

## **Day 2: The Solar Era and the Separation from Nature 2500 BC to 2000 AD**

During this phase:

The image of Deity changes from Great Mother into the Great Father

Divine Immanence is lost.

Earth becomes a place of punishment for primordial sin

Man is no longer part of the Divine Order

Belief in the presence of spirits within nature and in the archetypal powers of the invisible world — the goddesses and gods that are intrinsic to Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman civilisations begins to fade.

The focus of this era is on the Sun and the solar hero: the warrior who triumphs in battle. The more people are slaughtered by him, the greater his renown.

During the solar era in contrast to the preceding lunar one, the Masculine Archetype assumes a position of dominance in relation to the Feminine one: Nature, Woman and Body are downgraded in relation to Spirit, Man and Mind. Women are seen as chattels, of use only for the purpose of reproduction and the gratification of man's sexual needs.

The solar era saw the emergence and separation of the conscious ego from the matrix of instinct. This is the greatest evolutionary achievement of the whole solar era. But the development of the ego and the conscious mind gradually opened a chasm between spirit – associated with mind — and nature, associated with body. This whole process was closely tied in to the invention of writing and the power that literacy gave to a tiny elite group of educated and very powerful males. Gradually the mind assumes a position of dominance over the body and man assumes a position of dominance over nature and woman. This whole four-thousand-year-long process was, I think, unconscious.

As Richard Tarnas writes in his epilogue to *The Passion of the Western Man*, “the evolution of the Western mind has been driven by a heroic impulse to forge an autonomous rational human self by separating it from the primordial unity with nature. The fundamental religious, scientific, and philosophical perspectives of Western culture have all been affected by this masculinity. But to do this, the masculine mind had to repress the feminine. The evolution of the Western mind has been founded on the repression of the feminine - on the repression of the *participation mystique* with nature: a progressive denial of the *anima mundi*, of the soul of the world, of the community of being...of all that the masculine has projectively identified as “other.”

### **Ziggurat of Ur**

Socially and politically, this was a time of tumultuous change: new tribes worshipping sky gods invaded the thriving river valleys that had for millennia

worshipped the Great Mother and then many goddesses and gods, as in Sumer and Egypt. It is possible that climate played a role in the migration of tribes into lands that offered them the prospect of food. Vast numbers of former agriculturally based people moved to walled towns that grew rapidly into large cities. With the rise of literacy in the priestly class, powerful bureaucracies emerged to govern these cities and, later, empires. Colossal temples were built like the ziggurat of Ur and Karnac in Egypt. Kings appeared whose ambition, like Sargon of Akkad was to rule vast empires. Discoveries in astronomy, mathematics, engineering and an incredible creative outpouring into temples, palaces and works of art of all kinds was promoted by the immense wealth of the rulers of these empires. But these empires were built on the sacrifice of the lives of hundreds of thousands of young men who had to face the terror of death by the sword, as described in the Iliad.

I've just finished reading a book called *The Mighty Dead: Why Homer Matters* which explains how the warriors described in the Iliad came, not from Greece, but from the steppe-lands between the Black and Caspian Seas, probably as early as 1700 BC. They descended on the far older cultures of the Mediterranean like wolves on a sheepfold, slaughtering, burning, raping as they went. It is a horrific story. This is the historical background to the change in mythology and the relationship between the masculine and feminine archetypes.

### **Diagram of the Lunar and Solar eras**

During the solar era, the developing ego came to look upon the Cosmos, Deity and the world of Nature as something separate and different from itself, something it could observe but no longer feel part of. This has led after some 4,000 years to the current scientific belief that we live in a dead universe, without purpose or meaning; that consciousness is the creation of the physical brain and that God doesn't exist. Duality and polarisation are emphasised. At the same time, the individual begins to emerge from the collective. We can see this in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the two primary texts of this solar era. Achilles and Odysseus are solar heroes.

