

About Mohammed III: Of Pork, Pictures, And Pedophilia

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No Ham?

Debunking myths about Mohammed of Mecca (MoM) often involves Dispelling misconceptions about the Sunna. Here, let's look at a couple taboos that are based on specious assertions; then at an item that is ACTUALLY ethically problematic, yet is routinely elided. This juxtaposition will illustrate a gross contortion of prioritization. For while decrying things that are ethically copacetic, myrmidons are apt to blithely gloss over—nay, deliberately obfuscate—things that any level-headed person would see as opprobrious.

Let's start with the notion of "halal" vs. "haraam" with respect to food (that is: regarding dietary restrictions). We might use as our point of departure a maxim on which all reasonable people concur: All else being equal, it is preferable to eat "halal" meat (insofar as it is ostensibly organic) in lieu of meat that comes from a factory (and thus off of any assembly line), often under dubious conditions—suffused, as it often is, with preservatives and other chemicals. In this sense, "halal" meat is more natural, and is therefore much healthier than meat that is "processed".

Moreover, "halal" meat comes from animals that were treated well during life, and then slaughtered ethically (that is: quickly).

This cautionary measure stems from an ancient protocol that—for millennia—made perfect sense: Eat meat only from animals that have very recently been killed; and killed in a sudden manner (e.g. by having their throat slit); as the meat from any other dead animal is suspect. For most of human history, already-dead animals that one happened upon may have become putrified (that is: somehow despoiled in the intervening time.)

Thus: There are two very good reasons to opt for "halal" meat over much of the meat that is available in the present day.

That said, the notion of "halal" also involves spurious claim; and it is the dogmatic (read: superstitious) aspects of the practice to which we now turn. The practice of avoiding certain kinds of meat as spiritually impure goes back to the 6th century B.C., with "The Golden Verses" by the Ionian philosopher, Pythagoras of Samos—wherein he stated: "You should abstain from the meats that have been forbidden in the purification and deliverance of the soul. Make a judicious distinction between them, and thoroughly examine all things." Of course, this might simply be read as: Careful what you eat.

So far as the Abrahamic tradition went, it was sheer practicality that prompted the prohibition against eating swine. It comes as no surprise, then, that it turns up in Islam's holy book as well (2:173, 5:3, 6:145, and 16:115). Though pigs are actually some of the most sanitary—and most intelligent—animals in the world (after elephants, dolphins, and primates), in many places around the world, they were considered foul. This concern—valid in ancient times—accounts for the "kashrut" [dietary prohibitions] found in Judaic

“halakha”. (In Islam, “halal” is primarily a reiteration of “kosher” protocols.)

Why? One possible motive was that Hebrews associated pork with the derided Philistines, for whom it was an integral part of the diet. There may well have been an incentive to create a contradistinction between the impure pagans and the god-fearing Hebrews.

But more pressingly: Pigs were known to have sometimes carried disease; and—here’s the key—carried it in ways that were not readily apparent. {1} Hence the Judaic exhortation to avoid that particular kind of meat altogether. {2} Shell-fish were avoided for the same reason: when contaminated, it was difficult to identify. The rationalization for the prohibition, then, was quite simple: “People have been getting sick—and even dying—when they eat this animal; therefore god must not want us to eat this animal.”

While such a concern made a bit of sense in ancient times; it is now obsolete. In modern times, one is much more likely to get food poisoning (e.g. salmonella) from fish or chicken than from ham. Meanwhile, E. coli comes primarily from beef.

Like “kosher” foods in Judaic dogma, this dietary proscription is a relic from a bygone era—a time of rampant ignorance and superstition—when people were dealing with consumption issues that no longer attain. {31}

The NEW fiction that pork is (inherently) “bad for you” currently proliferates in both Beth Israel and Dar al-Islam amongst the more dogmatic supplicants. This is unsurprising, as it is an up-to-date way of rationalizing a long-standing—even if completely outmoded—prohibition. This myth persists even amongst (otherwise) more scientifically-literate Muslims. {3}

But IS pork unhealthy? No. If the concern is with low-density lipids, then it has nothing to do with pork per se. Pork boasts nutrient value that makes it eminently worth eating. Notably, it has a much higher myoglobin content than chicken; AND—of all meats—it is the best source of thiamin. It also contains high amounts of vitamins B6 and B12.

“But bacon is horrible for you,” comes a common reply. Indeed, a cut of ANY meat comprised predominantly of fat, and ANYTHING that has been fried in oil (read: infused with saturated fat) is unhealthy. This is an indictment against the consumption of fatty tissue and greasy food (low-density lipids), not of pork per se. In this respect, meat from swine is just as (un-)nutritious as just about any other meat. Actually, after the fat has been trimmed, swine meat is LEANER than the meat of virtually any other domesticated animal.

Consequently, the fact that bacon happens to be from this particular animal (rather than any other) is beside the point. Low-density lipids are low-density lipids. The danger of esterified fatty acids exists independently of which animal’s muscle tissue one is using as a source of protein.

If cholesterol and saturated fat were the preeminent concern, then marbled sirloin steaks and greasy cheeseburgers would be the gravest sin. Yet—unlike the Vedic deities—the Abrahamic deity seems to have been decidedly unconcerned with beef. (Lean pork actually has more mono-un-saturated fat than most other meats—including lean beef.)

A more universal maxim would have made more sense: Ensure the meat you eat is fresh and untainted. This would have come in extra handy for MoM himself, who—ironically enough—died from eating tainted mutton (as we saw in part 2 of this series).

The Koran’s protagonist may have claimed to have been all-powerful; but he was certainly not a very good

nutritionist. Couple this with the imperative of “sawm” during Ramadan (days of dehydration and nutrient deprivation, book-ended by bouts of gluttony before sunrise and after sunset), and one sees that health was the furthest thing from concern when the Sunnah was being established. {4}

When Filipinos snack on crispy pata with sisig rice, are they contravening divine law? How about when Chinese snack on tue-huan? How about when the Siamese snack on tom-sap krueng-nai moo or kuay-jub? It strains even the most bounding credulity to suppose that one’s Taiwanese grandmother is somehow defying the Creator of the Universe each time she snacks on her lu-lo-fun.

To reiterate: In bygone eras, eating the meat of an animal that had not been properly killed (its neck recently slit) posed significant risks; as the carcass of an already-dead may have been festering in the hot sun for who-knows-how-long; and consequently spoiled. Even worse, it may have become contaminated / infected. Hence the (perfectly reasonable) admonition to refrain from eating an animal that had died in a unknown / suspicious manner; or from a carcass that other animals had already started eating (as specified in Koran 5:3). Thus carrion were also off-limits, as scavengers are prime transmitters of disease.

Regardless, hunters the world over—from the North American plains to the African Serengeti to the Eurasian Steppes—had been doing fine for tens of thousands of years without any disclaimers about carnivorous diets; and the Creator of the Universe never thought to notify THEM of the mandate-in-question. If it were such a timeless imperative, such a super-being would surely have mentioned it at some point, somewhere, to someone other than a few tribes in the Middle East. {5}

In spite of all this, when one asks even the most liberal Muslim if he eats pork, one is often met with a scoffing, “NO”...as if one had just asked him if he admired pederasts. The irony is that there is nothing wrong with eating pork, and much wrong with glorifying a pedophile—a point any Muslim should bear in mind the next time he is tempted to extol Islam’s “Prophet” whilst decrying ham sandwiches.

Contrast the doctrinaire Muslim approach to pork with Hindus (at least, those who are not vegan for reasons having to do with “ahimsa”). When opting for meat, the latter tend to refrain from eating beef; as cows are considered sacred in the Vedic tradition. However, rarely do such Hindus insist that EVERYONE ELSE is obligated to observe this self-imposed restriction. Moreover, they almost never harbor resentment when non-Hindus opt for a hamburger. (“To each his own” is their approach.) Why the un-ruffled feathers? Most Hindus understand that one person’s religious beliefs mustn’t impose restrictions on anyone else.

While keeping in mind that, while ham / pork may not be the ideal food, there are far more pressing matters to attend to with regard to both nutrition and animal rights—NEITHER of which the Sunnah addresses (beyond the “halal” practice of killing game quickly).

We are defined not only by what we admire, but also by what we find objectionable. When a Muslim finds himself scorning people for eating pork-chops, he might want to consider the 8-year-old Aisha bint Abu Bakr being deflowered by a middle-aged man; then reassess his hierarchy of revulsion.

No Graven Images?

Now let’s consider the contrived outrage about pictorial representations of the Final Abrahamic messenger; and juxtapose it to the reverence we see accorded someone who actively encouraged slavery—including the sexual enslavement of pre-pubescent girls.

Fundamentalist Muslims are obsessed with blasphemy when it comes to the notion of “sabb”—a touchpoint

that leads to nothing but mass neuroticism. But the temper tantrums thrown over pictorial representations of MoM are not only belligerent; they are incoherent. For the original rationale for abstaining from such imagery is that it may lead to idolatry (hence the stricture against graven images in the Mosaic decalogue).

Yet this prohibition is not held for Noah or Abraham or Ishmael or Joseph or Moses or David or Solomon or Jesus. The Koran is clear that we should make no distinction between MoM and the other Abrahamic prophets (2:136/285 and 3:84). So what gives?

The rationale is that if an image is made, it would be tantamount to “shirk” (idolatry). Presumably, though, this would apply to EVERY prophet. If Muslims are not throwing fits when Christians portray Jesus of Nazareth, then it is inconsistent for them to have qualms with depictions of MoM—who is, after all, a prophet. {9} Muslims typically have no qualms with pictorial representations of ANY OTHER Abrahamic prophet. Why, then, this singular exception?

Simply drawing a picture of a person is not the same as rendering that person an idol. After all, Muslims have no problem with pictures of, well, PEOPLE IN GENERAL. Effigies of Mao Tse Tung still abound in China; and of Kim Il Sung in North Korea; and of [insert celebrity heart-throb] on the bedroom walls of countless teens across the globe. NONE of this is seen as a gateway to idolatry, thereby nullifying this concern.

