personal god. The mother, like Utu, gives birth to the man; the father, like a god, makes him bright (?). The father is like a god: his words are reliable. ***The instructions of the father should be complied with.***

261. *Without suburbs a city has no center either.*

262-263. My son, a field situated at the bottom of the embankments, be it wet or dry, is nevertheless a source of income.

266-271. *{To get lost is bad for a dog; but terrible for a man} {(1 ms. has instead:) An unknown place is terrible; to get lost is shameful (?) for a dog}. On the unfamiliar way at the edge of the mountains, the gods of the mountains are man-eaters. They do not build houses there as men do; they do not build cities there as men do.*

278-280. Praise be to the lady who completed the great tablets, the maiden Nisaba, that Curuppag, the son of Ubara-Tutu gave his instructions!

By the way, as a “word to the wise”, one way to easily get lost “**on the unfamiliar way at the edge of the mountains**” is by trying to gain more information about Zi-ud-sura (or Ziusudra), who received such wise instructions from his father, Curuppag (or Shuruppak), son of Ubara-Tutu (or UbarTutu). Readers who are oblivious to warnings will probably find that Ubara-Tutu was the last Sumerian king prior to a devastating flood, that Shuruppak was actually the name of the city (now the city of Tall Fa'rah in Iraq) that was flooded, that Ziusudra was later called Atrahasis (or Atrahasis), meaning “the ultra-wise”, and that it was Curuppag's son, Ziusudra (or Atrahasis), who survived the flood in a barge (or ark), who in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is called Utanapishtim (or Utnapishtim), and who in the *Pentateuch* is called Noah!

For readers who haven't become lost on such paths, please consider the following. Below is a repeat of the quotations from the *Instructions* that in the above I had put in bold italics – along with some comparisons that I trust are familiar:

- ***You should not speak improperly... You should not curse strongly... → Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain...***

- *You should not speak arrogantly to your mother... You should not question the words of your mother... The instructions of the father should be complied with.*
→ Honor thy father and thy mother.
- *You should not cause a quarrel... You should not pick a quarrel... My son, you should not use violence...* → Thou shalt not kill.
- *You should not buy a prostitute... You should not play around with a married young woman... You should not commit rape on someone's daughter... You should not have sex with your slave girl...* → Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- *You should not steal anything... you should not commit robbery...* → Thou shalt not steal.
- *You should not... [tell] lies...* → Thou shalt not bear false witness...
- *You should not serve things; things should serve you...* → Thou shalt not covet...

I'd then ask readers to judge which scenario seems more reliable:

- 1) That ~2,400 years ago, Ezra and co-conspirators (Ezra & C-C), who were then living in Babylon, just happened to have an exact copy of what God – the creator of the universe, the original symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in a total void, “Himself” – gave to Moses as the Ten Commandments, or
- 2) That ~4,800 years ago in a town in Mesopotamia near where Babylon was established ~800 years later, a father assembled for his son some sensible instructions for living and dictated them to “the lady who completed the great tablets, the maiden Nisaba”, instructions that humans had learned by experience were valuable for cooperatively living in groups during the previous tens of thousands of years, and that, ~2400 years later, Ezra & C-C plagiarized the *Instructions from Curuppag* – just as they obviously plagiarized the myths about Curuppag's son (Ziusudra aka Atrahasis aka Utanapishtim aka Noah).

Readers who chose the first option, above, should scroll back a few pages and re-read the *Instructions from Curuppag*. Other readers, those accustomed to thinking for themselves and thereby able to avoid that potentially perpetual “Do Loop”, will probably surmise that other options were available to Ezra & C-C. For example, Ezra & C-C might have seen, by themselves, that such obvious rules were advantageous for people living in groups. Another possibility, sketched below, is that Ezra & C-C relied (or “also relied”) on moral codes adopted by the ancient Egyptians

2. Ancient Egyptian Moral Codes

Thus, as another possibility, the authors of the *Pentateuch* (obviously familiar also with the literature of the ancient Egyptians) might have had a copy of what the Ancient Egyptians called *The Book of Coming Forth by Day* but which is now commonly called *The Book of the Dead*, the oldest copy of which is from ~1600 BCE.⁶ In turn, though, *The Book of the Dead* is a compilation of earlier works, including *The Coffin Texts* and, from still earlier, *The Pyramid Texts*,⁷ the earliest copies of which were found in the pyramids of pharaohs Unas, Tei, and Pepy I, who ruled during the 2300s BCE. And still in turn, *The Pyramid Texts* describe rituals that undoubtedly were established much earlier. Thus, when the thoughts in these books were originally conceived is unknown, but a date similar to the date of the *Instructions from Curuppag* seems not unreasonable.