### **Diagram of Psyche**

I've drawn this diagram to show how the emerging ego and the conscious mind rest on top of the immensely older matrix of instinct and the primordial soul that Jung called the Collective Unconscious. In the older section are the age-old instinctual habits of the human species and, older than these, the habits of the animal and reptilian species. Memories held in the older brain system – the reptilian and the mammalian or limbic brain interact with and influence more recent memories. (p. 196 of my book)

### **The psyche is in conflict**

because spirit and nature, the conscious ego and the matrix of instinct are drawing apart.

This inner conflict is projected into the world.

War becomes endemic, promoted by warrior leaders intent on power and conquest.

Rise of great empires from 2300 BC and of the solar hero: the warrior who triumphs in battle.

This era saw the Rise of the Patriarchal Religions

Awareness of the spirits and the archetypal powers of the invisible world (goddesses and gods) begins to fade.

One of the most problematic legacies of the solar era is the monotheistic image of Deity shared by the three Abrahamic religions — a paternal image of an all-powerful male, descendent of the earlier sky gods, that portrays God as transcendent to and separate from creation, not immanent within the forms of life as in the earlier cultures of the Great Mother. This God has no consort. The Great Mother is effectively eliminated. The effect of this was to split nature from spirit. It effectively desacralized the natural world and opened the way to its exploitation. It led to the fear and repression of the Feminine and prevented the emergence of a balanced culture which gave equal value to each archetypal principle. The still fragile ego “grew up” in the shadow of an image of deity that was utterly different from that of the earlier lunar phase where the image of the Great Mother embraced the cosmos, nature and all life on earth. The shock to the psyche was immense and it has never recovered from it. It can be compared to the trauma suffered by a child who has lost or been abandoned by its mother.

### **The Primary Myth of the Solar Era**

is the Battle between Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, symbolised by the hero's fight with the dragon. This powerful mythology led ultimately to the battle to conquer and subdue Nature in the service of Man.

The solar era is absolutely dominated by this myth.

Whereas the focus of lunar culture was on the alignment of the human community with the rhythm of the earth's cycles and vast living body of the cosmos, the focus of solar culture is on the conquest and mastery of a desacralized and increasingly inanimate nature. The desire to conquer, whether nature, territory or tribal enemies becomes the theme of this era and is with us still today.

The myth reflects the conflict within the psyche because spirit and nature, conscious mind and instinctive soul, are becoming increasingly dissociated. The inner dissociation is projected onto the idea of a cosmic battle between the forces of Light and Darkness or a battle against external enemies in the world. In the sphere of religion, it is later directed against heresy and apostasy.

## **Gilgamesh**

The theme of the heroic individual and the quest for a treasure begins with the Epic of Gilgamesh, thought to date to around 2300 BC. This epic carries the idea that something precious has been lost, as indeed it was. The emphasis of myth is now on the heroic individual and his exploits. This famous epic contains not only the earliest account of the Great Flood but also the first story of the quest for a treasure – in this case the Herb of Immortality. Gilgamesh with his beloved companion Enkidu, set out to kill Humbaba, the giant guardian of the great cedar forest that was sacred to the Goddess Ishtar. They have disobeyed the express command of the gods not to kill Humbaba. Enkidu dies shortly afterwards and Gilgamesh, heartbroken at the loss of his friend, sets out on a quest to find the Herb of Immortality. “Because of my brother, I am afraid of death.” After many adventures, he finds the Herb but on his way back to his city, while resting on the edge of a fountain, he loses it to a snake who seizes it and disappears beneath the water. Even now, as we read the story, we can feel the intensity of his grief. “Was it for this I have wrung out my heart’s blood? For myself I have gained nothing; not I, but the beast of the earth has joy of it now. I found a sign and now I have lost it.”