Ironically, this concern only makes sense insofar as MoM is deified. In other words, the stricture is a byproduct of the concerns germane to deification—the very thing it is ostensibly instituted to avoid. The rationalization for this spurious grievance, then, involves a rhetorical mobius strip.

Herein lies a comic irony. If idolatry is really the concern being addressed, then any picture that seems to MOCK the Last Messenger should be exempt from the rule (as it is clearly not going to foster idolatry). In other words, if this were taken to its logical conclusion, depictions that put MoM in an unflattering light should be the only kind that are PERMITTED; and only depictions that exalt him should be forbidden; as only the latter are amenable to idolization.

One does not need visual portrayals to engage in idolatry (though, of course, PICTORIAL depiction is the most common form of idolatry). Idolatry is a MENTALITY. It can take the form of the written / verbal as well as of the corporeal...but it does not REQUIRE physical objects to exist.

More to the point, this fatuous taboo is based on the (absurd) assumption that if a depiction is made of X, then people will automatically be inclined to idolize X. When is the last time you saw a picture of a person that—by dint of having seen the picture—motivated you to worship that person? Short of a tween developing an innocent crush on a cute celebrity, this is usually not an issue. MoM was not a heart-throb, so such a development should not be a concern.

When we make a documentary film about, say, the Third Reich, showing footage of Adolph Hitler does not cajole sane people into glorifying him. Why not? If a person does not want to render X into an idol, seeing a visual depiction of X is hardly going to change his mind. As it happens, neither Muslims nor non-Muslims are interested in making MoM into an idol.

In any case, the Kaaba proves that a depiction is not necessary for idolatry. (That is to say, even while banning pictures, the hundreds of millions of Muslims engage in idolatry ANYWAY.) Indeed, idolatry with non-pictorial objects is commonplace throughout the world. We see it in Judaism (the Wailing Wall; i.e. a landmark) and in Christianity (the crucifix, i.e. a talisman). Since time immemorial, cults have worshipped rocks and trees and miscellaneous other non-pictorial objects. Many people in America today

worship the U.S. Constitution, others the American flag, others the logo of their favorite sports team. None of these involve a graven image or an effigy. Idolatry requires pictorial representations the way eating food requires a fork.

Preventing the depiction of a person in order to prevent idolatry is like banning calligraphy in order to prevent people from reading (or banning straws so that people won't drink, or banning queen-size beds so that people won't have sex). Banning pictures of MoM, then, is a boneheaded effort to solve a problem that does not exist. Meanwhile, the most deluded segments of the Ummah will denounce pictures of MoM in one breath while bowing to the Kaaba in the next.

Herein lay another irony. Overt idolatry is an integral part of Islam—most blatantly, with regard to the treatment of the cubic shrine in Mecca. Meanwhile, the outrageous exaltation of MoM, if not actual deification, is certainly bordering on it. Alas, in the usual religious taxonomy, idolatry is only considered “idolatry” if it is a kind not sanctioned by the powers that be (just as superstition is only deemed to be “superstition” if it isn't one of OUR superstition).

This stricture also doesn't make any sense HISTORICALLY. During the Middle Ages, Muslim pictorial art was not uncommon. This included the walls of Kaaba itself. It is well known that gazelles were depicted in the Meccan cube for most of its existence (and, for all we know, are still there).

Illustrations of MoM have not always been forbidden. Most famously, Rashid ad-Din Tabib of Hamadan composed the “Jami al-Tawarikh” in the late 13th century, a chronicle in which there were several illustrations of MoM. There is a picture of the angel, Gabriel presenting a city to MoM in the Sarai albums of Tabriz from the 14th century. And in the 15th century, Al-Biruni's texts included depictions of MoM during the “Farewell Pilgrimage”.

In Islamic paraphernalia EVEN TODAY, MoM is sometimes depicted as a (faceless) flaming aureole, or a silhouetted figure equipped with a halo. This is a long tradition—going back to the “Siyer-i Nebi” by Mustafa ibn Yusuf of Erzurum (composed in the 1380's).

Nowhere in the Koran is it stated that images of MoM are forbidden. Be that as it may, there are a few ahadith that seem to prohibit Muslims from making pictorial representations of ANY people (or animals)—most notably: Bukhari's Hadith (4/54/447-450) and Muslim's Hadith (vol. 3, no. 5268-5271).

In addition to—and independently of—the contorted logic involved here, there is always recourse to 33:61—pronouncing that anyone who “insults” the religion should be seized and slain. So any given party's discomfiture can be used as warrant for reprisal. {8} Of course, “offense” is only taken, not given; so this makes no sense.

Is visual depiction inherently derogatory; and to be taken as some sort of desecration? Muslims don't seem to really believe this either. The Abrahamic deity HIMSELF is regularly portrayed in cartoons throughout the world; and nary a peep is elicited from even the most temperamental quarters of Dar al-Islam. {7} Why not? Would this desecration not be a graver transgression than a visual depiction of one of his prophets?

To review: The contention is—purportedly—that permitting visual depictions of MoM would encourage idolatry. The inconsistent logic here is revealed in that the code implicitly allows for depictions of ALL THE OTHER Abrahamic prophets. If doing so doesn't engender idolatry with THEM (each of which is revered in Islam), then—it would seem—there would be no problem with the “last” prophet either. (The Koran even tells us that we should treat all prophets equally.)

So why all the fuss over pictures of the prophet of Islam? Nobody can say for sure. Regardless of any proscription that Muslims might opt to impose upon THEMSELVES (in the name of piety), the matter has nothing to do with what anyone else opts to do. Presumably, that's what the first verse in Surah 109 means: To each his own creed.

Moreover, in civil society, we recognize the crucial role that even the most biting satirical cartoons play in effecting participatory democracy—as demonstrated by such iconic artists as Patrick Oliphant and Herbert Lawrence Block. We have also learned that closed societies, in forbidding such modes of expression, are invariably dysfunctional societies—suffering from intellectual bankruptcy. (I explore this topic at length in my essay: “In Defense Of Satire”.)

The prohibition of visual depictions of MoM is anathema to reasonable Muslims. The Progressively-inclined denizens of Dar al-Islam eschew such archaic strictures because they recognize them to be inimical to a free society.

It bears worth repeating: We are defined not only by what we admire, but also by what we find objectionable. When a Muslim finds himself scorning people for drawing a picture of the Seal of the Prophets, he might want to consider the 8-year-old Aisha bint Abu Bakr being deflowered by a middle-aged man; then reassess his hierarchy of revulsion.

Eliding Malefaction

Mohammed married the daughter of Abu Bakr, Aisha when she was 6; and consummated the marriage within the next 2 years. This is attested in the most vaunted Hadith: that of Bukhari (5/58/234-236, 7/62/64-65, and 7/62/88; alt. no. 3896, no. 5133-34, no. 5158, and no. 6130). The timing of this deed may have actually been worse; as Aisha was said to have been 18 years old when MoM died. He died in early June of 632, which means she must have been born in late 613 or early 614. The marriage is said to have occurred shortly after the death of Khadijah in 619. {15}

According to the Sunnah, such conduct was permissible. To ensure there was no mistake about this, the heading for some of the above Hadith passages reads: “Giving one’s children in marriage” (each citing Koran 65:4). MoM even wondered out loud why men would marry grown women when they could simply wed young girls (so that they may then play with each other), as attested in Bukhari (no. 5080). In Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad’s Book of “Nikah”, MoM encourages his followers to marry young girls, all the better to fondle them.

According to Muslim’s Hadith, MoM’s betrothal to Aisha took place when the latter was 7 years old, then consummated when she was 9 years old (no. 3309-11 and 3480-3482). Those ages are corroborated in “Sunan” Abu Dawood (no. 2116-21, no. 4195, and no. 4916-19) as well as by Aisha’s own testimony (vol. 9 of Tarikh al-Tabiri). We are even told that Aisha was still playing with dolls when MoM married her (Bukhari 8/73/151; Muslim no. 1422; and Abu Dawood no. 4931): something that—in traditional Islam—is only permitted for pre-pubescent girls. All this was further corroborated in Sunan an-Nasa’i (chapt. 78, no. 3380). Aisha was incontrovertibly pre-pubescent when she was deflowered by the self-proclaimed prophet.

There are various theories about why MoM may have waited two years before bedding his child-bride. It is quite possible that Aisha may have been physically too small to penetrate at 6 years old. Another likely explanation is that MoM wed Aisha in Mecca prior to the Hijra, when he would have been ostracized for his pedophilia. Accordingly, he waited until he’d migrated to Yathrib to engage in sexual intercourse—a place where there would not have been any repercussions.

When it came to Aisha, MoM's intentions were clearly salacious. He even opined that the young girl's aesthetic superiority to other women was like the superiority of "tharid" [a savory meat] to other meals (ref. Bukhari, no. 3411). There is nothing estimable in thinking of the pre-pubescent girl as a tasty dish. (Suffice to say, when a powerful man compares his young wife to a delicious meal, he is not referring to the quality of her character.) MoM even wondered why men would opt to marry grown women when they could simply wed young girls, who were EASIER TO PLAY WITH (again, see Bukhari, no. 5080). The self-proclaimed prophet actually encouraged his followers to marry young girls, all-the-better to FONDLE them. (For that deranged exhortation, see Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad's Book of "Nikah".)

Lo and behold: The license to copulate with pre-pubescent girls is given EXPLICITLY in the Koran. 65:4 says nothing about noble intentions (e.g. strategic betrothals to forge good relations between different tribes). The passage pertains to the "idda[h]": the period that a man needs to wait before having sex with a pre-pubescent girl who was been divorced from (that is: ALREADY MARRIED TO) another man. We are told that the "idda[h]" is three months in 2:228. Presumably, this was to ensure that the potential wife—*a pre-pubescent girl*—was not pregnant from her previous husband (in the event that she had unexpectedly reached menarche in the intervening time). {10}

Obviously, men were copulating with pre-pubescent girls for reasons other than procreation—being as how the girls were, well, PRE-PUBESCENT. The relevant Koranic passage (65:4) was not an aberration; it was necessitated by this waiting period before marrying a divorced girl...in the case of PRE-PUBESCENT wives (i.e. those who had not yet reached menarche, and so were not yet menstruating).

