

The March of the Conquering Gods

By David Jamison

Many years ago, two tribal families – one from the central Asian steppes, and one from Saudi Arabia – began a march; a march that continues today and is affecting every facet of our society.

Unfortunately, this is a march that is having deleterious effects on how we are living our lives – or better yet, how we should live it. But first, a little history. Please bear with me – I will be as brief as the subject allows.

Civilization as we know it had its origins on the fertile plains of the Mesopotamian delta in modern-day Iraq. It was there, between the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, that an ancient race known as the Sumerians first started congregating and working together to make life a little easier. This was a shift from the typical way of life, which consisted of following bands of animals around and living off that herd. Now, life wasn't so harsh. It wasn't just you and your people against the elements, you now had a supertribe and a settled existence. After a while, we demarcated people who had come to civilization and those that hadn't. All those that were living in a society were called "civilized" and all those that hadn't yet were called "barbarians."

During that time, people importuned gods to help them in the phases of life that were most vital to their existence. Since the beginning of religion, gods of the sky and weather tended to have masculine manifestations, and gods of the earth (Mother Nature, Gaia) tended to be feminine. This was due to people observing how nature worked. We saw rain fall from the sky and fertilize the earth, which then produced life. People likened this to the way man inseminates woman. Almost every creation myth known to man prefigures some masculine sky god impregnating a female earth with life and spawning Mankind.

Since it was sedentary, agriculture was a much more dominant form of subsistence for civilizations than hunting. And the land was a far more dominant factor in population growth, since a bad harvest was devastating. As such, the dominant gods of these cultures tended to be female and nurturing. The home and the homestead were the predominant bases of life, and had to be given divine protection at all times. Just as today people are attracted to big cities, more and more tribes started to converge on the Mesopotamian plain to find out what the fuss was about and to get on with the good living of a civilization. The first barbarian tribe to happen upon the Sumerians were called Semites, and include the races we would today call Arabs and Hebrews. The Semites were a nomadic desert-dwelling people who drove great herds of sheep and goats. They had masculine gods of the sky and weather because their very existence depended on the

whims of the climate. If the sun was especially hot for a continued period time, it put significant strains on the ability of the people to subsist. Two of the most popular Semitic gods were Yahweh and Ba'al. They were both gods of fire and sun (dig how Yahweh first talks to Moses) who demanded sacrifice after great victories.

Most tribes had an ark that symbolized the god of their people. They would bring the ark into battle and if they won the battle, it was a sign that their god was mightier than the god of the tribe they had conquered (Yahweh's Ark of the Covenant is still being searched for to this day). When the tribes of Judah finally conquered the Canaanites, Yahweh became the one true god Jehovah, and Ba'al was reduced to one of Satan's minions – Beelzebub.

The second group of tribes migrated south from northern and eastern Europe and spoke a family of languages eventually called Indo-European. When these people first came to Mesopotamia, they had to travel over the Caucasus mountains to get there, and their peoples were later given the umbrella term "Caucasian." Years of hard living in northern Asia had given them distinct cultural traditions, and a vast canopy of gods and a social structure to match. Again, since they were a nomadic culture, intermittent warring was common, so the most popular Indo-European gods were warrior gods. The prototypical gods of this tradition are found all over European mythology: In the Viking tradition of Norse mythology, Thor was a

warrior god of thunder and rain. In Hindu mythology, created by migrating tribes of Indo-Europeans called Aryans, Indra was the god of thunder, and was engaged in an eternal battle against the forces of evil. Similarly, the Medes, an Indo-European tribe that settled in modern-day Iran, influenced the mythology of Zoroastrianism, in which the god Mazda was engaged in an eternal battle with good and evil. When the Indo-Europeans settled in the Balkan Peninsula and formed the nucleus of Greek culture, Zeus grew into a lightning-sluicing god who controlled the sky through strength and intimidation.

When these tribes came upon agricultural communities, the result was almost always the same. Since they found it so easy to raid and plunder unsuspecting farmers, they credited their gods with the victory because They were stronger. They grew to distaste these sallow effeminate men, and began to believe it was their right to dominate these societies. Many of the female deities were eventually co-opted by the masculine religions as concubines or wives of the sky gods – Hera, Isis, Ishtar, and Aphrodite all headed agricultural fertility cults all their own before they became second leads in great conquering epics.

From then on, empires from that part of the world have started a steady and constant march out over the rest of it. First, you had the Babylonians (Semitic), Persians (Indo-European), Greeks (same),

Romans (same), Muslims (Semitic), and off into infinity. Now, women are no longer even needed to create the world: A masculine god just speaks it, and it is so. The only part of the world that is now not an old white male hegemony is Asia – but the narcotic wealth created by industrialization swept them up in the march in the 19th century. And though you would think we all would have eased up eventually and re-examined HOW WE GOT HERE, we just keep marching on, crushing and trampling everything in our path.

But now this march must stop, because we don't have anyone left to destroy but ourselves. Thousands of years after this story began, we are still living the fallacy that we must live in an insular insecure society where there is at any moment the chance of someone swiping our stuff. We let paranoia and xenophobia inform all of our actions like it did in the harsh desert sun, down to the minutiae of whose moving into our neighborhood. We let "dog-eat-dog" and "nice guys finish last" be our mantras for the real world like we did in cold Russian caves, a real world that was since built on cooperation and shared innovation. We are living by antiquated rules in a modern society; worshipping long-dead gods by our conquests and the spread of their beliefs and values. We have made it clear time and again that extending the olive branch has better repercussions than polishing the war axe. But we'll spit-shine that motherfucker in a minute once the fear arises (only we'll call it bravery).

We must not let the conquering gods conquer us. A hawkish sort will always argue that it's better to be safe than sorry – but safe from what? Who's gonna conquer us now that we have the technology to feed the world? What is there left to be afraid of except for cultural heterogeneity? Intellectually, there is no longer a need for the warlord in today's new world. There is no one whose motivations are alien to us since mankind can now – for the first time EVER – communicate globally on a moment's whim. The next thing we'll have to fear will be an invasion from outer space – but until that time we're just shitting in our own backyard. Plunder plunder plunder, crush crush crush, mindlessly marching on.