The earliest of these Egyptian texts describe how the pharaoh ascends to the sky (e.g., climbing a ladder, as in Jacob's dream, described in *Genesis 28*) and the dead pharaoh's journeys through various imagined places (including the Sea of Reeds, which is how "Red Sea" in the OT is correctly translated). But more relevant to specifying "moral law" (e.g., the "laws" claimed to be given to Moses by his god) is the moral code that's recorded in the portion of *The Book of the Dead* entitled "The Negative Confession",⁸ namely:

I have not committed sins against men.
 I have not opposed my family and kinsfolk.
 I have not acted fraudulently in the Seat of Truth.
 I have not known men who were of no account.
 I have not wrought evil.
 I have not made it to be the first [consideration daily that unnecessary] work should be done for me.
 I have not brought forward my name for dignities.
 I have not [attempted] to direct servants [I have not belittled God].
 I have not defrauded the humble man of his property.
 I have not done what the gods abominate.
 I have not vilified a slave to his master.
 I have not inflicted pain.
 I have not caused anyone to go hungry.
 I have not made any man to weep.
 I have not committed murder.
 I have not given the order for murder to be committed.

⁶ Available at, e.g., <http://www.aldokkan.com/religion/dead1.htm>.

⁷ For example, see <http://touregypt.net/featurestories/pyramidtext.htm>.

⁸ Copied from <http://www.touregypt.net/bod121.htm>.

I have not caused calamities to befall men and women.
 I have not plundered the offerings in the temples.
 I have not defrauded the gods of their cake-offerings.
 I have not carried off the fenkhu cakes [offered to] the Spirits.
 I have not committed fornication.
 I have not masturbated [in the sanctuaries of the god of my city].
 I have not diminished from the bushel.
 I have not filched [land from my neighbor's estate and] added it to my own acre.
 I have not encroached upon the fields [of others].
 I have not added to the weights of the scales.
 I have not depressed the pointer of the balance.
 I have not carried away the milk from the mouths of children.
 I have not driven the cattle away from their pastures.
 I have not snared the geese in the goose-pens of the gods.
 I have not caught fish with bait made of the bodies of the same kind of fish.
 I have not stopped water when it should flow.
 I have not made a cutting in a canal of running water.
 I have not extinguished a fire when it should burn.
 I have not violated the times [of offering] the chosen meat offerings.
 I have not driven away the cattle on the estates of the gods.
 I have not turned back the god at his appearances.
 I am pure. I am pure. I am pure.

Thus, even if Ezra & C-C didn't concoct their moral code (claimed to be from God) by plagiarizing the *Sumerian Instructions from Curuppag*, surely the above list from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* was sufficient. Put differently: if Moses ever existed and if he had been schooled in the ways of the Egyptian priesthood (as is commonly claimed), then since almost certainly he would have been required to memorize the above "Negative Confessions" as part of his training, he didn't receive his "revelations" from God but from his school master!

But no matter the specific origin of the moral code claimed in the *Pentateuch* to be conveyed to Moses by God, it seems much more likely that Ezra & C-C simply massaged existing moral codes, all of which were conceived (with the help of experience) not by any god but by earlier humans – and always with the purpose of helping people to live productively in cooperative groups. I'd therefore ask the reader to judge:

- 1) If substantial evidence appears to support the contention that a "Mountainous God Lie" has been foisted on humanity by claiming that morality is prescribed by any god, and therefore,

- 2) If some people (such as this writer) appear to be justified in becoming angry at clerics for indoctrinating children and hoodwinking “mentally challenged” adults with their damnable lies, a part of the world’s longest running and most pervasive con game.

Further I’d ask readers to consider an obvious reason why the clerics of the world perpetrate their lies. Thus, I suspect that they found it much easier to collect tithes by claiming that some particular “moral principle” must be followed “Because God said so” rather than by saying “Because Curuppag said so – and adding, ‘[The instructions of an old man are precious; you should comply with them’!](#)”

PERPETRATORS OF “THE LAW LIE”

With the above, however, I don’t mean to accuse all clerics as conspirators in a massive con game. Most clerics I’ve known are as ignorant as their followers – and actually, most clerics in America, Asia, and Europe (e.g., Evangelical, Mormon, and other cult “missionaries” from American backwoods, Catholic clerics from Africa and south of the American border, and Muslim clerics from the most backward nations of the world) seem more ignorant (more superstitious) than their followers: the near-sighted led by the legally blind!

In other words, I suspect that the majority of clerics probably “believe” what they promote, probably because their mothers told them it was “true”. But behind them in history, above them in the clerical hierarchy, and in front of them at the parasitic feeding-frenzy are the liars: knowing the origin of their lies, certain that no god ever gave any instruction to any human, confident that they’ll continue to profit from their con games, and living a life of luxury derived from their quackery.