Amongst Islamic apologists, a common rationalization for MoM's selection of a child-bride is that the practice was normal at the time. This claim is not only factually incorrect; the mere suggestion is downright perverse. Barring some revanchist Hindu communities in India, nowhere in the non-Muslim world—at ANY TIME in history—has it been seen as ethical for a grown man to copulate with a girl who has not yet reached puberty. Grown men marrying pre-pubescents was NOT normal. {14} Opprobrium of this heinous act could be found in virtually ALL societies, in ALL eras. {11}

We might also note the moral reality of this behavior—which is based on timeless standards. (This should be uncontroversial lest we resort to relativism of the most wanton kind, and propose that moral principles are merely social constructs.) It has NEVER been morally defensible for a grown man—especially one who is fifty years old—to be interested in copulating with pre-pubescent girls; let alone with 8-year-olds. Ever.

It should go without saying, but let's say it anyway: A man does not engage in sexual intercourse with a girl YEARS BEFORE she reaches menarche in order to procreate. MoM's marriage to Aisha was entirely a matter of wanting to have sex with a young girl. That is to say: It was NOT about an attempt to produce offspring. How can we be sure? To reiterate: In Islam's holy book, we read that girls who had not yet menstruated are permissible. Thus men are allowed to wed—and copulate with—girls who can not yet be impregnated. What could the rational have possibly been for this, if not for the enjoyment of "those whom your right hand possesses"?

Further evidence of MoM's pedophilia (as well as his flexible sexuality) can be found in Bukhari's book on Islamic etiquette, the "Adab al-Mufrad" (no. 1183). In it, we are told how MoM enjoyed sticking his tongue in the mouths of young boys. Abu Hurayra relayed that, one day, the prophet "walked around [the market of the Banu Qaynuqa] and searched... He then said, 'Where is the little one? Call the little one to me.' Hasan [Ali's son] came running and jumped into his lap. He then put his hand in [MoM's] beard. The prophet then opened his mouth and put his tongue in [Hasan's] mouth."

Elsewhere, the story is told as follows: “Hasan was thirsty. He asked his grandfather for water. There was no water. Afterward, the Prophet put his tongue in Hasan’s mouth; then he became completely satisfied. Hasan [the young boy] said of this miracle: Thirst never overcomes me after sucking on the Prophet’s tongue.”

Thus homosexual inclinations can be added to MoM’s penchant for pederasty.

That’s not all. In the “musnad” Hadith of Ahmed ibn Hanbal, we read that MoM enjoyed sucking on the tongues of young boys. Mu’awiya reported: “I saw the prophet sucking on the tongue or the lips of Hassan, son of Ali” (no. 16245). This undermines the rationalization that MoM was engaging in the activity in order to aid the young boy; as he too seems to have enjoyed the service (i.e. the tongue of a young boy). This begs the question of who was performing the miracle on who. (That is: Who was using whom when the tongue-sucking routinely went BOTH ways?)

It is ALSO recounted that MoM claimed that any boy who’s tongue he sucked on would be immune from hellfire—quite an enticing proposition, coming as it did from the self-proclaimed prophet.

It strains credulity to suppose that such claims would have cropped up in independent sources had there not been something to it. And it is highly unlikely that such esteemed authors would have recounted such episodes had they been widely seen as “nothing but insidious rumors”, as some apologists now insist. Clearly, these were widely circulated accounts that passed through the ages.

MoM’s homo-erotic proclivities were not limited to pre-pubescent boys. At the time, it seems to have been no secret that MoM engaged in sexual activity with other men. His child-bride, Aisha HERSELF testified in the most vaunted Hadith (that of Bukhari): “I used to wash the semen off the clothes of the prophet; and even then I used to notice several spots on some of his garments.” (This account is also found in Muslim’s Hadith; as well as in the “sunan” accounts of Ibn Majah, both of which are accorded the highest credibility.) Note that masturbation was forbidden; so the explanation for a man regularly being covered in semen is not difficult to deduce.

But wait. It gets even worse. MoM’s pedophilia did not stop with children; it seems to have extended to infants as well. His most renowned hagiographer, Ibn Ishaq recounted that MoM once saw the daughter of Umm ul-Fadl (i.e. Umm Habib bint Abbas) when she was “a baby crawling before him. He said: “When she grows up and if I am still alive, I will marry her.” (Spoiler alert: He died before she grew up.) This disturbing anecdote was corroborated in the “Musnad” of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. As it happened, MoM was murdered before Habib reached the ripe old age of 6, thus sparing the girl his licentious cravings.

It is worth reiterating: Contrary to the special pleading so often heard from Islamic apologists, prior to the advent of Islam, pedophilia was never considered “normal”. Indeed, THROUGHOUT WORLD HISTORY, there is only one case of a (non-Muslim, non-Hindu) middle-aged potentate marrying a child (and—even then—he had the moral sense to not consummate the marriage). Prior to Islam, such a thing was unheard-of (that is: outside of some revanchist Hindu communities in India). { 13 }

The history of arranged marriages between powerful families is well-attested. In almost every case, at any point, in any country, when a child was married off in a monarchical context, it was to ANOTHER CHILD. (Needless to say, no sexual relations were involved at that juncture.) Throughout history, children were paired in contractual agreements between families; but the official betrothal (and, presumably, consummation) did not occur until both parties came of age—as in Mongolian and Chinese cultures. { 11 } The initial “promise” was BETWEEN CHILDREN; and was in reference to future arrangements. It was

not done to satiate the cravings of middle-aged men for children; it was done to forge geo-political alliances. That arrangements were made years before the bride and groom came of age was simply a matter of doing so proactively.

So what about Islamic “fiqh” SINCE MoM’s dalliances with Aisha? We know that marriages involving pedophilia have been commonplace throughout the Muslim world from statements like the following from “Reliance Of The Traveller”—a 14th-century disquisition on the Sunnah: “A father can arrange the marriage of his virgin daughter without her permission EVEN IF she is beyond the age of puberty.” Even if? This indicates that marrying off a pre-pubescent daughter to an older man was the NORM, not the exception.

In the modern era, the instances in which child marriages occur most are—predictably—in Islamic areas of Africa. {16} In the Far East, marriage involving pre-pubescent girls still occurs in Pakistan, Bangladesh and in some of the Muslim communities of Nepal and India. This is not a coincidence. If today, the overwhelming majority of cases of (officially sanctioned) pedophilia occur in Muslim communities, it is clear that the license to do so has something to do with the attendant religious doctrine (in this case: the Sunnah). {6}

And what of the precedent set by MoM of older men engaging in sexual play with young boys? The practice continues in Deobandi Islam. It is referred to in Dari (a variant of Farsi) as “bacha bazi”. From Uzbekistan to Pakistan, young boys in harems are referred to as “bachas”. It is not uncommon for mullahs to keep such harems behind closed doors. This is an open secret in both the Hindu Kush and Arabia.

Endorsing sexual intercourse with children can be juxtaposed against the proscription against pork: the former is an odious act whereas the latter is an antiquated culinary relic.

And what of the repercussions of this precedent? The statistics on child-brides is worth noting: They are less likely to stay in school (or be educated AT ALL), they are more likely to be abused (physically AND emotionally), and more likely to end up in poverty (in cases where the husband is not a Saudi prince). Plus: Most such marriages eventually end up in a divorce—which is often highly problematic for the girl, to put it mildly. So even if we disregard the basic moral imperative for adults to not have sexual intercourse with pre-pubescents, there are still many reasons this antiquated practice is highly objectionable—none of which are broached in Islamic scripture. {6}

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

In assessing the merit of the Sunnah, we are expected to ignore the fact that the most doctrinal adherents would rather idolize a pederast than have a croque monsieur for lunch. Needless to say, the Koran would have been significantly improved if it had simply declared that eating pork was fine...yet pedophilia (and, for that matter, striking or raping a woman) was unacceptable. When we juxtapose pedophilia with having a ham sandwich for lunch or making a sketch of MoM, we find that a major recalibration of outrage is in order. All taboos are not equal.

Alas. One thing that sacred doctrines consistently do is skew the priorities of True Believers. So we must inquire: Is snacking on some “pad-see-ew moo” a graver moral transgression than, say, forcing women to cover their faces in public? Is there any way to rationalize pedophilia whilst denouncing secularism? The position, “It’s fine to idolize a pedophile; but—whatever you do—you better not eat bacon!” reflects a profound moral confusion.

In sum: The atavistic notion of “halal” (permissible) food is a vestigial meme. That is to say: The stricture is the dogmatic residue of a dietary precaution that may have been prudent long ago; but is now obsolete.

The category of “haram” (forbidden) food reflects concerns that no longer attain. If he exists, the Creator Of The Universe surely has nothing against pork-chops...any more than he becomes incensed when someone sips a Margarita.

And the Creator Of The Universe would certainly not have any qualms with cartoons...of ANY kind. Such a concern would be stultifyingly petty. Imagine fixating on such frivolous matters while millions of innocent people suffer and die from avoidable causes each year.

Meanwhile, if an even remotely benevolent super-being really exists, he is probably not a big fan of adults raping children.

ADDENDUM

Mohammedan Lineage Myths

Some believe that provenance is magically passed down, through the ages, via bloodlines. Hence the fixation on bloodlines that we so often encounter in traditions around the world.

Attempts to link Mohammed of Mecca (son of an “Abd-ullah”, who was the son of Abd [al-]Mu-Talib Shaybah, who—in turn—was the son of Hashim ibn Manaf) to iconic Abrahamic figures proliferate. The “Kitab al-Asnam” [“Book of Idols”] was composed by Hisham ibn Al-Kalbi of Kufa in the late 8th century. It was the first to attempt to establish a genealogical link between Ishmael and MoM.

