

ANCIENT HISTORY

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An Almost Know It All

A small podium. A guest lecturer this Sunday. A Unitarian-Universalistic Church using a local college auditorium. A group of not quite fifty. He didn't count them. More than thirty five though. The Minister, a pleasant woman, far more intelligent than her look, but carrying too much cargo in her rear had greeted him warmly once again. He knew it was in despair over coming up with a challenging agenda for a supposedly intellectual congregation. He was therefore an asset.

She made the introduction. Referred to his writings. *His scribblings* ... Went into the time-line of, oh, about 1700 BC to 1000 BC. The Middle East. Oh well, he had his note cards. On with the show!

He nodded and got right into to it. He learned this from watching TV. Try for a *hook*.

"I believe that it was Prof. Izady, whose commentaries I stumbled across on the Internet, who wrote of the relation of the Kurdish peoples, *or some of them*, to the ancient Hurrians. Of note was his mention of the term 'yazata' or 'yezad' for what we would consider an angel. Who knows where the words came from or if indeed if there is a relation to what I'm about to go into but bear with me... (Smile -edges of enlightenment or fear of rejection?)

"In Jewish mythology the 'Father-of-the-People,' Ab-ra-ham came from Haran; *also from Ur* but several researchers are beginning to doubt that *this* Ur was in southern Mesopotamia. Coming from a Hurrian country does not mean he was Hurrian; he could have been a Hebrew, from an independent caste of landless, but free souls. But being a Hebrew does not mean he was a Semite either. Many sojourners into Canaan, including the European Philistines adopted the Canaanite *language* known today as ' *Hebrew* . ' (Pause -gauging the interest or lack of interest in the small gathering.)

"Trying to gather a synthesized appreciation of Israelite-Judahite religion is as complex as understanding the ancestry of these peoples... (Did he really care about this himself?)

"Most likely there were multiple sources from which all this sprang. I can assume a 'Hyksos' that is to say Canaanite -*Amorite and Hurrian* historical relationship with the early Levites... Such peculiarities as using flint knives for ritualistic purposes like circumcision in a metallic age as the Egyptians did... *Was that the Second Intermediate Period?* Levitical origins could be conjectured to surround the cult of Leviathan, or serpent. Leviathan was defeated in the lost book, 'The Wars of Yahweh' but mentioned in a psalm. --Outside of the Exodus story, Moses is remembered to have been involved with a snake-serpent, shamanistic magic *and bronze-icon* cult. Moses' Egyptian name may

have been Levimose. Which is not to say that he was indeed a true Egyptian. Much of the Joseph-Exodus 'memory' could be a 'Hyksos' Canaanite; *that is Amorite & Hurrian* memory of having been great in Upper Egypt and then being slaughtered, enslaved and expelled. (A few muttered asides. His self-deprecating humor was often misunderstood.)

"I see Judah as having come into being 150 - 200 years after 'Israel.' There is no mention of Judah in the Song of Deborah only of the wandering Kenites, *the children of Cain -yet with a reputation as metal workers!* --Probably one of the progenitors of Judah. Another precursor being the Kenaz Clan *or Tribe* of Edom. Allow me to transgress about the Song of Deborah: 'The people chose new gods; ...war was in the gates... And the *gods* fought from heaven...' The word we currently have is 'stars' but stars were considered divine manifestations in ancient days and what were the stars doing OUT during a daylight deluge of such proportions that all the chariots bogged down? These formative religions can not be understood from a current theological perspective. (Getting into it -the hell with the crowd.)

"But there was a relationship with some of the weakening and declining City-States of *partially Hurrian origin?* At Seir the Horites *Hurrians(?)* probably needed the fresh blood of Edom, *Habiru mercenaries?* The LORD *Yahweh* was said to rise up from Seir. A league of four Hivite *or Hurrian* cities allied themselves with the Israelites and some received Levitical duties. They were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjathjearim. The *Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle* was maintained at one Hurrian high place, *Gibeon*, and the Ark rested at another Hurrian place, *Kirjathjearim* .

"David, and possibly this was his title; was he actually *Marshal El-Hanan?* --needed a city, did he feel uncertain in Hebron where Caleb and Othniel and other chieftains of the Kenaz clan had held power? He seemed to have made an alliance with the Jebusites... were they partially or originally Hurrian? Taking his personal warriors, *including his two Philistine cohorts*, he entered the city after a supposed contest. Most likely made the Jebusite rulers officials in his own administration, married many of the local woman, named two of his sons after the city god, shalam. And purchased land for the consecrated altar of the Temple. A very benevolent 'conquest.'

"Much later, one of the laments of Yahwist prophets was that the people of Jerusalem were not Jews but still Jebusites whoring after Canaan's gods. --It was this elite from Jerusalem that was later exiled to Babylon and there produced the priestly Torah.

"I recall a few writers trying to understand the derivation of the holy name 'Yahweh.' Apparently, *unlike 'El,'* it doesn't appear to be Semitic. There are places when the name is represented simply as 'Yah.' Specifically as a complete name of God, as part of the saying "Praises to Yah," Hallelujah-- which a billion earthlings say from time to time -- and as part of many personal names. I don't know if there is any relation between the Kurdish-'Iranic' term for angel and the name of the divine, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were a Hurrian contribution to this (*ahem* -equivocation?) - *my*- religion that many people *including me*, had claimed to be of desert origin. Probably nothing comes out of the true desert but desperation -- that is why it is called the desert." (Relief at having exorcised a polemic.)