## **Marduk and Tiamat**

But there is another myth, this time a Babylonian Creation myth, dating to around 1700 BC, that encapsulates the oppositional mythology of the whole solar era. It tells the story of a ferocious battle between the god Marduk and the great dragon-mother goddess Tiamat. Marduk was a Babylonian god who murdered the mother goddess by sending arrows into her belly and cutting her body in half to make heaven of one half and earth of the other. Humanity was made from the blood of Tiamat’s murdered son. The mythic model of the goddess culture was one of relationship between every aspect of creation but from now on the mythic model of solar cultures ruled by a male deity is one of mastery, conquest and control. This myth had a huge influence over the entire Middle East and Mediterranean world, establishing Marduk, the brutal macho warrior-god as a model for males to emulate. Jules and I wrote extensively in the Myth of the Goddess about the negative influence of this myth on later cultures.

## **Perseus killing the Gorgon:**

The Babylonian myth and the earlier Sumerian one of Gilgamesh killing Humbaba were reflected in the later Greek ones like the story of Perseus killing the Gorgon. There is ever-increasing polarisation reflected in mythology as the conscious ego grows in self-awareness and struggles to draw away from the matrix of nature and instinct, fearful of falling back into it. The Greek heroes and gods are shown overcoming monsters as shown here. All these myths gave men an image to copy. All suggest that men had to overcome the fear of dying in battle and the power of the instinct to paralyse with terror as in the story of Perseus and the Gorgon.

Millions of young men had to face this terror as they went into battle, as they still do today.

### **Theseus killing the Minotaur**

The myth of Theseus killing the Minotaur is perhaps the most dramatic and memorable of all the Greek myths. Daedalus, the master engineer and mason of the island of Crete had built a labyrinth to house the fearsome Minotaur. Theseus was one of a group of seven youths and seven maidens who were to be offered as sacrifice to this terrifying monster who was half bull and half man. This suggests that Crete at this time was a lunar culture because 7 was the number associated with the Great Mother. This story may carry ancient sacrificial rituals associated with the earth's regeneration. Ariadne, daughter of the king of Crete fell in love with Theseus and begged Daedalus to give her something that could bring him safely out of the labyrinth. He gave her a ball of twine and with this he was able to find his way back to the entrance after killing the Minotaur. I will return to this myth tomorrow because it is the origin of the labyrinth of Chartres.

### **Achilles vase**

The solar era is an era of great battles, the conquest of territory and the forging of enormous empires with all the suffering, death and heroism that these entailed. It is also the age of the glorification of the warrior and the warrior-leader or king. The warrior becomes identified with the archetype of the solar hero and we can listen to this mythology played out in the story of the Trojan War in the *Iliad* and in this image of Achilles, the great hero of the Greeks, killing Hector, the son of the King of Troy. One of the most poignant aspects of the story of Achilles is his undying love for his friend Patroclus and the terrible vengeance he took on Hector because he had killed Patroclus, mistaking him for Achilles because he was wearing his armour. The myth of the solar hero gave the warrior leader a god-like power and numinosity. Alexander the Great is the prime example of the solar hero of this whole era. Solar mythology is later incorporated into religions and into the battle for supremacy between Christianity and Islam.

### **Hercules subduing the Bull of Crete**

Here is an image of Hercules subduing the Bull of Crete. The emphasis of this era is on the heroic struggle of man against the power of nature carried in the image of the bull, dragon or monster. In relation to the psyche, the emphasis was on the hero – the ego – standing against the power of the instinct and the fear of slipping back into the matrix of nature which was seen as a devouring monster. This long struggle for consciousness against the overwhelming power of fear and superstition eventually gave us the power to make astonishing discoveries that would enable us to explore wider horizons and lead eventually to Copernicus, Galileo and Hubble. But it also encouraged us to regard nature as an enemy to be overcome.

## **Perseus and Andromeda**

When drought or some evil befell the community, symbolized in mythology by a dragon ravaging the land, a virgin was sacrificed to appease the gods.

Iphegenia was sacrificed to the goddess Artemis by her father Agamemnon in order for the Greek fleet to be given a fair wind for Troy. This may go back to rituals of sacrifice of the lunar era when something or someone was sacrificed in order to bring back the crescent moon or to ward off some catastrophe such as famine or disease befalling the community.