The purported lineage is as follows: Hashim (namesake of the Hashimites) was the son of Abd Manaf {17}, who was the son of Qusay ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka’b ibn Luay ibn Ghalib ibn Fihir ibn Malik. Thus, the earliest attested figure is a late 2nd-century figure referred to as “M-L-K”. This was merely the Syriac term for a tribal chieftain (derived from the older Akkadian / Assyrian word for “king”). The lineage is fudged from there on back.

Malik’s alleged father was “Nadr”...who was the son of Kinanah ibn Khuzayma ibn A-M-R [alt. Mu-Drikah] ibn Ilias [alt. Ilyas / Elias; a.k.a. “Elijah”] ibn Mu-Dhar ibn Nazar [alt. Nizar / Nazir] ibn Ma’ad, we can go back even further...to a figure alleged to have lived in the 2nd century B.C. who was referred to as “Adnan”. He was assigned this name because he was purported to be an ancestor of the Adnani Arabs. Per this genealogical contrivance, Adnan’s son, Ma’ad, sired Nazar...who sired Mudhar, who sired the Abrahamic prophet, “Elijah”. Thus: Elijah was not Hebrew, he was an Ishmaelite (read: Arab).

There is a glaring temporal problem with this: Elijah of Samaria lived in the 9th century B.C.; and so could not possibly have been the great-great grandson of a man who lived in the 2nd century B.C. (This is aside from the fact that making him an Ishmaelite requires ignoring all extant Abrahamic lore.)

The solution to this temporal snafu was to do one of two things. The first option was to jettison the Biblical (i.e. Judaic) record of Elijah altogether—thereby making him an Arab while moving him forward in time more than EIGHT CENTURIES. The second option was to move Adnan back in time (eight centuries further into the past)...thereby rejecting the aforementioned nine-generation link between Malik and Adnan. The latter option would require inserting an additional 24-plus generations into the accepted Mohammedan genealogy (to get from Adnan to Malik).

In a nutshell, the traditional Abrahamic genealogy (per the Biblical record) must be dramatically altered in order to bring Ishmael’s progeny down to Elijah...and then from Elijah’s progeny down to Malik...and

thereby down to Islam's "Seal of the Prophets" (who was born c. 570 A.D.) As stated, the Mohammedan genealogy is as follows: Elijah (as "Ilias") sired Amir / Mudrikah, who sired Khuzayma, who sired Kinana, who sired An-Nadr, who sired Malik...down to Abd Manaf...and thereafter down to MoM. Presto!

Prior to "Adnan", very little is specified in Mohammedan lore. {18} More ambitious Mohammedan genealogists claim that HIS father was a man named, "Ud[a]d" / "Awwad", son of [Al-]Mu-Qawwim ibn Al-Yasa ibn [Al]-Hamis ibn Nibt ibn Salaman ibn Ham[m]al. That last name, "Ham[m]al", means either "ram" or "carrier" in Arabic; and designates an ancestor that would have lived at some point in the 4th century B.C. (Never mind that that was a thousand years before Classical Arabic came into existence.)

That's about it.

This leaves between one and two millennia to account for...if, that is, we are to make it all the way back to Ishmael, son of Abraham. The Biblical Abraham would have been an Amorite—as the name was originally an Amorite name, though one that may have been adopted from the Chaldeans. ("Abram" was recorded in Assyrian cuneiform in inscriptions by the Hyksos on the Sinai peninsula.) Abraham's identity is, of course, retro-actively altered by Islamic historiographers, rendering him—as with all other Abrahamic prophets—not only a Hijazi Arab, but a MUSLIM (ref. 3:67 in the Koran).

The Ishmaelites—we might be reminded—are said to have been Abraham's progeny through his son (sired via Hagar). So whenever the Hebrew Bible references "the seed of Abraham" (as in Genesis 17:8, which declares that Canaan was bequeathed to Abraham's seed), it encompasses not just the progeny of Isaac, but the progeny of Ishmael. In other words: Anything promised to "the seed of Abraham" includes the Ishmaelites. Beth Israel, on the other hand, is more narrowly defined as the progeny of Isaac's son, Jacob. {22} Hence it is only statements that specify "Israel" (i.e. the progeny of Jacob ben Isaac) that restrict the Promised Land exclusively to the Jews (see my essay on "The Land Of Purple").

Yet even THAT interpretation poses problems. For, in Genesis 17:20, the Abrahamic deity proclaims that he will make the progeny of ISHMAEL a great nation...right after Abraham beseeched the godhead, "O, that Ishmael might live before thee!" two verses earlier. (!)

There is a problem with ALL of this, of course. IF Ishmael and his progeny were ordained by god to deliver the "right" message, and IF Ishmael really lived in Arabia and erected the Kaaba in the Hijaz in the 2nd millennium B.C., then why is it that the Koran tells MoM that he was sent the Final Revelation so that he "may warn a people [the Arabians] whose forefathers were not warned" (36:5-6)? Other verses pose further problems, as the Koran's protagonist declaims: "We have heretofore never given them [the Arabians] anything to recite, nor did we ever send a warner before [MoM]" (32:3, 34:44, and 35:24). Yet according to Mohammedan lore, Arabians WERE warned, as the sons of Ishmael would have been located in the Hijaz (hence the location of the Kaaba).

(Note that I explore an explanation for this historical snafu in my essay, "Mecca And Its Cube.")

The rationalization for all this typically as follows: When the Abrahamic deity finally got around to it, the Final Revelation was given to the Bedouins of Arabia because otherwise—come Judgement Day—they would have been able to use the excuse that "the Book", which had been made available to all others (10:47 and 16:36), had never been revealed to THEM (6:155-157).

Yet this contradicts the contention that the Koran was intended for all mankind AND that a prophet had already been sent to all nations (16:36)...as well as the contention that Abraham dwelled in the Hijaz. 6:155-157 states that the "Recitations" were delivered explicitly to the Arabians (in their native tongue) so

that THEY would—finally, at long last—be made aware. That is: The revelations were delivered in THEIR tongue—whatever it may have been—in order to preclude the possibility they plead they didn’t know any better when the Day of Judgement arrives.

It is clear, then, that the authors of the Koran did not believe that Ishmael had dwelled in the Hijaz; and so did not think the Meccan cube dated back to the days of Abraham. (Again, see my essay: “Mecca And Its Cube”.)

With regard to Abraham’s progeny, there is no explanation for how the one to two millennia prior to the (alleged) 2nd-century B.C. “Adnan” (or perhaps his ancestor, “Ham[m]al”, if we oblige) might be chronicled. {18} The use of narrative filler is not uncommon in sacred histories; as with, say, the use of the Kings of “Alba Longa” in Roman lore to account for the massive caesura (four centuries) between the founding of Latium / Sabinium by Aeneas and the founding of Rome by the fabled Romulus. Presto! The sequence of events is given extra dramatic flare.

To resolve this problem in their own lore (which, to repeat, is an inexplicable gap of between one and two thousand years), some Islamic scholars conjecture that the salient Gentile lineages proceeded via Ishmael’s two eldest sons, Nebaioth (a.k.a. “Nabut”) and/or Kedar (alt. “Qaidar” / “Qedar”; progenitor of the Qedarite Arabs). There are also some traditions that posit ancestors of Ishmael’s subsequent TEN sons (most notably the third: Nadbeel / Idiba’ilu) and/or his two daughters (Mahalath and Basemath)...who’s progeny roamed Arabia for the ensuing centuries...until we somehow arrive at “Hamal” (or, later, “Adnan”).

HOWEVER, when the Koran opts to mention Abraham with his sons Isaac and Ishmael (3:83-84), it then only mentions ISAAC’S son, Jacob (ironically, remaining mum on Ishmael’s progeny). This glaring omission is quite strange if it is Ishmael’s lineage that is supposed to be most relevant. {19}

So what of Kedar? He is said by some to have sired “Yashjub”, who in turn sired “Yarub”. Thereafter, the speculation completely fades away. For during Classical Antiquity, the only attested lineage that is salient (vis a vis Abrahamic lore) is categorically HEBREW (i.e. Davidic). Getting from the early Ishmaelite lineage—past the traditional Abrahamic (read: Judaic) patriarchs—down to “Adnan” (via “Hamal”) requires a tremendous genealogical slight-of-hand. Indeed, to get all this to work, one must circumvent the entirety of Abrahamic lore and concoct an entirely new lore from whole-cloth. {18}

It is no wonder, then, that attempts to catalogue the generations from Ishmael’s alleged great-grandson (“Yarub”) down to “Adnan” (or even to Adnan’s purported ancestor, “Hamal”) are generally frowned upon in Islamic circles. Even the most dogmatically-brazen Muslims recognize the entire enterprise to be ridiculous. For attempts can only possibly end in embarrassment; as one would be forced to fill a gap of well over a thousand years with invented characters.

YET...comic absurdity doesn’t prevent some True Believers from trying anyway. The most mendacious Mohammedan genealogists simply proclaim Adnan’s father to be Ishmael HIMSELF, then just call it a day. The rest of us are expected not to notice the intervening millennium or two; nor to try to ascertain where key figures like “Yusuf” and “Musa” might fit into such a hyper-compressed timeline. (And what about Ishmael’s son, Kedar?) Presumably, we should overlook such temporal foibles and just play along.

Other commentators simply dissemble on the matter. This genealogical pickle is made even more unseemly once we recall that—per Islamic lore—the Abrahamic icons (esp. the prophets) are ALL supposed to have been Muslim; even those in the Hebrew lineages from Isaac (e.g. Levite, Davidic, et. al.) That is: Those reputedly Judaic “prophets” were supposed to have been Muslim ALL ALONG (per the tenet of

“hanif”). No amount of obscurantism can hide the fact that such conjecture is addled with a slew of glaring logistical snags.