Polite applause. A few smiles of recognition, perhaps from other nuts with nothing to do all day but speculate about the arcane origin of things. He shook some hands, wondered whether he should have gone into his New Testament thoughts; Jesus as a personage with much less recognition than John the Baptist during his own life time. The former, a campaigner against legal divorce (not polygamy) as an economic antidote to forced prostitution. After all, his ministry was supported by these female victims of male prerogative. And then there was the early cult. The mysterious deaths of individuals who would not turn over all their worldly goods... Paul's re-interpretation of a Jewish Anointed One as a resurrecting, Hellenistic Soter. The application of imitative magic, the Eucharist etc. -These were his thoughts; of what he should *also* have said. An enthusiastic supporter pumped his hand and spewed out some of his own conclusions. Banal? Now, he regretted saying anything at all. Wasting so much time. He should be sponsoring symposiums on 'How to Design a Better Web Site.' Something commercial; *something that made sense!*

Then a woman shook his hands and offered the kind of restrained, then complete eye contact that opened his soul. Was he young enough for this? My God. "Yes, yes..." Perhaps she knew a thing or two. He had no more convictions. He had said what he said and once said, could be (should be) forgotten.

They spoke. Oblivious to the gathering that was meandering toward refreshments set up along the stage. She gave him that look again and resurrected the subject of the Hurrians. *She cared about the Hurrians.* He felt like laughing at such sad irony.

Was he religious, she wanted to know. Well, now, what a question. He hadn't properly said Kaddish for his father and wasn't fasting for the Day of Atonement these *days* - *which had nothing to do with the sacrifice to Yahweh and the second offering to Azazel, the god of the plain.* -There, he went thinking again! --But, he *was* trying to re-learn Hebrew. And reading, always reading. Thinking about the unknowable; a Jewish malady? No, he wasn't religious.

"Wouldn't it shock people to find that out that Jewish beginnings were not necessarily Semitic, but Hurrian?" She asked.

He recoiled slightly. Was this what he was trying to say. Something this simple? Next, a foolish person would claim that Azazel was Lucifer, the devil of dualistic religions that believed in such things... He debated smiling --or refuting such allegations.

"I don't think Jews are Hurrians... You could make a better argument that Jews are the bastards of the Tenth (*Roman*) Legion," he replied. "From the rape of captured Judea after the failure of the first revolt," he added for clarification.

"But if 'Yah' the divine guardian was a Hurrian borrowing..." she began.

"We are all quite inter-related. That's all..." The edges of his eyes looked around for polite escape. Rescue. *He shouldn't have uttered the unutterable!* Look what has become of it.

The Minister rescued him. A limp handshake and a thank-you for rounding out the end of

an otherwise mundane Sunday. Perhaps he could come up with another topic in the future. Something equally provocative. Perhaps, perhaps. *E-commerce farming in cyber-land*.

He thanked everyone who needed thanking for thanking him. Was warm and respectful to the Hurrian woman. Bade his departure before learning about witchcraft or Druid-ism. Outside in the sunshine. Alone. The air was fresh. The day still unformed. A nice drive. Some good tunes in the car. And plenty of time to read. No need to share every thought was there?

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A week later. He had an urge for orange juice and went forth with little expectations to a convenience store. Putting change in his pocket a tall man began speaking to him.

"What were you talking about the other day?"

Looking around for the target of this question, the tall man repeated his demand directly to his face. A nut? Was there a need for self-defense? A need to flee?

"Huh?"

"You were talking about the Jews of antiquity. Debunking them. Yet when my sister went up to compare notes; --she's into that stuff too, you blew her off like she was a hooker trying to pick you up..." The tall man was sort of smiling.

"Oh..." That. He shifted his orange juice container. "I was rambling; venting. Assumptions and speculations. Old research..."

"Whose side are you on. One of those self-haters? You should be proud of where you came from," the man said. They were both outside now, paused before the small parking lot.

"I am. My father was a good man... Amos, Isaiah, Hosea gave the Western world a sense of human ethics. Buber... Rosenzweig, all needed a foundation from someplace. The beginnings of things can not really be understood from a current perspective... I mean, Moses might have been very important to these people even if he went around with a snake on a stick trying to inoculate them with magic. It's not something we can KNOW..."

"It just sounded like all these folks were a bunch of pagan jerks," the man said, feeling uncertain he was in his correct element.

"Maybe, to my way of thinking, they were. But the wheel started as a log. This is the way the world was. Even Akhenaten thought God was the sun and for his trouble later generations of Egyptians considered him a criminal," he said.

"What about the Ten Commandments, and all that?" The tall man asked.

He shrugged. "They might have been a product of another era. King Hezekiah's reign

perhaps, or Josiah...Besides. I don't believe everything I read. Why should I believe everything I say?"

The tall man laughed. He began to say something, but shook his head. "...You should give my sister a call. You two have a lot in common. I can't understand *her* either. I tend to be a believer. I don't need to guess where things come from, or how."

"That's cool... Well, thanks for having this chat." He shook hands with the man.

Here wait, let me give you her phone number. Her name is Ruth..."

He laughed. It was just perfect.

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