## **The Phase of Separation and The Myth of the Fall**

Now I would like to look more closely at certain features of the Myth of the Fall because it has had such a profound effect on Western civilisation. The Phase of Separation is most clearly reflected in this myth and in my view, it contributed hugely to the loss of the older lunar experience. [In this myth Earth becomes a place of exile and punishment for primordial sin. Man is given dominion over the Earth but he is no longer part of the divine order. He lives in a world contaminated by the Fall, subject to sin, suffering and death.] (end of quote)

There is a clear separation between the transcendent punishing God and fallen, sinful man. The myth originates in the Old Testament but it became the cornerstone of Christian doctrine and was also known to Islam.

## **Jewish and Greek views of Women**

During the solar era misogyny infiltrates the patriarchal religions, derived from the Jewish as well as the Greek and Roman view of woman.

The *Jewish* view of Woman entered Christianity through certain passages in the Old Testament and the preaching of St. Paul

The *Greek* View of human nature also entered into Christianity:

A *Male* part that was rational, virile, masterful and noble

A *Female* part that was irrational, sexual, animal and treacherous – making woman a sexual temptation and a danger to man. Woman was “the beautiful-evil thing” (kalon kakon) whereas man was beautiful in mind and appearance.

The *Christian* view of woman was deeply influenced by the Jewish and Greek views. The Myth of the Fall led to the unfortunate conclusion that woman was governed by her “lower” female nature and had to be controlled by the rational superior male.

In the Greek philosophers we find the idea that woman is a secondary or inferior creation. Because of her “animal” nature, woman is described as a danger and a threat to man. But the most important myth where this view of woman was enshrined was the Myth of the Fall in the book of Genesis. The conviction of woman’s guilt and even her identification with evil entered Christianity through the teaching of St. Paul and the early Christian Fathers who were absolutely

obsessed with the guilt they believed had been laid on man's shoulders through Adam and Eve's disobeying God's command not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

### **The Effects of the Polarising Mythology of the solar era**

The Feminine Archetype associated with Nature, Soul, Body and Matter is split off from Spirit

thinking is dissociated from feeling; mind from soul  
Nature and the Earth are no longer sacred  
Nature is effectively de-souled

Man is identified with Spirit  
Woman is identified with Nature

Woman becomes subject to Man, giving rise to the misogyny that contaminated all the patriarchal religions and still afflicts them today

Body is split off from Mind  
sexual intercourse is viewed as transmitting the sin of the Fall

Can you see how the older lunar experience of life was effectively stifled or covered over by this new mythology?

### **Cranach - The Garden of Eden**

This painting by Cranach gives the whole story of the creation of Adam and Eve, the stern warning from God, the taking of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge and the angel chasing the hapless couple out of the Garden. It really is a most graphic portrayal of the original lunar state of consciousness where we lived more instinctively and closer to nature and the change of consciousness that came with having to leave the relatively unconscious state of the Garden of Eden.

### **Cranach – Adam and Eve and animals**

I can't resist showing you this beautiful painting also by Cranach of the relationship between Adam and Eve and the animals before the Fall.

### **The Expulsion (Bosch)**

The Myth of the Fall of Man is the most dramatic and influential myth of the solar phase of Separation. If we look at it from the perspective of the evolution of consciousness, the whole myth, telling the story of Eve's temptation by the serpent, the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, can be read as a metaphor that describes the birth of self-awareness and our separation from the matrix of nature—the Garden of Eden out of which we have evolved. This separation aroused a profound sense of guilt, fear and grief

because we lost the original sense of participation in a primordial and sacred unity without understanding what had happened or why it had happened. We lost the *feeling of connection* between ourselves and an invisible ground of spirit active and present within the visible world. And we lost the sense of kinship with all creation. There is no more striking image of this sense of exile and loss than our expulsion from the Garden of Eden with an angel with a flaming sword barring our re-entry.