One can't help but wonder why Islamic apologists try so diligently to retro-fit (read: force-fit) a patently Judaic legacy into their own legacy; or vice versa. They bend over backwards to link their prophet to Abraham—as if that were the only way to justify their Faith as monotheistic; or the only way to validate MoM's greatness; or the only way to proffer MoM's Abrahamic bona fides; or the only way to show that Providence was somehow at work when MoM was “chosen” to deliver the final revelation.

Their hackneyed attempt at ancestral co-optation reveals the spuriousness of the lore they so exuberantly tout. That they find the need to shoe-horn Judaic lore—itsself highly dubious—into their own lore so as to give it a veneer of Abrahamic legitimacy indicates that they (correctly) suspect their own lore can't stand on its own merits.

So there we have it: A farcical lineage that assiduously strives to connect MoM (qua last Abrahamic prophet) to the father of Semitic monotheism BY BLOOD... via a contrived pantheon of non-Hebrew (Ishmaelite) intermediaries. The result of these efforts is a cast of characters that manages to cover only a small fraction of the remaining two millennia.

But wait. There's more. There is also an effort to place the first HUMAN BEING ever to exist (“Adam”) NINETEEN generations before Abraham (per the traditional Biblical account). Propounders of this zany (Young Earth) approach opt to place Noah exactly in the middle of this (far-fetched) pre-Abrahamic lineage.

Splendid. But no word yet on with whom Adam's son, Seth (Arabized as “Sheeth”) mated so as to produce his fabled son, “Anush” (from the Ancient Hebrew, “Enos[h]”; sometimes Arabized to “Anwas”). Short of incest, preternatural procreation must be assumed (in order to—as it were—get the ball rolling).

Adam sired three sons via Eve (as “Hawa”): Cain (as “Qabil”, with twin sister, Iqlimia) and Abel (as “Habil”, with twin sister, Layudha) and Seth (as “Shayth”). Expositors solved procreation problem by giving Cain and Abel each a twin sister, which they then swapped for mating purposes. Cain killed Abel not due to jealousy over god favoring one over the other, but because he was jealous of Abel bedding Iqlimia, who was more beautiful.

With whom Seth mated is anyone's guess. Some say there were OTHER sisters involved. In any case, he begat Enosh (as “Anoush”)...and on to Kenan (as “Qinan”) to Mahalel (as “Mahlail”) to Jared (as “Yarid”) to Enoch (as “Idris”) to Methuselah (as “Mattulshalakh”) to Lamech (as “Lamik”), who was the father of Noah (rendered “Nuh” in Arabic). As in Hebrew lore, the salient son of Noah was Shem.

Shem-ites split according to the two sons: Arpha[k]shad and Aram (as “Eram”). The former sired Shelah, who sired [h]Eber (rendered “Hud”), patriarch of the lineage that led to Abraham. This was through [h]Eber's son, Peleg / Falikh, then to Reu / Rau to Serug / Sarukh to Nihor / Nahur to Abraham's father: Terah / Azar.

Terah also had a son, Saleh—who was said to have been the patriarch of the NON-Ishmaelite Arabians (the doomed people of Thamud). Another son was Haran, who begat the infamous Lot / Lud. (Haran may well have corresponded with the patriarch of the Arameans—normally considered Shem's son, Aram.)

Abraham sired Ishmael via Hagar—inaugurating the Ishmaelite lineage (who were primarily Nabateans). Meanwhile, he sired Isaac via Sarah—thereby inaugurating Beth Israel via Isaac's son, Jacob. To ensure that all Arabians were considered Ishmaelites, instead of Abraham siring Midian via his concubine,

Keturah (as in Hebrew lore), it was Ishmael who sired him—thereby inaugurating the (Ishmaelite) lineage that led to the Sabaeans / Minaeans in southern Hijaz and Dedanites / Lihyanites / Tanukhids in northern Hijaz (as well as possibly the Lakhmids in eastern Arabia).

Jethro / Shu'ayb was considered a Midianite. It was his daughter, Zipporah / Saffura / Sephora, whom Moses wed.

But never mind any of that. By 10,000 B.C., there were already MILLIONS of homo sapiens in the world. {20} And by 2,000 B.C., there were TENS OF MILLIONS of people strewn across the planet, from the Americas to the Nordic regions to Southeast Asia. (Bear in mind that Cain eliminated Able; then all of Cain's progeny were eliminated in the Great Flood.) Ergo, since the day that Seth and his mystery-mate begat mankind, each and every man in each and every generation had to be re-producing like gang-busters...AND doing lots of traveling. The math here is silly, of course; especially once we note that, in addition to Shem, Noah had only two other sons (Ham and Japheth) who produced offspring. Positing super-charged insemination and super-charged migration, century after century, certainly makes for fun speculation.

But there you have it. Mohammedan lore in all its daffy splendor.

Other than homo sapiens beginning just 19 generations prior to Abraham, there were other modifications made to Abrahamic lore in order to accord with the desired (Ishmaelite) narrative:

In 6:74 of the Koran, Abraham's father is re-named "Azar" (as apposed to "Tera[c]h"), who was the son of "Tahur" (from the Ancient Hebrew "Nahor"). These men are said to have been descendants of Noah's son, Sam (from the Ancient Hebrew "Shem"). How? Through Shem's son, Arpachshad (as "Arfakshad"). Some Muslim expositors seem to have conflated "Cainan" with "Kenan"; others simply skip "Cainan" with a wink and a nod, and go directly to Salah / Shelah (as "Shalikh"). They then go to [h]Eber (as "Abir") then Peleg (as "Falikh") then Reu (as "Abraghu" / "Ra'u") then Serug (as "Shahru" / "Saru") then Nahor (as "Tahur" / "Nahur")...who sired Abraham's father, Tera[c]h (as "Azar"). These Arabicized names for Biblical (Hebrew) figures indicate the derivative nature of Mohammedan lore.

Thus Mohammedan lore maintains ten generations from Noah to Abraham; placing Abraham three to four centuries after the Great Flood, assuming all hyper-exaggerated life-spans are disregarded.

There's more. Going backward from Noah (presumably, sometime in the late 3rd millennium B.C.):

Noah's father is designated "Lumik" (from the Ancient Hebrew "Lamech") {21}, son of "Mutu Shal[i]kh" (normally rendered "Methuselah")...who in turn was the son of the fabled prophet, "Idris". According to this farcical lineage, Idris (a.k.a. "Akhnuh", an Arabized version of "Enoch") was Anush's great-great-grandson through Kenan (as "Qainan")...who, recall, had been SKIPPED in other accounts. Kenan's son was Mahalalel (as "Mahla'il"), who was the father of Jared (as "Yarid"), who sired Idris / Enoch, who sired Methuselah, who sired Noah's father, Lamech...thereby putting Noah NINE generations after Adam and Eve.

We can only assume that Abraham existed at some point between three centuries (minimum) and six centuries (maximum) prior to Moses (who would have lived in the 13th century B.C.) Though not even the most audacious Biblical literalists pretend to know exactly when that might have been. {22} Abraham most likely would have lived at some point between 1800 B.C. and 1600 B.C. (thus placing Adam and Eve not much before 2000 B.C., when the world population was already 30 million people.) Voila! The human race is less than 5,000 years old (and evidently began with a ridiculous rate of copulation). {23}

But WHAT WAS going on in the late 3rd millennium B.C.? People were worshipping at Stonehenge in Britannia. The Minoans were thriving in Greece. Numerous cities were thriving in Sumer (from Ur to Uruk, from Larsa to Lagash, from Kish to Nippur). Eridu[g] had been a major city since the 6th millennium B.C. (see my essay on “Forgotten Cities”). The Elamites were thriving in lower Persia. Lothal was a thriving city in the Indus Valley. And the Xia Dynasty was thriving in China.

What of major figures? Gilgamesh ruled in Uruk in the 26th century B.C. Sargon of Akkad founded the Akkadian Empire in the 24th century B.C...even as King Uru-ka-gina erected the E-ninnu at Lagash...after establishing the first formal legal code. And in the 21st century B.C., the great ziggurat of Ur was erected (by King Ur-Nammu) as a temple to Nanna...after establishing his own formal legal code.

Gee wiz. Where was the Abrahamic deity for ALL THAT?

Sane votaries in the Abrahamic tradition remind us that we’re not supposed to take these archaic genealogies literally. A fair point. {24} But the fact remains that there was EVEN AN ATTEMPT to concoct such a preposterous genealogy in the first place; and that such an attempt was undertaken by the same people who formulated the lore on which the religion ITSELF was predicated. Here’s the catch: Opt not to take THAT seriously, and the credence of the rest of the material collapses.

The notion that the fate of all mankind somehow hinges on this particular sequence of men is—to put it mildly—ludicrous. (Never mind the outlandish proposition that bloodlines are cosmically significant: a tenet that serves as the basis for virtually all brands of racism.) Note, moreover, that NOT ONE of the figures enumerated in this essay is documented as ever having existed—let alone as ever having said anything profound. Their significance is based entirely on their position in the anointed (patriarchal) lineage.

But never mind any of that. Such delinquency is immaterial insofar as we’re fixated on a confabulated ancestral legacy. When ancestry is all that matters, credibility is entirely beside the point; merit is patently irrelevant.

Alas, an obsession with bloodlines—especially patrilineal bloodlines—is standard in ancient lore. The Judaic tradition was oriented around it (even though, now, it is MATRIARCHAL bloodlines that count for Jewishness). Most monarchies throughout history have been obsessed with patriarchal lineage. And—as we’ve seen here—Islamic lore takes this daft idea to the nth degree. Such is the nature of tribal chauvinism; and thus of ethno-centricity.

We might note that patrilineal regimes could also be found in the Far East, as with the ancient Chinese “tsung-fa” system of primogeniture—whereby the anointed ruler was known as the “son of heaven”; and was empowered via a “mandate from heaven”.

Generally-speaking, in order to buoy one’s false pride (as a member of THIS group rather than of THAT group), a “just so” story must be concocted; and rendered post hoc. Confabulated ancestry is the easiest way to accomplish this task. Bolstering a tribe’s self-image with a cosmically-significant bloodline is a surefire way to appeal to its members. Harkening back to fabled ancestors is the primary way of doing this.