Further, though, and most unfortunately, it’s not just clerics who promote and perpetrate the Law Lie. To see another example, consider the following, written by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. It’s from his 27 June 2005 dissenting opinion⁹ on the McCreary County, Kentucky et al. *versus* ACLU lawsuit dealing with display of the Ten Commandments in a U.S. government office. In this quotation, I’ve omitted Scalia’s references, replacing them with {...}, and added some notes in brackets, [...].

⁹ Available at <http://wid.ap.org/scotus/pdf/03-1693P.ZD.pdf>.

Besides appealing to the demonstrably false principle that the government cannot favor religion over irreligion [“False principle”?! Scalia is claiming that the U.S. government can favor religion over irreligion?! That claim should certainly be challenged! For one, the U.S. Constitution states that the government should have nothing to do with religion. Thus, Article VI, Section 3 of the Constitution states “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States” and Amendment I states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” As Jefferson summarized in 1782: “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, *or no god*. [Italics added] It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.” Besides, what does Scalia mean by ‘religion’ vs. ‘irreligion’ – and whose definition is to prevail? Scalia’s obvious definition (see below) relates ‘religion’ to “the gods”. In contrast, M.M. Mangasarian’s definition (contained in “Religion is the science of children; science is the religion of adults”) means that Scalia’s ‘religion’ is just childish science. So, if Scalia’s claim is coupled with Mangasarian’s definition, then Scalia is claiming that the U.S. government favors childish science over adult science! Really? Scalia is claiming that the U.S. government can’t favor modern ideas in astronomy, biology, chemistry, ecology, geology, mathematics, medicine, physics, etc. over the preposterous “science” in various “holy books”? Would Scalia have all U.S. government policies conform to biblical principles of a flat Earth only ~6,000 years old, the sky held up by four props, rain caused by a leaking vault in “the heavens”, curing of illnesses by “driving out devils”, $\pi = 3$, etc.? Wouldn’t it be preferable if government activities were based on the best available science?!], today’s [majority] opinion suggests that the posting of the Ten Commandments violates the principle that the government cannot favor one religion over another {...}. That is indeed a valid principle where public aid or assistance to religion is concerned {...} or where the free exercise of religion is at issue {...}, but it necessarily applies in a more limited sense to public acknowledgment of the Creator [and for some strange reason, I doubt if, by “Creator”, Scalia is referring to the first symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in the original void that led to the Big Bang].

If religion in the public forum had to be entirely nondenominational, there could be no religion in the public forum at all. [Bull! It depends on what’s meant by ‘religion’. There are no denominations in physics, chemistry, biology...! Scalia is obviously hung up with childish science!] One cannot say the word “God” or “the Almighty” [it depends on what is meant by such words!], one cannot offer public supplication or thanksgiving [it depends if the thanks are to producers or to nonproducers, a perfect example of the latter (nonproducers) being all clerics], contradicting the beliefs of some people that there are many gods, or that God or the gods pay no attention to human affairs [or the most certain knowledge that humans have ever been able to gain (even more certain than the knowledge that they exist), namely, that there are no gods – and never were any!].

With respect to public acknowledgment of religious belief [Define “religious belief”! In contrast to Scalia’s definition, I “religiously” hold to the “belief” that all opinions should be held only as strongly as relevant evidence justifies.], it is entirely clear from our Nation’s historical practices that the Establishment Clause permits this disregard of polytheists and believers in unconcerned deities, just as it permits the disregard of devout atheists [and just as historical practices and the original Constitution permit the disregard of the rights of women and Blacks. But just because that’s the way it was doesn’t mean either that that’s the way it should be or will always be! To see the stupidity in Scalia’s statement, try it with the word ‘Blacks’ (or any minority) substituted for the phrase “devout atheists”, e.g., “...it permits the disregard of {the opinions of} Blacks (or any minority).”].

The Thanksgiving Proclamation issued by George Washington at the instance of the First Congress was scrupulously nondenominational – but it was monotheistic. [Well, of course it was monotheistic! Do you think that there was more than one symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation that created our universe?!] In *Marsh v. Chambers*, *supra*, we said that the fact the particular prayers offered in the Nebraska Legislature were “in the Judeo-Christian tradition” {...} posed no additional problem, because “there is no indication that the prayer opportunity has been exploited to proselytize or advance any one, or to disparage any other, faith or belief” {...}. [What a crock! It disparages belief in the efficacy of the scientific method and in people’s faith that they can solve their own problems, without the help of invisible pink elephants (or giant Jabberwocks or whatever) flying around in the sky!]