Unfortunately, even tragically, the myth was taken **literally as divine revelation** and the Christian psyche was imprinted with the belief that human nature was fallen, mired in sin, punished by God and condemned to exile and suffering on earth. Christians have been taught and have believed that their only chance of redemption was the doctrines and rituals of the Church and the saving grace of the sacrificial death of the Son of God. There was no salvation for those who were not Christians. This placed the emphasis on the need to believe and belong to the Church rather than on connecting with the divine ground.

The myth perfectly illustrates the change of state from lunar to solar culture, from unconscious participatory unity to separation, guilt, estrangement and exile. As a myth, it movingly describes our sense of isolation, exile and abandonment as we lost touch with the older way of experiencing life and embarked on a new phase in the evolution of consciousness. It is no wonder that fear and guilt are the underlying emotions of this whole era; fear of God; fear of divine punishment; fear of doing wrong, guilt for any sexual aberration.

### **St. Augustine**

The Myth of the Fall was given disastrous new importance by St. Augustine and his doctrine of Original Sin which became incorporated into Church Law in AD 418. Through this doctrine, the love of God and obedience to Him were placed in opposition to the instincts of the body. Chastity and sexual abstinence were believed to restore the lost sense of unity and bring one closer to God. “Truly,” he said, “by continence are we bound together and brought back into that unity from which we were dissipated into a plurality.” This idea was the origin of the belief that priests should be celibate and that virginity was a superior spiritual state.

Original sin was transmitted like an incurable disease through the sexual act. Adam’s sin had corrupted the whole of nature and made it subject to death but the entire sorry story was initiated by Eve. In *The City of God*, St. Augustine wrote that from the moment of the Fall, “The flesh began to lust against the spirit. With this rebellion we are born, just as we are doomed to die and because of the first sin, to bear, in our members and vitiated nature, either the battle with or the defeat by the flesh.” This is polarising solar mythology at its most extreme. He also said that woman’s face reminded him of Eve.

St. Augustine's moving *Confessions*, begun around the year 400 AD when he was forty-six, are saturated with a profound rejection and distrust of his body. In psychological terms, the will of his conscious mind — dedicated to God — was forcibly imposed on his instincts, with disastrous consequences for himself as well as for generations of Christians. It is not difficult to imagine the effect of this Christian belief on the sexual relations between men and women. Even a man's embrace of his wife was deemed to be adulterous. Nor is it difficult to understand that it was Augustine's crucifixion of his own sexual instinct and his passionate nature which gave rise to his distorted view of human nature and his explanation of the origin of evil. (put away mistress of 16 years, death of son he had with her shortly afterwards)

### **Crucifixion**

From the time of St. Augustine, the Myth of the Fall became the foundation stone of Christian teaching and was declared to be the primary reason why we needed a Redeemer, whose sacrificial death would free us from the power of death. Nowhere in the Myth of the Fall do we find the celebration of the sacred nature of sexual love, nor the recognition of nature as a Sacred Order of reality. On the contrary, expulsion from the Garden of Eden and the suffering of both man and woman in this world were presented as a divinely imposed punishment for the role of our primal ancestors in initiating the Fall. And the image of God as a deity willing to sacrifice His only Son for the redemption of humanity entered into theological history. We can listen to the words of St. Anselm in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. "A man appended to a cross suspends the eternal death impending over the human race."

### **God creating Adam**

There are four major beliefs originating with the Book of Genesis that have had enormous influence on Western civilisation. The first belief was that God created Adam first as in this beautiful tapestry from Florence.

### **God creating Eve (Urbino)**

The second was the belief that Eve was created second, from Adam's rib. This sculpture from the Duomo at Urbino is one of the most beautiful ones I have ever seen. It shows God drawing Eve out of Adam's body. Unfortunately the implication of this was that Eve was a secondary creation and an inferior one because she was created from Adam's rib. There are endless Christian commentaries on this aspect of the myth.