Typically, genealogical fabrication is a crucial ingredient in etiological myths. As with hagiographers proffering a burnished “record” of their protagonists, ideologically-driven genealogists will doctor the past to suit their purposes. Indeed, they would re-write yesterday’s weather if they had to. Historical accuracy is a moot point when one is determined to consecrate the in-group. {25}

The moral of the story is that collective identities are social constructs. That's all they ever were; that's all they'll ever be. Such a specious taxonomy only gains traction insofar as participants pretend that it is an immutable essence of WHO THEY ARE. To make the charade "work", they must believe that their (contrived) legacy has been hardwired into the very structure of the cosmos. Thus: "Our birthright is written in the stars." Tribal chauvinism—and its handmaiden, Providentialism—is the result of such mendacity.

The logic here is simple: Provenance occasions telos. Thus: An effulgent etiology begets a effulgent eschatology; hallowed legacy girds a glorious destiny. {32} Exalted origins dictate a grandiloquent purpose. Hence: What we USED TO BE justifies whatever it is we PLAN TO DO. With a divine mandate posited, the anointed group is given a blank check. Once one "knows" where one used to be and where one is going, everything can be fit into a Grand Narrative, and thereby made to "make sense".

So the trick is to establish a resplendent legacy—replete with valorized ancestors demanding reverence: the touchstone of tribal honor. Doing so confers on the anointed group special privileges. The idea is that an illustrious past gives one license to do whatever one sees fit. When one sees oneself as "chosen", prerogative becomes limitless. (After all, who are WE to countermand god's plan?) When this divinely-ordained privilege is accorded along racial lines, some combination of xenophobia and a siege mentality ensues.

Such artificial divisions invariably contribute to the Balkanization of mankind; and an abiding obsession with bloodlines never ends well. All forms of racism are predicated on this ubiquitous fixation. Meanwhile, "I'm doing god's will / work" is the ultimate omni-rationalization. "It's all part of god's plan" is a wild-card anyone can play to justify LITERALLY ANYTHING. With god's imprimatur, anything goes.

Footnotes:

{1 The most common issue with under-cooked pork is trichinosis—involving a parasite (the roundworm, trichinella spiralis) that tends to reside in that particular animal. In ancient times, this would have been especially problematic, as the meat of swine must be more cooked than most other meat. Of course, larvae of various organisms can be found in ANY undercooked meat; but different meat requires different degrees of cooking to be rendered edible. Such problems are not unique to the muscle tissue of swine. The issue—it would seem—is that goat, lamb, poultry, etc. do not require the same degree of cooking in order to avert such problems (e.g. from bacteria like, say, salmonella typhimurium). Note that the Creator of the Universe did not see fit to explain HOW and WHY such meat may have caused problems. Oddly enough, his knowledge seemed to be limited to the experiences of the (scientifically illiterate) people he was addressing.}

{2 Ref. Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, in which there is a peculiar fixation on "cloven hooves". Yet EVEN THIS proscription comes with a rather daffy proviso, which limits the forbidden meat exclusively to animals that have split hooves OR that chew cud. Presumably, then, the proscription did not apply to animals that satisfy both conditions. (Hence, it seems, animals WITH split hooves that do NOT chew cud are the ones to be worried about. Those with split hooves that DO chew cud are fine.) Among other things, we encounter the erroneous impression that pigs are somehow more unsanitary than bovidae. The concern seems to primarily be with cleanliness; not with the type of meat per se. It can be adduced that the focus is on a set of animals with which there had been incidents of sickness—a pattern that hews to the aforesaid conditions. Even if we were to grant this temporal concern, Yahweh's powers of discernment

were—apparently—rather stunted. So far as aerial creatures went, the restriction was—understandably—limited to scavengers like eagles, vultures, kites, falcons, and ravens (i.e. birds most likely to transmit disease). On land, the terms of the stricture explicitly applied to camels, hyrax (a kind of badger), rabbits, and swine. As far as aquatic animals went, the concern seemed to be with creatures sans fins AND sans scales (therefore, no shrimp or—well—manatee allowed). It is quite likely that in ancient times, denizens of the Levant would often fall ill after eating shell fish; hence the concern. MoM did not have any clam-bakes or lobster picnics, yet he DID eat rabbit and camel. (Hence an inconsistency.) Here’s the catch: If we are to go by 2:208, which exhorts followers to eschew Jewish mores so that camel and rabbit are made permissible, then—by the exact same token—swine is rendered on-limits as well. (!) As I point out elsewhere, those who fashioned the Sunnah were likely unfamiliar with the details of Judeo-Christian doctrine; so when they attempted to invoke it, they often botched the rationalization. The proscription against swine likely remained in tact because pork continued to pose problems in the Middle East during the Middle Ages; whereas being able to eat the meat of camels and rabbits would have come in handy. As with ALL doctrinal modifications, redaction was selective—that is: done to comport with the exigencies of the time and place. It was clearly not about hewing to timeless / immutable laws; it was about doing what made sense under the circumstances. }

{3 This misconception also exists amongst some (otherwise) educated Jews and Hindus—who sometimes countenance the same prohibition. }

{4 Due to daily pre-dawn and post-dusk binges, food consumption during Ramadan actually INCREASES amongst those who fast; even as incidence of sickness skyrockets. For more on this subject, see my essay on “Prayer”, where I discuss fasting. }

{5 A common rationalization is that neck-slitting is more “humane”; but it is rather far-fetched to suppose that animal suffering was a pressing concern for people during the Iron Age. Another query: Does the proscription against consuming “swine” (qua suidae) include ALL animals in the sub-order, “suina”? Or are other suiformes in-bounds? How about peccaries? Where is the line, exactly? If the Sunnah is supposed to apply to everyone, everywhere in the world, forevermore, then the demarcation of “khinzir” isn’t always so straight-forward. Presumably, the Creator of the Universe was well-versed in the taxonomy of the highly-variegated animal kingdom he so meticulously designed. Yet the Koran’s authors seem not to have been up to snuff on the finer points of zoology. We might also wonder: Why not a proscription against eating, say, elephants (which are even more intelligent)? Was the Koran’s protagonist only concerned with fauna found in Arabia? }

{6 It is no coincidence that child marriage is found—overwhelmingly—in hyper-provincial and/or hyper-religious communities, where education for females is not valued. Parochialism and Reactionary thinking typically go hand in hand. }

{7 Usually, he is (satirically) depicted as an old, white man with a long, white beard. Based on how bent-out-of-shape some Muslims get when MoM is drawn, we should expect them to be up in arms every time the guy-on-a-cloud-wearing-a-robe illustration occurs. Yet there has never once been a protest when such tongue-in-cheek cartoons appear. The logic, then, is inconsistent. If it is permissible to be sardonic with god yet there can be no leeway with a prophet, peculiar priorities seem to be afoot. }

{8 In spite of a Grand-Ayatollah-issued fatwa conscripting his murder (for his novel, “Satanic Verses”), Salman Rushdie has thus far managed to elude this dire fate. For his film documenting violence against women in the Muslim world, “Submission”, the Dutch filmmaker, Theo Van Gogh, was not so fortunate. }

{9 Recall that in Islam, Jesus of Nazareth is considered one of the most important prophets. He was born

of a virgin, resurrected the dead, and performed other amazing miracles. Moreover, HE—not MoM—will be the one who comes at the end of the world to render Judgement. }

{10 The three-month “idda[h]” (waiting period) for girls who had not yet menstruated (had their courses / cycles) is also well-attested in the various “tafsir” (commentaries): those of Ibn Kathir, Ibn Abas, and Al-Jalalayn—where unambiguous annotations make the lesson here glaringly explicit. The issue, of course, was divorcing a pre-pubescent girl after having had sexual intercourse with her. The point was to ensure she had not become pregnant due to having reached menarche in the intervening time—always a possibility. Here’s the catch: Had sex NOT been involved with such girls, the need for “idda[h]” would have been moot. This is spelled out in 33:49, in which the Koran’s audience (men) are notified: When you marry believing women and then divorce them before having had sex with them, no ‘iddah’ is warranted. Simply give them a gift and set them free in a pleasing manner. }

{11 In the non-Muslim world, middle-aged men copulating with pre-pubescent girls was never acceptable anywhere, at any time, outside of a few precincts of India (a point I explore further in footnote 14 below). In the Far East (notably: Mongolia and China), when children of royal blood were commissioned to (eventually) marry an appointed co-ed, it was usually with someone of similar age. Thus: In the event that betrothals were arranged for a child, it was to ANOTHER CHILD. Moreover, sex was not involved (at least, while the parties were pre-pubescent). During the Middle Ages, there were some cases where the bride was 15 or 16—as with Emilie of Saxony, Beatrice d’Este, Mary Queen of Scots, and—most famously—Marie Antoinette of France. Note that such cases are so well-known precisely because the girls’ youth was so notable. Such exceptions—being exceptional—prove the rule. One needs to go back to the ancient world to find societies in which arranged marriages occurred at an even younger age. (Such marriages primarily occurred in Jewish communities.) Again, in cases of early marriage (which was not uncommon in Ancient Greece), the bride and groom were typically of comparable maturity. And even in the most extreme cases, we find proscriptions against the marriage of pre-pubescent girls (see footnote 13 below). In Roman Catholic law, girls could not be married until they reached menarche. In Vedic law, girls could not be married until at least three years after menarche. EVEN IN PRE-ISLAMIC (pagan) BEDOUIN culture, we find this proscription. It is a myth that pedophilia was usually tolerated in the ancient world. Barring certain isolated (Hindu) communities on the Indian subcontinent, pedophilia was ALWAYS considered pedophilia; and was thus seen as unethical (see footnote 14 below). As it turns out, the stricture against this heinous act transcends culture. The taboo has existed virtually everywhere at every point in history. This makes perfect sense, as revulsion of the act is primally-hardwired into us; and for obvious reasons. It comes as no surprise, then, that the prohibition goes back THOUSANDS of years. After all, mother nature has no purpose for sexual intercourse when the female has not yet menstruated (see footnote 12 below). Alas, the Sunnah—and consequently instances of sharia—permits the marriage of pre-pubescent girls, per the example set by MoM with Aisha. This is a disgrace; and should be recognized as such by responsible Muslims. }