Historical practices thus demonstrate that there is a distance between the acknowledgment of a single Creator and the establishment of a religion. [Yes! And historical practices demonstrate that the distance is very small: once clerics indoctrinate children that the sky is filled with invisible flying pink elephants (or whatever), then the clerics soon have their collection plates ready and their con game is up and running.] The former [a single creator] is, as *Marsh v. Chambers* put it, “a tolerable acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the people of this country.” {...} [“Tolerable” to whom! It’s not tolerable to those who consider all organized religions to be con games and all gods to be figments of deluded minds, delusions put there by conniving clerics and power-mongering politicians.]

The three most popular religions in the United States [Ah hah! So, never mind the Constitution, never mind the rights of minorities; instead, let’s have a popularity contest!], Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – which combined account for 97.7% of all believers – are monotheistic. {...} [Believers in what, fairy tales? What about those of us who believe in the scientific method?] All of them, moreover (Islam included), believe that the Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses, and are divine prescriptions for a virtuous life {...}. [So what? There was a time when everyone “believed” that the Earth was a flat plate. Just because the majority of people believes something doesn’t make it so!]

Publicly honoring the Ten Commandments is thus indistinguishable, insofar as discriminating against other religions is concerned, from publicly honoring God. [Which “God”: some magic man (or giant Jabberwock) in the sky or “the god” of science, i.e., the scientific method? Further, though, the Establishment Clause states that the government (or any government agency) has no business “honoring” your God (or anyone else’s)! Its job is to install sewers, build bridges, deliver the mail, organize collective defense, decide on appropriate laws, etc. – NOT including laws promoting your mythical god!] Both practices are recognized across such a broad and diverse range of the population – from Christians to Muslims – that they cannot be reasonably understood as a government endorsement of a particular religious viewpoint. [What a stupid statement! It disregards, for example, Mangasarian’s assessment (quoted above), in that, thereby, the government endorses childish science, discriminating against the religion of adults (science).]

Of course I agree that all people should be free to hold and promote whatever worldview they want. But I and other Americans are paying Scalia his salary to protect the American Constitution, not to promote his wacky worldview, and while I’m paying for his salary, he promotes the blatant examples of the Law Lie that “the Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses, and are divine prescriptions for a virtuous life”!

I admit: probably it would be more “politically correct” if I described Scalia as being mistaken rather a liar. Perhaps it’s so. Perhaps he truly is so poorly educated that he “thinks” that there’s some magic man in the sky that created and controls the universe and dictated morality. But that would mean that Scalia makes critical (life-changing) decisions based on absolutely zero evidence! Surely such a person doesn’t belong as a judge in any court, let alone in the U.S. Supreme Court. So, whether or not it’s politically correct, wouldn’t it be kinder to call Scalia a liar rather than a fool?

In any event, I’m pleased to notice that improvements seem to be occurring. For example, in the comments section of the 20 January 2009 *New York Time*’s article ‘The Speech’: The Experts’ Critique, “Grant” wrote:¹⁰

I was encouraged to hear President Obama acknowledge that we are “a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus — and non-believers.” I can’t recall any mainstream politician who has ever granted non-believers the dignity of that same recognition and acknowledged them as a part of this country... What a refreshing change from the offensive comments made by the offensive Joe Lieberman [candidate for Vice President on the Gore-Lieberman ticket] on the campaign trail in 2000, who admonished us... “never to indulge the supposition that morality can be

¹⁰ From <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/20/the-speech-the-experts-critique/>.

maintained without religion” and claimed that “the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.”

More progress can be expected as Scalia, Lieberman, and so many other “leaders” who promote the Law Lie join G.W. Bush in obscurity.

Moreover, though, if they’re not lying, if they truly believe the nonsense that they’re espousing, then not only are they fools, they’re immoral: what they’re doing is wrong; it’s evil. Others have said similar:

A wise [person]... proportions his belief to the evidence. [David Hume]

To believe without evidence and demonstration is an act of ignorance and folly. [Volney]

The foundation of morality is to... give up pretending to believe that for which there is no evidence, and repeating unintelligible propositions about things beyond the possibilities of knowledge. [Thomas Henry Huxley]

So long as men are not trained to withhold judgment in the absence of evidence they will be led astray by cocksure prophets, and it is likely that their leaders will be either ignorant fanatics or dishonest charlatans. To endure uncertainty is difficult, but so are most of the other virtues. [Bertrand Russell]

It is wrong always and everywhere for anyone to believe anything on insufficient evidence. [William Kingdon Clifford]

We ought to do what we can towards eradicating the evil habit of believing without regard to evidence. [Richard Robinson]

Sam Harris summarized it well in his 2004 book *The End of Faith*:

It is time we realized that to presume knowledge where one has only pious hope is a species of evil. Wherever conviction grows in inverse proportion to its justification, we have lost the very basis of human cooperation. Where we have reasons for what we believe, we have no need of faith; where we have no reasons, we have lost both our connection to the world and to one another. *People who harbor strong convictions without evidence belong at the margins of our societies, not in our halls of power.* [Italics added.]