### **God Creating Eve (tapestry)**

Here is another image of the creation of Eve

### **Adam Blaming Eve**

The third belief was that by listening to the Serpent and taking the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, Eve initiated the Fall of Man and brought sin, suffering

and death into the world. A text in the Old Testament says, “From woman came the first sin and because of her we all die.” This was the origin of the heavy burden women have had to carry in patriarchal culture.

In Genesis 3, God says to Eve. “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.” And God says to Adam, “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. (Gen: 3: 16 –17). For nearly two thousand years, countless millions have assimilated the message of this cruel, rejecting and punishing image of God and carried the heavy burden of original sin. And they have assimilated the message that everything is woman’s fault. Over the centuries of the Christian era, woman was made to pay heavily for that fault.

There are some two billion Christians in the world today — nearly a third of the world’s population — who will still absorb the idea that a woman was responsible for bringing death, sin and suffering into the world and that, because of her primordial sin, humanity carries the bitter legacy of the Fall. These two beliefs, so entwined with each other, have deeply wounded the Christian soul. They have wounded woman as well as man’s image of woman and his image of his anima or the feminine aspect of his own nature. They have given us a very negative image of life, as well as of woman and sexuality. If women want to know the origin of a critical internal voice I think it may be here, in this myth.

The belief system engendered by the Christian interpretation given to the Myth of the Fall justified every kind of persecution of woman, from denying her the right to any property and making her subject to her husband, to the witch trials of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries in which hundreds of thousands of women were tortured in order to prove they had had sexual relations with the Devil and died horrifically at the stake. “Never” writes Gregory Zilboorg in his *History of Medical Psychology*, “in the history of humanity was woman more systematically degraded. She paid for the fall of Eve sevenfold, and the Law bore a countenance of pride and self-satisfaction, and the delusional certainty that the will of the Lord had been done.” We can perhaps compare this delusion with the current belief of hard-line Muslims that a woman should die if she betrays the family honour or if she is an apostate.

### **God giving Adam dominion over the Animals of the Earth**

The fourth belief was that God gave Adam dominion over the animals. This has ultimately gave rise to the idea – so much a part of our culture today - that we can control and exploit the resources of the Earth to satisfy the needs of our species alone.

### **Memling ‘Eve’**

The title that Adam gives to Eve in this myth – “Mother of All Living” – is actually the former title of the Great Mother, a title that was also held by the Shekinah in Kabbalah. The Genesis myth takes the life-affirming images of the Garden, the Tree of Life and the Serpent, all inseparable from the goddess in the mythology of the earlier era, and weaves them into a story about disobedience, fear, guilt, punishment and blame. The Great Mother who once contained both the living and the dead within her being now, astonishingly, as Eve, becomes the cause of death coming into the world.

### **Adam and Eve with genitals covered**

Whatever its origins and the reasons for its appearance, what we are listening to as we decode the imagery, is a complete reversal of the lunar mythology of the Goddess culture. We need look no further than this myth and the interpretation given to it by generations of theologians, priests and rabbis, not only for the ideas which led to the loss of the wholeness of life but also, as I hope to show, for the misogyny which spread like a contagious virus through the three patriarchal religions.

From a Jungian perspective, the phobic fear of woman during the solar age reflects the fear of the evolving organ of consciousness – the ego – being swallowed up by the primordial undifferentiated unity, the maw or womb of Nature that was identified unconsciously with woman. For men who are deeply insecure in their masculinity, whose internal image of woman is undeveloped because woman has never been valued for herself, but only for what service she can render to man, an independent and educated woman will present a threat—unconsciously, the threat of castration and death. The fact that this fear is not outgrown is evidenced by the appalling rapes and murders of women we have recently become aware in India and Pakistan, among other countries, as well as the very nasty attacks on women on Facebook and Twitter whenever they stick their head above the parapet.

### **Hugo van der Goes**

The literal interpretation of the myth bequeathed to generations of Christians a legacy of sexual guilt, misogyny and fear of the instincts. The more I read the documents of the Catholic and Protestant churches which reflected this literal interpretation, the more I could see the immense harm that was done to the relationship between men and women in Western civilisation.