{12 The condition of physical maturity (“bulugh”) vs. mental maturity (“rushd”) is moot when it is specified that the girls being discussed have not yet menstruated. Clearly, due to physiological conditions, it is the former that is the pivotal factor. Precocious-ness of the child does to exculpate her rapist. It is a fiction that girls used to reach menarche significantly younger than they do now. The anatomy of homo sapiens has not changed significantly in the past millennium or two; and menarche—along with the accompanying thelarche—has never occurred sooner than 10 years old. If anything, it used to occur LATER than it does now. (In the modern area, it typically occurs between 12 and 15.) Today’s improved nutrition has enabled maturation to occur at a slightly FASTER pace; just as it has increased height and life-expectancy. Suffice to say: It was at least as physiologically improbable for an 8-year-old to menstruate in the Middle Ages as it is now—irrespective of how precocious she may have been. }

{ 13 Even in the most questionable instances (as with Theodora Komnena, Elizabeth of Portugal, Agnes of France, and Joan of France), the girls were not pre-pubescent. Note that when Caterina Sforza wed Girolamo Riario, Roman Catholic law did not allow consummation until the wife was at least 14. In all of Western history, there is only ONE known exception (with respect to age discrepancy): Isabella of Valois, who wed King Richard II of England in 1396 when she was seven. This marriage was arranged solely for political purposes. According to all accounts, the marriage was NOT CONSUMMATED. The king actually arranged for Isabella to reside at alternate locations (first Windsor castle, then castles at Portchester, Wallingford, and Leeds) for the duration of her childhood, where she was given her own court. In other words: In the single case where a full-grown Occidental ruler wed a pre-pubescent girl, it was not for sex. Indeed, measures were taken to ensure celibacy—reflecting a recognition that sexual intercourse under such circumstances would have been opprobrious. }

{ 14 Outside of Dar al-Islam, Hindu culture is the sole culture in which marriage of pre-pubescent girls has (sometimes) been seen as acceptable. As it happens, this exception ALSO seems to be based on religious precedent: Seeta (child-bride of Rama) and Rukmini (child-bride of Krishna). It is unfortunate that the “Manu Smriti” recommends arranged marriages for girls who are still within three years from menarche—mentioning girls as young as 8. Once again, we see that ancient texts are the main culprit when it comes to this execrable practice. In any case, as society has ITSELF matured, the accepted marriageable age for females has steadily increased; a historical trend that is found the world over. If we extrapolate back in time, the trend is not linear; it is asymptotic. The asymptote is located at the age of menarche. It is no secret that as any society has become more civil, the earliest normative age for a female to wed has INCREASED. We might note that it is the RECOGNITION OF morality, not morality itself, that has changed. Moral principles are timeless. In this respect, more primitive societies tended to be more morally confused. This steady increase in acceptable age actually goes in the OPPOSITE direction of the typical age of menarche, which has DECREASED as society modernized (due to a better diet and increased health). It is likely that Aisha reached menarche LATER than the average girl today. }

{ 15 How shall we account for this? Part of the explanation may have something to do with the discrepancy between the lunar and solar calendars. At the time, Hijazis would have used the former (in which “years” were eleven days shorter than a full revolution around the sun). Thus a designation of “six years” (according to the lunar calendar) translates to two months less than six (actual) years. This also accounts for claims that MoM was in his early 50’s when he wed Aisha, even though just UNDER fifty years would have elapsed since his birth c. 570. (That would have made the claims of Aisha’s age OVER-estimates as well; for the same reason.) There also seems to be a discrepancy regarding the time that elapsed from the consummation (two years after the betrothal to Aisha) to MoM’s death—when he was roughly 62 years of age—in June of 632. We are told in Islamic sources that this span was nine “years”, putting MoM at 53 years of age at the time of consummation. But that would mean the consummation occurred in 623 rather than in 621 (thus placing the betrothal c. 621 rather than c. 619). Regardless, this does not change Aisha’s age at the time of marriage (which is explicitly attested); it simply shifts the dating of her birth on history’s timeline (depending on which calendar is used). The fact that the marriage took place in the advent of Khadijah’s death indicates that it took place in Mecca (i.e. pre-Hijra); which means prior to 622. THAT might explain why MoM opted to wait two or three years after the betrothal to Aisha before engaging in sexual intercourse with her. Having sex with such a young girl in Mecca may have posed a problem with the community (given pre-Islamic Arab mores); whereas in Yathrib-cum-Medina, he could get away with the act (given the fact that he was now proclaiming what was halal vs. haraam). }

{ 16 In some nations, child marriage still takes place, but the practice is primarily limited to Muslim communities. This is the case in Niger, Chad, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania (insofar as Africa is concerned). (Note that many of these are also the

countries where slavery is still routinely practiced...again, due to sharia.) Such marriages tend to have a correlation with the incidence of human trafficking. The exception to this trend seems to be the Central African Republic, where both FGM and child marriage are prevalent, yet have little connection with Islam. In that case, the primary factor seems to be human trafficking (on secular terms). Predictably, sex with pre-pubescent girls is commonplace WHEREVER rampant sex-trafficking occurs—be it sub-Saharan Africa, India, or Thailand.}

{17 Note that Manaf’s son, Hashim, is the patriarch of the Dar al-Hashim, namesake of the Hashemites—who preceded the House of Saud as rulers of Arabia (and who currently rule Jordan). Ironically, though Sunni, Hashimites are part of the Dhawu Awn, which shares ancestry with the second Shia “imam”, Hassan (son of Ali ibn Abi Talib).}

{18 In Al-Tabari’s “History”, we find the admission that there was no consensus as to what might have happened prior to Adnan: “The genealogists do not differ concerning the descent of [MoM] as far as Ma’ad ibn Adnan.” Beyond that, there seems to have been no working hypothesis. During my research, I have encountered attempts to fill in the 16-plus century-long gap (assuming Abraham lived in the 18th century B.C.) between Ishmael and Adnan; by proffering forty generations of confabulated names. This assumes the average siring age would have been at least forty. (40 x 40 = 1,600.) Such a chart can be found on the “Family Tree Of Mohammed” Wikipedia page. The glitch in this chart, though, is that Elijah (as Alyasa or Ilyas) is designated as the great-great-grandson of Aaron (Harun), who was the brother of Moses (Musa), who was—in turn—a great-grandson of Levi, one of Jacob’s sons (and thus a Levite). Jacob was born of Isaac, not Ishmael. Therefore Elijah is taken out of the Ishmaelite lineage in this account. In any case, Qedar’s son is designated as Aram in this hypothetical genealogy. Hence the Arameans are supposed to serve as the vessels of the Ishmaelite line. This hypothesis is interesting in that the Arameans (putative source of Aramaic) would have spoken SYRIAC by Late Antiquity...which means that those who countenance to this hypothetical lineage are (inadvertently) conceding that the Ishmaelite legacy came through a Syriac-speaking people (see my essay, “The Syriac Origins Of Koranic Text”).}

{19 There is, of course, a simple explanation for this omission. 3:83-84 doesn’t mention Kedar because neither MoM nor the authors of the Koran were aware of such a figure. In other words, Kedar was a post-hoc fabrication. To wit: Mohammedan lore contrived the hallowed Ishmaelite genealogy long after the fact. MoM and his Bedouin contemporaries were only aware of the Abrahamic lore that circulated in Arabia from Syriac sources (see my essay, “Syriac Source-Material For Islam’s Holy Book”). This is yet another illustration of the fact that the content of the Koran (and of the earliest Mohammedan lore generally) reflects the limited information (and erroneous impressions) about Abrahamic lore that happened to be circulating in the Hijaz during the Dark Ages. As pointed out elsewhere, many of the most glaring misconceptions about Abrahamic lore are simply regurgitations of the misconceptions found in Syriac material (e.g. the talking baby Jesus). This makes perfect sense, as the Syriac “Peshitta” was the primary Biblical source available to Hijazis—who SPOKE Syriac—at that time.}

{20 The 2nd-century “Book of Jubilees” (a.k.a. “Lepto-Genesis”) was the most prominent attempt to remedy this sexual conundrum—conjuring a female named “Azura” [meaning “restraint”] for Seth, who was both his sister and mate. For Cain, we are given “Awan” [alt. “Aven”; meaning “vice”], who was both his sister and mate. (Other sources posit “Aklima” / “Kalmana”.) This was followed by a roster of female mates—furnished ex nihilo—for the antediluvian patriarchs: “Noam” for Enos[h], “Mualaleth” for Kenan, “Dinah” for Mahalaleel, “Baraka” for Jared, “Edna” for Enoch AND for Methuselah (père et fils), as well as “Betenos” for Lamech. (That is: Lamech from Seth’s line; as opposed to the Lamech from Cain’s line, who mated with “Adah” and “Zillah”.) Mercifully, in this scheme, Noah is given a maiden named “Emzara” with whom to sire offspring (instead of his half-sister, “Naamah”). In Gnosticism, Adam and Eve produce a daughter, “Norea”, who is the sister and wife of Seth. She is also sometimes rendered the

wife of Noah. Elsewhere, Seth is given a mate named “Horiaia”. We see, then, that the primary role for women in the Torah was to serve as vessels for bearing progeny. So far as Islamic etiology is concerned, the dogma that all mankind came from a single person (Adam) is explicated in 6:98, 7:189, and 39:6. Meanwhile, various passages (e.g. 17:70) refer to mankind as “the children of Adam”. Also note that some legends posit a FIRST wife of Adam (prior to Eve): “Lilith”—as conveyed in the “Othijoth” [“Alphabet”] of Ben Sira[ch]. Lilith’s crime: She wanted to be equal to Adam—an impertinence that got her banished. She was then demonized, and portrayed as the Judaic equivalent of a Succubus.}