This myth was a major cause of a profoundly negative view of life and with it, a rejection of the world and a widening of the solar split between spirit and nature, mind and body as well as between men and women. Its influence has ultimately contributed to our growing dissociation from nature and our ruthless exploitation of the earth's resources. Since, in this myth, the earth was designated a place of exile, punishment and suffering why should we respect it? Since we had been banished to this place of suffering, toil and death it was perhaps understandable

that we should feel justified in exploiting it for our own benefit and that we should seek to offload our own sense of guilt and alienation by punishing or blaming others.

I think that the greatest sickness in Christian culture has been the fear of sexuality, the repression of the instinctive delight in life, and the oppression and enforced subservience of woman. The primary mistake in Christian teaching was to split matter from spirit and body from soul. The second was the belief that in order to cultivate the soul we had to neglect, repudiate and even inflict suffering on the body. Suffering or denial inflicted on the body was believed to open the path to God. Only by repudiating her sexuality and renouncing the world could a woman become acceptable to God.

Following the paradigm of solar mythology, which conceived of a great cosmic battle between good and evil, the next step was to ascribe all goodness to the institution of the Church and all evil to the pagan gods or any group which offered a challenge to the Church's power, formulating the concept of the 'saved' and the 'damned' and reserving hell and damnation for 'unbelievers'. This concept later entered into the totalitarian ideologies of the last century where one group was elevated to a position of absolute power and another condemned to persecution and death. All this did great violence to the soul.

The question I would put to you is: Did this myth bring us to a higher, more developed state of consciousness, or did it hold back our evolution?

### **Adam and Eve covering genitals triptych**

The relevance of this myth to us today is that the deeper layers of the soul which, for many thousands of years had known a life of participation in the life of the earth and the cosmos through an instinctual awareness of the unity and divinity of life, were now deprived of that experience. The mythology of the lunar era where all creation was imagined as emerging from the cosmic womb of the Great Mother in a great web of relationships was suppressed. All traces of animism were eradicated. The various mystery religions which had flourished under the Greek and Roman Empires were suddenly declared anathema. By the end of the fourth century under the emperor Theodosius, pagan temples had been destroyed and pagan rites prohibited.

### **Eve, Mary and the Tree**

The repudiation of the image of the goddess and with it the significance and influence of a feminine dimension of the divine was devastating because a vital thread of connection to the past was severed. Whereas the Egyptian, Sumerian, Greek and Roman Goddesses had given men and women clearly defined images of different aspects of the Feminine to which they could relate, Christian culture offered only three role models of the Feminine: Eve, the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. The image of the purity of the soul was carried by the Virgin Mary,

the dangerous desirousness of instinct by Eve and unbridled sexuality by Mary Magdalene. There is a fundamental split between the soul, personified by the immaculately conceiving and — from the declaration in the Papal Edict of 1854 — the immaculately conceived Virgin Mary, and the body, represented by the carnal Eve and Mary Magdalene, the ‘fallen’ woman. It was through the far-reaching influence of this myth that we lost the wholeness of our being and the awareness that the totality of the soul must include instinct and the life of the body. You can clearly see the split in this painting. On the one side Mary and redemption through her Son; on the other death brought about by Eve taking the apple. As Irenaeus (ca. AD 125-200) stated it: “Eve by her disobedience brought death on herself and on all the human race: Mary, by her obedience, brought salvation.”

### **Eve, Adam and Serpent and Tree**

Once again, as in Greek and Jewish culture, women were to be confined to the home and could hold no public office. Their primary role was to accept the rule of chastity, silence and obedience, to copy Mary’s celebrated example of humility.

Through my work as a therapist, I found that the belief in original sin and the profound rejection of woman, the body and sexuality that developed out of the Myth of the Fall is still carried in the unconscious psyche of modern men and women, no matter how much they may have adapted to a secular culture. I think it is responsible for woman’s deeply negative view of herself and the difficulty she has in being true to her own values and her deepest instincts.

### **Blake - Adam turning away from Eve**

From a Jungian perspective, man’s anima — the unconscious internalised image of woman that he carries in his psyche — will have been imprinted with the image of Eve and the Christian teaching on original sin. This may cause him to fall back on old beliefs of woman’s inferiority, emotionality and subservience whenever he feels threatened in his relationships with women. These old beliefs manifest in the debasement and abuse of women displayed in pornography and rap lyrics as well as in the ongoing and deplorable domestic violence towards women. Even the current obsession with sex, promiscuity and pornography that is so much a part of modern Western culture can be seen as an unconscious bondage to the same sexual complex that led to its repression. It has inflicted a devastating wound on the Christian psyche which I think is reflected in the problem of the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests, stemming perhaps from the insistence on celibacy and in the difficulty both Catholic and Protestant Churches have in accepting women as priests. Fear of sexuality is a powerful complex that has not been recognized and addressed and, therefore, cannot be transformed.

## **Michelangelo Expulsion**

Women in the West, able now to vote and to work in almost any profession that attracts them, may have forgotten the immense power of this story over their lives. In being educated in the same way as men, in holding their own in a world still controlled and structured by men, women may have the greatest difficulty in being true to their own deepest values which have been formed by their age-old experience as mothers. In trying to copy the competitive role model offered by men, they may suffer from a devastating internal critic, ready to destroy their trust in themselves. They may reject their own feminine values, being still unconsciously influenced by the negative projections onto women that prevailed during the 4000 years of the solar era. Men, equally influenced, may not be able to recognise and honour the feeling values that have for so long been associated with women and the Feminine. The difficulty the UN has had in promoting the rights of women world-wide shows how much prejudice there is still to overcome and the prejudice comes, in part, straight from this myth.

## **Two Different Kinds of Knowing**

So, reaching the end of this talk on the Solar Era, we carry within our psyche two kinds of consciousness, two different ways of knowing:

- 1. Lunar – a consciousness that can be identified with our primordial Soul:** a very ancient instinctive, participatory, relational way of knowing, mediated through instinct, intuition, feeling (the heart) and the right hemisphere of the brain — still found in Shamanic cultures today.
- 2. Solar – a consciousness that can be identified with our Mind:** a goal-focused, objective way of knowing, mediated through linear thinking, the rational mind and the left hemisphere of the brain. developed ca. 2,000 BC – 2,000 AD.

A radical imbalance developed in us as the solar way of knowing was superimposed on the older lunar way. Over the millennia of the solar era the left hemisphere gradually became too dominant and we lost all awareness of the sacredness of the life of the Earth and the Cosmos.

(see *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* by Iain McGilchrist)

## **Christ and Mary in Santa Maria Maggiore**

The image of the Virgin has been immensely important throughout the Christian era in helping people to stay in touch with the older consciousness and in keeping alive their instinct for relationship with a deeper ground. In many ways, she has filled the role of the earlier Great Goddesses although she could not carry the role of the Great Mother. The massive petition to the Pope to elevate her to the level of the god-head achieved its aim with two Papal Bulls in the 1950's when, in the first, she was declared "assumed in heaven, body and soul".

and in the second named as Queen of Heaven, so restoring to her the cosmic dimension that the Goddess held in past civilisations. The new dogma affirmed that Mary as Bride was united with her Son in the heavenly bridal chamber and, as Sophia, united with the godhead. Jung thought that these two Bulls would have a far-reaching effect on our culture.

So, at last we have a new image of the sacred marriage as reflected in a wonderful early image from Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, showing Jesus and Mary in the starry heavens, with the sun and moon beneath their feet. Here there is balanced and relationship between the two archetypal principles held by Jesus and his mother.

### **The Black Madonna of the Pillar**

Throughout the late Middle Ages, when the Feminine Archetype was beginning to come to life again in the Grail legends and in countless pilgrimages to the Black Madonna in France, hers was the image that gave comfort and solace to the suffering and was responsible for countless miracles at Chartres and her other shrines.