{21 This is all quite dubious anyway. According to Hebrew lore, ONE Lamech was the father of Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-cain, and Naamah (Noah’s mate). He was son of Methus[h]ael, son of Mehujael, son of Irad, son of Enoch, who was the son of Cain (via his own sister, Awan). That makes him SIX generations from Adam and Eve. However, there was ANOTHER Lamech (the one who sired Noah). He was the son of Methuselah (via Edna), who was son of (a different) Enoch (also via Edna), son of Jared, son of Mahalalel, son of Kenan, son of Enos[h], who was the son of Seth (via his own sister, Azura). That makes him EIGHT generations from Adam and Eve. This all only works if Seth was the third brother of Adam and Eve. (We must also assume that Adam and Eve bore two daughters, Awan and Azura, to mate with their two surviving sons.) Leaving incest aside, we are still left with a shortage of female mates in subsequent generations.}

{22 There is no Islamic attempt to trace Abraham’s progeny to the time of Exodus (since, after all, Moses was Hebrew); and the Ishmaelite lineage had no prominent representatives (i.e. candidates) in the traditional historical record. However, the Judaic attempt is rather amusing. In brief: Via Sarah, Abraham begat Isaac, who (via Rebekah) begat Jacob—who was the father of the 12+1 tribes of Israel (see footnote 26 below). Via Leah, Jacob begat Judah and Levi (see footnote 27 below). Via Milkah, Levi sired Kohath (son) and Jochebed (daughter). Kohath’s son (Amram; “Imran” in the Koran) mated with his own aunt (Jochebed) to produce Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. Positioning Abraham only five (or six) generations prior to Moses (who himself lived in the late 13th century B.C.) would place Abraham c. 1400 B.C.; thereby placing Adam and Eve c. 2,000 B.C...if, that is, we assume the aforesaid 19-generation interim between the exile from Eden and the fall of Sodom & Gomorrah (see footnote 28 below). Meanwhile, Judah sired Perez, who sired Hezron, who sired Ram, who sired Amminadab, who sired Nahshon, who sired Salmon, who sired Boaz, who sired Obed, who sired King David’s father, Jesse. Thus: David is 13 generations from Abraham (almost 4 centuries later; putting him appropriately at c. 1,000 B.C.) There is nothing novel about concocting “just so” taxonomies by divvying up mankind into (contrived) tribes...which are often based on fictional characters. Mormons believe in patriarchs like Lehi, Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, Amnor, and Mormon himself...as well as Nephi, Mulek, Laman, and Shule. (Hence they posit tribes like the Nephites, Mulekites, Lamanites, and Jaredites.) It’s all bullshit; but it is GILDED bullshit. More to the point, it is bullshit that serves a purpose.}

{23 This is roughly in keeping with the ancient Hebrew calendar, which places the beginning of mankind at 3,760 B.C. The earliest patriarchs were believed to have often sired offspring when they were over a hundred years old, thereby stretching out the duration of generations. Since the Creation of Man is equated with the Creation of the world, the epoch is referred to as “Anno Mundi”.}

{24 Getting from Abraham to David is also rather amusing. According to Judaic tradition: Via Rebekah, Isaac begat Jacob. Via Leah, Jacob begat Judah (their fourth son; after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi). Via Tamar, Judah begat Perez...who begat Hezron who begat Ram (a.k.a. “Aram”) who begat Amminadab who begat Na[h]shon. Na[h]shon was a contemporary of Moses and is said to have been involved in the fabled Hebrew Exodus from Egypt (leading the crossing of the waters). That brings the line up to the late 13th century B.C...which puts Abraham just SEVEN generations (i.e. roughly two centuries) before Moses. In other words: just prior to 1400 B.C. Insofar as we assume Moses really existed, he lived in the

late 13th century. So that still leaves almost TWO CENTURIES to account for (in order to traverse the remaining time required to arrive at King David, who was born in the late 11th century B.C.) Judaic tradition lists only five more generations to span that period. Nahshon's son, Salmon, begat Boaz of Bethlehem (via a prostitute, designated as Rahab of Jericho). Via Ruth, Boaz begat Obed, who begat David's father, Yishai (a.k.a. "Jesse"). This is why David is sometimes referred to as Ben Yishai.}

{25 Note, for instance, the mythical Roman lineage of Trojan hero, Aeneas (purported son of Venus & Anchises), who begat King Ascanius of Alba Longa, who begat Silvius, etc. I present a case-study of such confabulation / obfuscation in my essay: "The Forgotten Diaspora", wherein the Turkic ancestry of Ashkenazim is adamantly denied by Revisionist Zionists, who stake their claim on the Levant based on Semitic bloodlines.}

{26 On the Hebrew calendar, Joseph was purchased (in Egypt) in the year 2216 (1544 B.C.) The demarcation of tribes based on Abrahamic progeny via the seed of Joseph (great-grandson of Abraham) in Judaic lore was nothing new. Indeed, it echoes the Greeks' demarcation of tribes based on the sons of Hellen (grandson of Prometheus): Aeolians as the descendants of Aeolus, Dorians as the descendants of Dorus, then the Achaeans and Ionians as the descendants of Xuthus' sons: Achaeus and Ion. The conventional tabulation of twelve tribes of "Israel" is based on a discrepancy, whereby the 12+1 tribes is truncated via legerdemain. I explore this topic during the discussion of genealogical machinations in my essay: "Genesis Of A People".}

{27 Levi was the salient son, as his progeny would be the high priests: the so-called "kohen-im". However, there was a "catch" when it came to Jacob's progeny. He had FOUR mates: Zilpah (with whom he sired Gad and Asher), Leah (with whom he sired not only Levi, but also Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun), Rachel (with whom he sired Joseph and Benjamin), and Laban's handmaiden, Bilhah (with whom he sired Dan and Naphtali); see footnote 29 below. All that accounts for the fabled tribes (see footnote 26 above). Later: Ephraim and Manasseh would be the sons of Joseph (via Asenath of Heliopolis). Joseph is one of the most fabled characters in the Torah, due to his banishment to Egypt and eventual redemption. According to the Hebrew calendar, Joseph was purchased in Egypt in the year 2216 (that is: in 1544 B.C.) Also note: Israelite leader, Joshua [Hoshe'a ben Nun; cum "Yehoshua"] was a descendent of Ephraim.}

{28 This motif (positing an ancestral patriarch for each tribe) is not uncommon. In a few cases, matriarchal lineage has taken precedence. For example, Kikuyu (Bantu / Kenyan) folklore tells of the prehistoric couple, Gikuyu and Mumbi, who bore nine daughters—each of whom begat one of the nine Kikuyu tribes. Matrilineal-ity, it turns out, is most common in NON-Abrahamic traditions—as with, say, the Nubians of north Africa and the Carolinians of Austronesia. Swahili lore also tells of the original "Thenashara Taifa" [Twelve Tribes / Nations]... the patriarch of which is a figure named "Mwana Mkisi", deemed the personification of "ukisi" [Bantu: "that which is holy"].}

{29 Even the emergence of these tribes was the result of morally-dubious acts—as well as subterfuge. As mentioned, Abraham sired Isaac via his half-sister, Sarah. Isaac was thus the product of incest (Genesis 20:12). Isaac—in turn—sired the twins, Jacob and Esau, via an Aramaean woman: Rebekah. There was much "palace intrigue" (sans palace) surrounding Jacob's liaisons. Never mind that Jacob betrayed his brother, Esau, for Isaac's blessing; thereby securing the mantle of anointed patriarch via deception. There were plenty of shenanigans to go around. Laban covertly transplanted Jacob's favored bride, Rachel, with his other daughter, Leah. As mentioned, Jacob ended up siring seven children via Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and (the sole daughter) Dinah. Jacob's beloved, Rachel, then offered her slave-girl, Bilhah, to Jacob (which yielded Dan and Naphtali). In reprisal, Leah offered her slave-girl, Zilpah (which yielded Gad and Asher). Finally, Jacob sired Joseph and Benjamin via Rachel (with the help

of magical incantations). ALL of this is supposed to be lauded—as if each tryst was the reflection of Providence. That women were being used as bartering chips in each round of bloodline sweepstakes goes un-noticed (see footnote 30 below).}

{30 The notion that the primary role of women is to serve as vessels for producing offspring (to carry on a patriarchal lineage) is—to put it mildly—problematic. Alas, it was presumed that a female’s *raison d’être* was to bear sons—a presupposition which suggests that a woman’s life is defined by how well she fulfills her role (as a vessel for more men). A woman’s procreative charge entails that her life be devoted to pandering to male counterparts. We might bear in mind that this deranged mindset did not end in the ancient world—as King Henry VIII so famously reminded us. The psychopathic English king’s fancy for Ann Boleyn was promptly transmogrified into seething disdain as soon as it became clear she would default on her appointed function: furnishing him with a male heir.}

{31 Swine, it turns out, were negatively stigmatized for reasons other than the nature of their meat. They were seen as INHERENTLY unclean—an impression that is demonstrable false. (Pigs are actually much cleaner than some of the animals considered “halal” in Islam.) It seems that the authors of the Koran deemed swine SPIRITUALLY impure. This is made clear by the use of swine as a pejorative for non-Muslims—as in 5:60. (2:65 and 7:166 use apes as a pejorative.) To call “kuffar” (non-Muslims) SWINE was to point out their inferior nature. This had nothing to do with dietary practices. Yet if certain animals were seen as cosmically tainted, it made sense to not eat them.}

{32 Within Beth Israel, there even exists a chimerical bloodline that Orthodox Jews hold to be the most exalted: the one (purportedly) proceeding from Moses’ brother, Aaron. This vaunted patriarchal lineage is referred to as the “kohen-im” [“priests”]. For other expositions on chimerical Judaic genealogies, see the “Seder Olam Rabbah” from the 2nd century A.D. and the “Seder Olam Zutta” from 804 A.D.}